

Adolescent Identity Development and Leadership Development: A Collective Case Study
Approach

A Dissertation submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In Curriculum and Instruction

in the Department of Leadership, Technology, and Workforce Development
of the Dewar College of Education and Human Services

July 2022

DAN C. KAMYKOWSKI

M.A., Middlebury College, 2013
B.A., Centre College 2007

© Copyright 2022 Dan C. Kamykowski
All Rights Reserved

This dissertation, “Adolescent Identity Development and Leadership Development: A Collective Case Study Approach,” by Dan C. Kamykowski, is approved by:

Dissertation
Committee
Chair

DocuSigned by:
Taralynn Hartsell
5D94DA9F05DA479...

Taralynn Hartsell, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction

Researcher

DocuSigned by:
Herbert Fiester
891A9221CCD14C8...

Herbert Fiester, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction

Committee Member

DocuSigned by:
Steven Downey
3AA38AF781424CF...

Steven Downey, Ph.D.
Professor of Research and Instructional Technology

Associate Provost for
Graduate Studies and Research

DocuSigned by:
Michael J. Bochenko
368B8AFB1070420...

Michael J. Bochenko, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

Defense Date

Becky K. da Cruz
Becky K. da Cruz, Ph.D., J.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice

June 14, 2022

FAIR USE

This dissertation is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, revised in 1976). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of the material for financial gain without the author's expressed written permission is not allowed.

DUPLICATION

I authorize the Head of Interlibrary Loan or the Head of the Archives at the Odum Library at Valdosta State University to arrange for duplication of this dissertation for educational or scholarly purpose when so requested by a library user. The duplication shall be at the user's expense.

Signature *Daniel C Kamykowski*

I refuse permission for this dissertation to be duplicated in whole or in part.

Signature _____

ABSTRACT

This study examined the identity development of adolescents who attend a leadership development summer camp called BLAST. James Marcia's (1966) adolescent identity status paradigms can be a reflection in these experiences. The conceptual framework included these reflections along with theories and research findings about adolescent identity development. In both of these areas, I found lack of research.

Robert Stake's (2006) protocols and guidelines for collective case study research were the methods I relied on for this study. For this study, I proposed two research questions: (1) how do adolescent participants describe their personal leadership development experiences at BLAST and (2) how do participants perceive the BLAST experience impacted their identity development? To answer these questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews of the participants and analyzed camp documents. Relying on In Vivo, values, and process coding along with direct interpretation, I analyzed these data to answer the research questions to understand how the participants of this leadership development camp experience identity development.

From the analysis, some ideas were found. First, adolescents described their leadership development experience as a collaborative experience full of engaging and collaborative activities that improved their leadership abilities, namely communication skills. Secondly, the participants of this study acknowledged how they became more outgoing. Also, upon self-reflection of the overall experience, the participants all indicated some ideas that indicated positive identity development as defined by the theoretical framework.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION	2
Background.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	11
Assumptions and Delimitations	13
Definition of Terms.....	17
Summary	18
Chapter II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	19
Theoretical Framework.....	19
Adolescence and Identity Development	26
Adolescent Leadership Development	36
Summary	50
Chapter III: METHODOLOGY	52
Research Questions	52
Interview with a BLAST Participant Pilot Study	53
Research Design and Setting	54
Procedures.....	58
Methods of Analysis	69
Credibility and Validity	74
Summary	75

CHAPTER IV: SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION	76
Site Context.....	76
Camp Activities and Traditions	79
CHAPTER V: KATE.....	90
Profile of Participant.....	90
Summary of Participant Interviews	91
Profile of Group Leader	99
Summary of Family Group Leader Interview.....	100
Summary of Documents	104
Case Assertions.....	105
Conclusion	115
CHAPTER VI: LYNN.....	117
Profile of Participant.....	117
Summary of Participant Interviews	118
Summary of Family Group Leader Interview.....	128
Summary of Documents	130
Case Assertions.....	132
Conclusion	139
CHAPTER VII: NATE.....	141
Profile of Participant.....	141
Summary of Participant Interviews	143
Profile of Group Leader	156
Summary of Family Group Leader Interview.....	157

Summary of Documents	159
Case Assertions	162
Conclusion	171
CHAPTER VIII: CLARA.....	173
Profile of Participant	173
Summary of Participant Interviews	174
Profile of Family Group Leader.....	182
Summary of Family Group Leader Interview.....	183
Summary of Documents	186
Case Assertions	187
Conclusion	195
CHAPTER IX: CROSS CASE ASSERTIONS.....	197
Cross-Case Assertions	197
Quintain.....	214
CHAPTER X: DISCUSSION.....	218
Study Overview	218
Relationship Between the Findings and Research Questions	220
Connections Between BLAST and Leadership Development	231
Limitations.....	236
Recommendations	237
Implications for Future Research	241
Conclusion.....	243
REFERENCES	245

APPENDIX A: EMAIL INVITATION FOR POTENTIAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS	254
APPENDIX B: IRB PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT	258
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE 1	260
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE 2	264
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE 3.....	267

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my family,
Thank you for letting me be me,
Exploring the things that I wanted to explore,
Finding my own way,
And being there to support me each step of the way.

To my found family,
Thank you for being my backup,
Standing by for every crazy new adventure,
Always making sure I unglued from the computer,
And keeping me sane during these past few years.

To my Rusty,
Thank you for being a good boy,
Keeping me from sitting at the desk for too long,
And knowing when it was time to just sleep at my feet.

PROLOGUE

I have been a volunteer with the Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership program (HOBY) and other programs like it since 2001 when I attended HOBY as a student. I have seen the changes that I saw in myself occur in countless other adolescents. In fact, the HOBY seminar starts with a video which includes testimonials of other former participants who all describe the experience as “life-changing” (What is HOBY, 2019). I know it happened for me, and I see it happen in others each year. When I wonder about this program, I try to understand what it is about my and these participants’ lives that has been actually changed by HOBY. The only tangible thing the participants’ take home with them is typically a shirt from the event. So, there must be something happening to the participants if there is no physical prize or award to change their lives.

I believe I had a change of identity during this weekend. Prior to HOBY, I lacked the confidence, esteem, or personality similar that I have now. This development in my identity was certainly an integral part of the success I experienced in school academically as I finished high school with a particularly good grade point average. Socially, I avoided so many of the pitfalls and problems of my peers’ experiences. More so to the point, I became the one that my peers would come to for help because of my perceived identity. Out of my peer group, not many attended seminars and camps like HOBY, so I know there was an influence from this program. I want to know what happened at this leadership camp that caused me to become this adolescent.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Through this study, I wanted to show a perspective into how adolescents understand and experience identity development after they attended a personal leadership development camp for student council members. This chapter describes the problem that I addressed with the findings of the research and purpose of the study. The chapter also presents the research questions and includes an explanation of this study's significance. Next, this chapter ends with assumptions and delimitations which may affect the study and steps to be taken to ensure a viable study. Lastly, this chapter ends with an explanation of the proposed research setting and definition of highlighted terms within the study.

Background

Laura Reston, a contributor for Forbes.com, authored an article in 2015 about the value of college summer programs for high schoolers. In the article, she described the various programs and their curricula. Interestingly though, her perspective focused on the notion of the "value" of these programs (Reston, 2015). She discussed the financial investment families must make for these programs and suggested that these programs did not aid in college acceptance. This author shows a singular point of view of these programs by only highlighting the overt reasons why a student should attend a summer program such as these ones. The question therein is what if there are other reasons why adolescents should attend these programs.

Contrary to what Reston (2015) proclaimed about summer programs, other researchers found practical effects of summer programs upon students' self-confidence and academic success. Rinn (2006) used a self-reporting questionnaire to measure the change in social self-concept of academically gifted adolescents in a residential summer program. Her results found

that these adolescents experienced an increase in social self-concept when participating in a summer program such as the one examined in the study. While results of this study did promote participation in summer programs, the implications relied heavily on the academic and social development and not personal development. More recently, an article in *American Educator* written by McEachin, Augustine, and McCombs (2018) highlighted a meta-analysis of 25 studies about summer programs and what could be done to increase the participants' academic success of these programs. While McEachin et al. (2018) highlighted summer programs, they only examined programs that sought to decrease summer learning attrition while barely mentioning any effect of the summer program on the student socially or otherwise. The authors could be implying that the purpose of summer programs was to ensure the academic success of the student and nothing more.

Numerous summer youth programs exist both on and off college campuses throughout the United States. The website summerprogramfinder.com contains a database of programs for high school students based on location, price, and category. One such category is leadership programs. Rehm (2014) examined high school student leadership training programs. While not each of the programs she discussed have the same goals or methods, each program typically aimed to increase the adolescents' leadership competencies and essential leadership skills such as public speaking and critical thinking. These skills are not only helpful for adolescents in their youth but in their adult life as well, which could be one reason more programs are starting to develop leadership skills in young people. The effects of these programs, however, are measured only within the goals and objectives of their respective program, yet not beyond this perspective. Many of the participants of these programs return after the conclusion of the seminar or camp knowing they have completed the objectives of the program, but they may or may not have

noticed the more internal or personal effects I believe can occur. As the researcher, I hope to discover and explore the personal effects of the leadership training program in this study.

Some programs, such as Boy Scouts or Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership, have had well-established seminars and camps where leadership development is a goal of the summer seminar or camp. However, not all adolescents receive the opportunity to participate in these programs. I believe lack of participation is due to gatekeepers such as parents, teachers, coaches, or school counselors. They may not see the value in building leadership skills in these programs besides adding them to a resume or college application. If the parent or school counselor has not seen or experienced the program firsthand, then these individuals may not believe there is any real value to participation. If Reston's (2015) article is any indication, those who organize these programs must promote the program's ability to enhance the adolescents' future success in college or career instead of what the program's true aims may be. It is possible that these programs have other beneficial consequences, but those outcomes are overlooked because of the types of benefits Reston thinks should be the focus. In the preliminary study for this study, I found that the adolescent participants of these programs believe a change occurred outside the scope of the program's goals and objectives. These secondary or tertiary effects should be examined fully, which is at the heart of this dissertation study.

While Boy Scouts and Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership programs occur outside of school environments, some programs exist as part of the school climate in the form of after-school or extracurricular activities. One such school-based program for adolescents to be involved is student council. Each student council is different, but many student council members and leaders seek, in addition to other aims, to promote the development of the student as a school leader as well as an individual leader. The Georgia Association of Student Councils, to which

many student councils in Georgia belong, states in their organization's constitution that they seek to "provide opportunities for the training of leaders..." (2018, p. 1). In doing so, one aspect of their annual programming is a summer camp for individual student council members to develop as a leader on a personal level. GASC provides its own leadership development camp for adolescents named Bringing Leadership And Students Together (BLAST). The BLAST camp is open to adolescent participants throughout Georgia to have an experience of personal leadership development over the course of the three-day long curriculum. I believe something occurs to the individual participants that is overlooked by the previously mentioned gatekeepers who tend to ignore programs like it as a valuable experience for adolescent development. This ignorance is unfortunate because these adolescent participants could be receiving more out of these programs than just what the programs' developers and facilitators describe. If these programs can show positive results for the participants beyond leadership development, the value of sending the adolescents to these programs can be enhanced.

Statement of the Problem

In Georgia, the leadership education students are receiving in the classroom is minimal. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2018), only one course is in the approved catalog of courses, Peer Leadership I, which students could take in high school in Georgia. Any other student who wishes to study leadership while in high school must register for a JROTC course which understandably slants their curriculum towards military-styled leadership (Georgia Department of Education, 2018). A student can only enroll in JROTC if the school has been selected by the United States (US) military branch to have a program. This lack of offering means if a student wishes to pursue opportunities to develop leadership skills, he or she must enroll in this pre-military program or seek a leadership development experience outside of school

programs like a summer program. In addition, schools and parents alike have shown a propensity to only encourage programs which have overt benefits such as increasing chances of college acceptance and not one focused on leadership (Reston, 2015). Parents and school counselors may see only tangible benefits of sending students to a particular camp that promotes college acceptance but not necessarily leadership development. Upon examination of any college admission high school course requirement list, most colleges will ask that the applicant have some level of leadership training or course. This condition means courses that improve a student's chances of college admission are given the priority with course selection, which then means courses such as leadership education are considered inconsequential and not necessary for success. The problem becomes that the benefits of attending a summer leadership development program need to be more overt and more thoroughly displayed.

For this study, I examined what benefit an adolescent who attends a summer leadership development program receives. Aside from the obvious potential benefit of developing leadership skills, the adolescent might experience other types of development, such as identity development in the case of this study. This study adds to the body of research on adolescent leadership development and adolescent identity development, which are fields with ample possibilities to contribute and expand research (Kroger, 2000; Whitehead, 2009). Posner (2009) stated that the current field of leadership development emphasized the external process, which meant that leadership development could be learned in a traditional way such as math or any other subject area. However, Posner (2009) also believed that leadership development was an internal process which must be continually experienced and practiced much like character development or morality. For this study, the literature review and theoretical perspective show that one such internal process, identity development, may be a factor toward leadership

development. Data collection for this study relied on the participants' personal experiences in addition to other sources which will be used in an examination of this internal processes.

Adolescent identity development is the key to the internal process that I examined. Specifically, this study helped me examine how adolescents experience the process of adolescent identity development while attending the summer program known as BLAST. Adolescent identity development, or identity formation, can be described as the internal mechanism driving a person forward in life with direction while maintaining a sense of steadiness (Kroger, 2017). This is the portion of the individual that many previously mentioned summer programs are not recognizing as part of their program's mission to address. Kroger and Marcia (2011) stated that research of adolescent identity development programs was just beginning. Through this dissertation study, I examined the participants' experiences of the BLAST camp of the Georgia Association of Student Councils because of the program's goals emphasizing the personal leadership development of the participant instead of academic pursuits. For Kroger and Marcia, research on identity intervention programs and their effects was a new area of research. Kroger and Marcia did not describe the content of these intervention programs nor did they examine how a personal leadership development camp provided meaningful results in terms of adolescent identity development.

Because teaching leadership to adolescents has been greatly pushed to highly specialized curricula and to out-of-school experiences, a problem with students not receiving any kind of leadership training in adolescence exists (Rehm, 2014). Through this study, I explored what impressions a leadership development experience makes on the participant, namely in adolescent identity development. In doing so, I demonstrated how leadership development may have a

larger role to play on the development of an adolescent larger than teaching him or her how to be a team leader.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the identity development of adolescents after they attend a youth leadership development camp called BLAST. The camp's name is an acronym for Bringing Leadership and Students Together. This three-day summer camp is designed to give the participants experiences in teamwork, communication, and introspection that allow them to develop a personal leadership style. The curriculum of the camp is based on traditions started several years ago with the addition of a curriculum called Generation Leadership. The adolescents, most of whom are student council members at their own schools, who attend the program may see development in their identity formation yet to be illuminated and explained in empirical research. If this personal leadership development camp can be shown to encourage identity formation within the participants, then a connection can be drawn between leadership and identity development in adolescents. This data can then be used to accomplish the following goals:

1. Provide insight into what adolescent leadership development currently looks like in the eyes of adolescents. From there, recommendations could be made to make such programs more effective on both adolescent identity and leadership development. More research focusing on adolescent leadership development is needed. Research on leadership development curricula, emphasizing the adult experience of leadership development, has been more prevalent instead (Whitehead, 2009). Also, by examining the leadership development of adolescents, an increase in understanding leadership development for all age groups could occur (Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018).

2. Describe the process of how adolescents understand their own identity development.

Kroger (2000) stated that even after decades of research on the topic of identity formation, the understanding of the course of adolescent identity development remained an unfulfilled research topic. In this qualitative study, I can show the internal process described by Posner (2009) and use it to demonstrate how adolescents experienced identity development in their own words. Relying on the theoretical framework, I can identify aspects of the adolescent's identity development that align with this framework.

This collective case study I hope to examine is the adolescent leadership development experience at the Georgia Association of Student Council's BLAST camp. I want to know how the adolescent participants in this leadership development camp experience and understand personal change in their leadership and identity development. A guiding question is *How does leadership development change the lives of the adolescent participant?* This question can provide the information to help achieve my three goals. However, while current literature can tell how leadership development training leads to positive results (Wong, Lau, & Lee, 2012), I wanted to understand from the participants' point of view how they experience change and the processes that lead toward the potential change. To understand this process, I needed to witness the change myself and then to interpret its occurrence along the participants' own perceptions of the process of understanding leadership and identity development. The best method to collect such data is to conduct a collective case study among BLAST participants to analyze their perspectives and stories of personal experiences. Being a part of the BLAST camp experience myself as camp photographer, I acquired an inside perspective that allowed a more complete picture of individual experiences to help answer research questions and achieve the research goals. Further discussion of the methodology will be presented in the third chapter.

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership development experience of the BLAST camp and how it is connected to adolescent identity development. Examining how this experience changed the lives of the camp participants can lead to two goals: to illuminate more understanding of what adolescent leadership development can look like and to understand adolescent identity development more deeply. In conclusion, this study can comfortably be labeled appropriate for qualitative research to best accomplish these goals and purpose.

Research Questions

In this study, the key elements examined were very much conceptual. In this study, I examined the participants' leadership development as an internal process that can only be experienced and consequently described by the individual (Posner, 2009). This internal process can be summarized as the motivation to become a better leader regardless of station or rank in life. Identity development has been researched for years, but the adolescent identity development process remains somewhat misunderstood (Kroger, 2000). The most commonly held idea about adolescent identity development is a dichotomy that, as will be discussed in the theoretical framework, is limiting and does not fully encapsulate the experience when compared to other ideas.

Research questions involving these two key variables are one of the most important aspects of any study. They provide guidance and focus for a study (Maxwell, 2013). However, for a qualitative study like the one, research questions are emergent due to new ideas and key variables potentially developing from the data collection. Consequently, as the data collection and analysis processes begin, the questions could have been modified to better suit the goals and purpose of the study in terms of these new key variables (Creswell, 2014). This did not occur

during this study. The initial research questions proposed were the principal questions I answered through the study.

With the collective case study method, the research questions were formulated with specific details in mind. First, open-ended questions emphasizing interrogative words such as *how* and *why* were relied upon (Alvarez-Hevia, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Using these types of research questions allowed for varied themes and ideas in the data collection to give a wide-view perspective into the phenomenon being studied. In addition, for a quality and consistent collective case study to occur, clear research questions were developed. Third, collective case study should have questions relating to the studied condition, known as the quintain (Stake, 2006). Issues connected to the research questions are included, but not necessarily in the form of a question. Further discussion of reasons behind the research questions, issues, and quintain are presented in Chapter III. The research questions currently are as listed below:

1. How do adolescent participants describe their personal leadership development experiences at BLAST?
2. How do participants perceive the BLAST experience impacted their identity development?

Significance of the Study

There was a need for understanding adolescent leadership development because its development should start before adulthood. Certain skills linked to strong leadership traits and styles may be more fully fostered if the initial development is started before adulthood (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). This idea is demonstrated by progressive schools where high school students are given opportunities to develop as leaders within the school curriculum (Rehm, 2014). This addition to the curriculum could be why empirical research has started to focus on the impact of

teaching leadership to students as a whole. In contemporary society with more information and accessibility to resources are within easy grasp, the difference between an adult and the adolescent is becoming increasingly slimmer (Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018). This idea implies that teenage students need the same preparation and training of older students to include leadership roles and skills.

Adolescent leadership development is not receiving the attention from researchers, and thus, creating a gap in the knowledge of this field. Whitehead (2009) pointed out that while leadership development had seen an increase in academic writing, adolescents received little attention in research in terms of developing leadership skills. Additionally, current empirical studies like those of Rosch and Imoukuede (2016) and Tomkins and Nicholds (2017) have been primarily conducted at universities with college-aged participants. The issue is that adolescents and their personal leadership development experiences have been largely ignored in empirical research.

Studies which do examine adolescents and leadership have focused on quantitative methods to measure outcomes of these experiences and the relationships among variables, but not the process of these personal experiences (Hindes, Thorne, Schwean, & McKeough, 2008; Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018; Wong et al., 2012; Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway, 2000). In qualitative studies, authors have sought to understand perceptions of leadership and applications of leadership capacities (De Jongh et al., 2014; Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). While these studies provide insight into the participants' perspective of their leadership abilities, they do not seek to understand specific phenomenon of how the adolescent sees him or herself becoming a leader or how it changes him or her. I wanted to diminish this gap in the literature. If understanding how the adolescent develops an identity as a leader or find any commonalities

in those leadership identity development experiences, such finding could potentially lead to a much better understanding of adolescent identity development processes.

This study is also significant because of the effects it could potentially cause in the mindsets of curriculum designers of such programs as well as leadership curricula which could be used in schools. For those who create or decide on the programming for these summer camps and seminars, findings from this study could demonstrate purposeful activities to include in those programs that could yield positive effects for the participants. Also, findings could also highlight aspects of programming for leadership development that may not be as significant in the eyes of the participants as these curriculum designers have originally intended. For school-based curriculum creators, the findings of this study could help expand on budding programs on the positive effects of leadership development education within the existing school curriculum. For the participants, when summer programs and school curricula can be adapted to fit their development, the positive effects only increase. This study has the potential to cause all these significant results and possibly more.

Assumptions and Delimitations

This section discusses the assumptions and delimitations and how they may have affected the study. These assumptions and delimitations may or may not overtly affected the study in various manners such as the target population, data collection process, or data analysis.

Assumptions

I have been involved with youth leadership development for the past two decades either as a participant or facilitator including three previous years with BLAST. Through these experiences, I have seen a variety of exercises and results that over time has led me to forming preconceived notions of these repeated exercises and their results. For example, if there is a

particular game where the objective is for the participants to fail, and thus, have to resolve with the feeling of failure, my thoughts about how that resolution should have transpired in the past may affect the way I form a question or the way I interpret an experience shared with me. Therefore, when collecting data, I needed to remain vigilant to the unique experiences of the individual and not rely on any prior knowledge or experience I have had. During the data collection process, one-on-one interviews are a key source of data collection. I needed to avoid leading questions and include terms and phrases the participant uses to describe experiences as opposed to using terms from my point of view. Adhering to their words and not my own will be crucial through data collection and analysis. In terms of data analysis, Saldaña (2016) stated that using the coding strategy known as *In Vivo* uses the exact words of the study's participants to create codes, categories, and themes. Coding strategies like this one could prevent the influence of my prior experience and pre-conceived notions from affecting the data collection.

My role with the BLAST camp was tangential to the activities of the camp and should not have interfered with the experiences of the study participants. The schedule was planned and organized by the camp director and the camp clinician without my involvement. I assumed that carrying out my duties as the assistant to the camp director did not negatively impact the honest collection of data throughout the camp experience nor my interactions with the participants. The participants had no prior knowledge of the study. Likewise, I had no prior knowledge of who would be involved ultimately in the study's sample.

I also assumed that each person was a willful participant in the study. In choosing participants, I adhered to my selection protocols to avoid any bias after seeing or interacting with participants at BLAST. I also assumed that each participant was honest and open about their experiences. As the participants saw me at the camp, I needed to ask them to elaborate on

certain terms, ideas, objects, and events as they may have assumed I understand what they meant. Such behavior had already occurred in a preliminary study, and thus, I wanted to avoid this situation for the sake of conducting rich data collection. Therefore, I needed to create a carefully written interview guide to avoid these issues.

Within the BLAST camp, I assumed that each participant in the study had an equal opportunity to participate in the activities of the camp given that the total number of camp participants is small. This ability to participate meant when I reference a specific activity or experience during the camp, the study participant had memory of what I am asking and able to share about the experience. I can also assume if by some reason the participant cannot recall the experience I reference, he or she is aided through the documents I collect during the camp to use a recall stimulation.

Delimitations

In the introduction, I discuss the wide range of potential leadership development experiences I could access for this particular study. I chose the BLAST camp for reasons that make it a viable candidate for a “bounded system” (Stake, 1995, p. 2). This system is a way of identifying what is and not considered a part of the case study I propose to conduct. The fact that the camp had a definitive beginning and end means there is a definitive boundary to the case. This camp also suited the parameters of Stake’s (1995) idea of a bounded case study as I was present during the extent of the camp without having to be overly involved in any of its activities. In other camps where I might have conducted this research, my role would not have been as discreet as Stake’s (1995) protocols would prescribe. Also, this camp was a small camp with approximately thirty to forty participants who elect to participate in the camp. In a larger camp experience, participants may not have all the same opportunities for development due to

constraints of organization and time. At BLAST, each participant was able to participate in each activity fully and equally. This allowance provides for more complete experiences to be shared by each participant.

As this study involves one-on-one interviews with underage participants, parental involvement and consent was required. Following ethical protocols of research involving this age of participants was the utmost importance even at the risk of influencing the data collection process such as a participant not wanting to discuss for fear of embarrassment in front of a parent. Other situations could have led to discontinuing a participant's involvement with the study if the experience became painful to discuss or retell. Fortunately, this situation did not occur during the data collection. Within the population for this study, I devoted a significant amount of time to ensure that the participant and his or her parent/legal guardian were both comfortable with the study's methods. The details of each participant's involvement were planned meticulously with input from both the parent and the participant to ensure the comfort of all parties involved was achieved.

As with any empirical study with human participants, there is the possibility of response bias within the interview process. The participant could unwittingly convey an experience or notion in a manner trying to provide what he or she thinks is the information I want to know instead of providing the honest response. I devoted time to collecting photos of the experiences and of the camp participants. These photos were used during the interviews to aid with providing a frame for the participants to rely on to provide the most honest re-telling of the experiences of the camp.

Definitions of Terms

This study examined the identity development of adolescents after they attend a youth leadership development camp called BLAST. The study focused on the processes that help adolescents obtain leadership skills. Certain terminologies were used in this study requiring explanation and definition.

Adolescent Identity Development

Jane Kroger (2000) provided a description of adolescent identity development. This development is the way “in which adolescents engage in the task of identity development” (p. 145). Researchers as early as the 1970s viewed the research of Erikson and Marcia as the most prominent researchers about this topic which included the understanding of the adolescent psychosocial task and, after Marcia’s dissertation, the four identity statuses (Kroger, 2000).

Adolescent Leadership Development

Also known as youth leadership development, Houghton and DiLiello (2009) defined this development as the range of formal and informal experiences that help adolescents increase in leadership competencies. Other aspects and perspectives of what is leadership development and how it may be applied to adolescents specifically will be discussed more deeply in the next chapter.

Identity Status

According to James Marcia as described by Kroger (2017), the identity statuses are one of the four groups in which an adolescent can find him or herself based on the decision-making processes he or she undertakes in order to develop a completed identity.

BLAST

The annual summer camp sponsored by the Georgia Association of Student Councils. BLAST is an acronym meaning Bringing Leadership and Students Together. This three-day residential camp provides six different modules coupled with various activities for the campers to learn about personal leadership and practice their own leadership style.

Summary

In this opening chapter, five major points have been made. The first point is a portion of American society believes the purpose of summer programs and summer camps like those described by Reston (2015) and McEachin et al. (2018) is to help students get into college or help with their academic achievement. Second, I have discussed the lack of leadership development opportunities for adolescents (Whitehead, 2009). I also point out how leadership development is considered an internal process over an external one and how this development could include the idea of identity development (Posner, 2009). Third, I expand on the purpose of this study as a method of understanding how leadership development camps can change the lives of its participants, namely affecting the identity development process. Fourth, I explain that the significance of this study could mean positive changes and additions to what is considered effective curriculum for leadership development programs and courses. Last, I have reviewed what would be the assumptions and delimitations of this study to mark the possible influences and limits of this study. In the next chapter, I rely on the theoretical framework and literature review to discuss the theories and previous research to inform decisions about my study and how it fits into the current field of literature.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will review the core theories and literature to this study. First, the theoretical framework includes a description of the theoretical aspects of the study and how they relate to the research problem being examined. A literature review follows the theoretical discussion. Details discussed in this review of literature and research are reflected in decisions made for the methodology of the study.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the theory of James Marcia and his ideas on adolescent identity development, there must also be an understanding of its origins. Erik Erickson was a noted psychologist of the mid-twentieth century who developed a psychosocial theory of development that preceded Marcia (Kroger, 2017). Under Erickson's theory, there are eight stages during the lifespan experienced by everyone, and in these stages there is a problem in the form of an identity crisis that the individual must resolve (Hluhaniuc, 2015). According to his book, *Childhood and Society*, Erikson (1993) described each of these stages as starting from infancy and continuing to full adulthood. These stages include a dichotomous crisis such as the following: (1) basic trust vs. mistrust, (2) autonomy vs. shame/doubt, (3) initiative vs. guilt, (4) industry vs. inferiority, (5) identity vs. role confusion, (6) intimacy vs. isolation, (7) generativity vs. stagnation, and (8) ego integrity vs. despair (Erikson, 1993). In each of these stages, the individual's identity is the negotiation of which side of the given crisis he or she favors. Erickson's theory, however, examined adolescence during the fifth stage or identity vs. role confusion only (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Erickson mentioned specifically that the late adolescent, being in the fifth stage of development, had to make decisions about occupation and

ideology (Kroger, 2017). Marcia (1964) defined the aspect of occupation as the career field the adolescent aspires to join, and ideology is the combination of philosophy and belief to create belief structures such as religious views or political opinions. Using these aspects of identity development would be used in Marcia's original study to support his findings about adolescent identity development. Reflecting on Erikson's ideas as a starting point, Marcia would base his theory on these ideas.

James Marcia completed his dissertation on determination and the construct validity of his ego identity statuses in 1964. Although Erikson mentioned it in his prior writings, Marcia constructed his study to determine the validity of assessing an adolescent's identity development among four statuses as opposed to Erikson's dichotomous range. These ego statuses were Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion. He used semi-structured interviews to determine which of the four identity statuses each of his 86 college-aged participants belonged to (Marcia, 1964). Each interview was evaluated separately from high to low for one of the four statuses (e.g., Foreclosure-high), and then Marcia made an overall conclusion about the participant's identity status from the evaluations. Within the interview guide he created, the questions elicited responses of a closed nature over three topics: occupation, politics, and religion. The choice to include these three areas to evaluate the study subject's identity was chosen based off the significance these areas had in Erikson's writings prior to Marcia's study and their connection to the topics of occupation and ideology, the latter being what Marcia determined included political and religious beliefs. The first topic referred to the research subject's decision on a career field and how he or she arrived at that decision. The second topic referred to the subject's political feelings in comparison to parents and likeliness of debating those beliefs with others. The final topic referred to the subject's evaluation or re-evaluation of

the religious faith he or she has been raised in and how much would follow the religious practices. As stated before, the questions for each of these three sections were meant to elicit the opinions and beliefs about these areas from the participants. For example, one question on the interview guide for the politics section was “Who would you like to see the president?” (Marcia, 1964, p. 185). While possible that this could have been a simple starting point to the conversation, Marcia described this interview process as lasting less than 30 minutes so the logical conclusion would be that the interview was not very in-depth. In the dissertation study, a similar semi-structured interview process is followed but it will allow for deeper responses using a longer interview. Marcia completed his dissertation with the conclusion that there was evidence to support his claim of four identity statuses for adolescents.

After Marcia’s original research was completed, he had been viewed as the analogous Luke Skywalker to Erickson’s Obi-Wan Kenobi in terms of research on adolescent identity development due to their similar views with different conclusions. As Hluhaniuc (2015) described, Marcia finished what Erickson started in terms of developing a theory for fuller adolescent identity development. Like Erickson, he stated biology, psychology, and society have their influences however, Marcia (1980) believed the identity status was always in a state of flux. This instability was what differed from Erickson’s ideas of a stable dichotomy. While Erickson believed that late adolescent identity development was a scale between identity and role confusion, Marcia affirmed that identity development for this stage in life was more complicated (Kroger, 2017). With these comparisons and juxtapositions, it is easy to see how Marcia’s ideas have been a continuation of what Erikson started.

Marcia’s 1964 research resulted in a distinct categorization of identity development which Erikson’s theory did not include. Marcia (1980) developed a profile for each of the four

identity statuses for adolescents in terms of identity development. Kroger (2017) broke down the four statuses based on Marcia's research as she defined their origins: "Marcia defined four very different means by which one may approach identity-defining decisions: *identity achievement* (commitment following exploration), *moratorium* (exploration in process), *identity foreclosure* (commitment without exploration), and *identity diffusion* (no commitment with little or no exploration)" (p. 2). To make a simple illustration to demonstrate these statuses, these four statuses can be thought of as high school students who are ready to graduate and matriculate to a university. These four statuses would be represented by the teenager who picks his future college because it has the program to help him launch a career he wants (*identity achievement*), the teenager who is still exploring his options for college because he has not decided what he wants to do in terms of a career (*moratorium*), the teenager who is pursuing a career his parents want him to follow at the college that his parents went to (*identity foreclosure*), and the teenager who has yet to think about what career he wants nor has even looked into finding a college (*identity diffusion*).

These four statuses were the result of a semi-structured interview model called the Identity Status Interview developed by Marcia (Kroger, 2017). According to Marcia (1980), these statuses could be determined by observers with approximately 80% reliability, and his ideas have been the subject of decades of studies since their original development (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). While Marcia may have borrowed some terms from Erikson, Marcia's definitions of these four identity statuses are the result of his own research.

Scholars have described Marcia's statuses in different configurations, but the preeminent status was typically the same. In one such perspective, these statuses are viewed through a two-dimensional axis where the horizontal axis is the exploration and the vertical axis is the

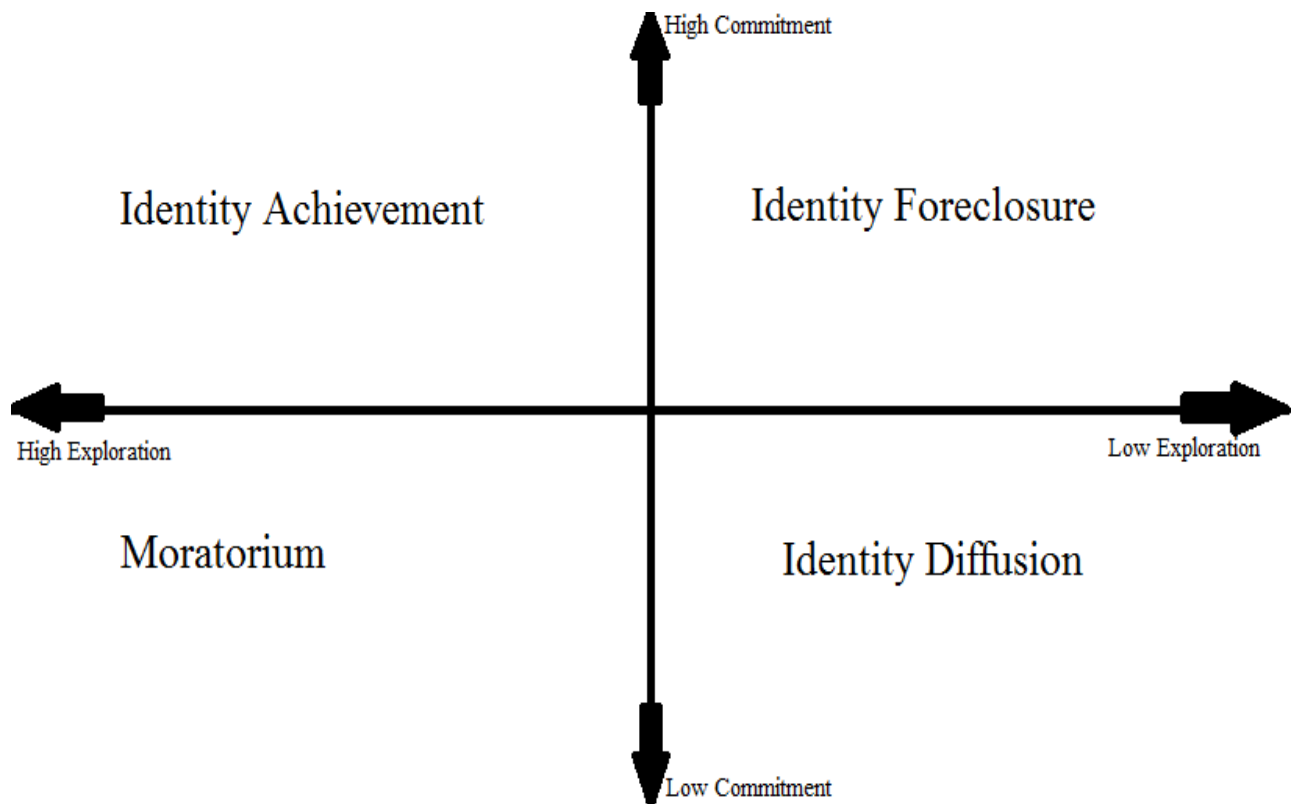
commitments of the adolescent (Norozpour, Gharrace, Ashouri, & Habibi, 2015) as illustrated in Figure 1. Of these four statuses, the most prominent is *Identity Achievement*. This status refers to those who have a solid understanding of their personal ideologies and occupations (Marcia, 1980). Individuals who reached this identity status have made a commitment to their ideals and look to match those values to their environments (Kroger, 2017). A person who has reached this identity status has potentially committed to a career and an interpersonal style after intense exploration (Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000). Kumru and Thompson (2003) emphasized how the choice to make these commitments must be a personal one. At this stage of identity, the individual has a strong sense of self. In regard to the development of the adolescent, *Identity Achievement* is the most complete and thus, is at the maximum of adolescent identity development.

Along this axis of commitment, another status exists where a commitment has been made. The *Identity Foreclosure* status is when the individual has made a commitment to an identity, but he or she has not explored or experienced crisis of that identity (Kroger, 2017). Kroger and Marcia (2011) suggested that those at this stage have chosen a direction for their ideals or occupation, but that direction was prescribed by a parent or significant other. Schwartz et al. (2000) also described this stage as a person who committed to certain aspects of an identity but has yet to make any exploration. This commitment could include aspects such as professional, interpersonal, and religious commitments (Olès, 2016). These commitments were the result of familial traditions or otherwise adopted from others as Kumru and Thompson (2003) reported. This identity status is like identity achievement but lacks the exploration of the identity achievement.

The other two statuses include those stages that have yet to make a commitment to occupation or ideology and are thus on the bottom of Figure 1 where low commitment occurs. The first is the *Identity Diffusion* status (Marcia, 1980). The adolescents of this stage have yet to make a commitment to either occupation or ideology. Kroger and Marcia (2011) described this adolescent also as the one who had not made the commitment nor wanting to make a commitment. Schwartz et al. (2000) described this person as lacking identity commitment and not engaging in exploration. Confusion about the self is connected to this status (Kumru & Thompson, 2003). The complementary status to diffusion is called *Moratorium*. During this stage, the adolescent is experiencing Erickson’s idea of identity crisis.

Figure 1.

Graphical Representation of Marcia's (1964) Ideas



Kroger (2017) described this status also as when the adolescent explored different directions in terms of life goals and identity. Schwartz et al. (2000) emphasized that this person was still “negotiating the exploration process” (p. 505) and thus, had yet to make solid commitments. Kumru and Thompson (2003) indicated that this individual was seeking for alternatives to his or her ideology or vocation without making commitments. The telling sign of the differences of these two statuses is when the adolescent at the moratorium stage is seeking new ideas through exploration while the adolescent at the foreclosure stage does not. Even so, adolescents find themselves in these statuses when the commitment to any vocation has yet to solidify.

Marcia’s ideas about how commitment and exploration fit into the development of the adolescent are the most influential aspects of the theoretical framework for this study. The most integral part of these statuses is the relationship between commitment and exploration. Upon examining the Marcia’s (1964) interview guide, the questions seemed to emphasize comparing the participant’s beliefs against his or her parents. There is little about asking how the participant came to the conclusions about his or her beliefs. This process of how these explorations and commitments are made is at the heart of the dissertation study. Within the BLAST camp curriculum, each participant is challenged through experiences to develop as a leader through a process of personal reflection, which means their ideas about occupation and ideology may be examined or challenged. This development may occur through Marcia’s depiction of exploration and commitment of the adolescents’ ideas and beliefs in these areas in addition to others. In this study, I want to understand how the adolescent describes the experiences of identity development with the goal to better understand these exploration and commitment processes of the adolescent’s identity development through the BLAST leadership development experience.

Adolescence and Identity Development

There are two major components of this study which are included in this literature review which will be incorporated into the study's methods. Prior to this review, a discussion of what is and what is not adolescence is presented so there is an understanding of the scope of the literature discussed. This first section of the literature review contains an examination of research that critiques the research that looks at the exploration and commitment processes that are essential to Marcia's status design. Also, a review of research connecting Marcia's statuses to aspects of adolescent psychology is presented. Last, this portion also reviews studies about relationships among adolescents and their effects on the adolescent identity development process. The section following includes reviewing research of adolescent leadership development. This section of the chapter includes discussion of studies where leadership programs for adolescents are explored. The reviewed literature of this portion includes a proposed understanding of what is leadership and a review of research about leadership education curricula and programs for adolescents. This second section of the literature review concludes with research on proposed adolescent leadership development models. This literature review is used to provide insight into the study and used to inform the study's design.

Adolescence Defined

Adolescence is an age range that is examined and manipulated based on several different perspectives. Marcia (1980) described adolescence as the onset of puberty with no specific end. The American Psychological Association Online Dictionary ("Adolescence," 2018) defines adolescence starting between 10 and 12 years of age with the onset of puberty and typically ending by 19 years. Curtis (2015) wrote an article for the Journal of Adolescent and Family Health where she provided a list of various defined ranges of adolescence from three other

organizations (the American Academy of Pediatrics, the US Department of Health and Human Services, and the US Census Bureau) that reiterated the same age range for adolescents. Arguably, these organizations use medical knowledge as well as other perspectives to gauge when adolescence occurs. From these multiple perspectives, it is possible to describe adolescence as the time between puberty and the end of secondary education, which is typically between 18 and 19 years. In terms of this study, the development being examined occurs somewhere within this age range. Also, for this study, this age range is important for designing the study's methods.

Late adolescence is the point of adolescence at which all of Marcia's participants have been in his original study, but that stage is not the stage examined in the rest of the literature or needed for this study. Marcia (1980) specifically discussed late adolescence in his writing. Authorities on adolescent development have marked late adolescence as the ages ranging between 15 and 22 years (Curtis, 2015). According to Marcia (1980), late adolescence was the time when the individual reached a stage of physical, cognitive, and social status in order to negotiate a path to adulthood. This idea could mean that an adolescent who came from an environment with every opportunity to thrive and develop would reach the defined end of adolescence at a different time than an adolescent who came from an environment where developmental needs were not met consistently. For this study, understanding that the participants may not yet be within the range of late adolescence may have an impact on the findings. However, as further discussion show, research involving adolescent identity development has been conducted with participants who are not yet at this development stage (see Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010). Late adolescence may be the emphasis in

the theoretical framework, but it is certainly not the only way a study relying on this theory has been conducted.

In examining current American society, adolescence could be marked by the end of secondary school when high school students graduate that make an impact on the age range of any potential participants in this study. Graduating from high school occurs when the student has reached the cognitive stage to declare he or she has finished her academic development and is ready to participate in the adult world. Typically, the graduate has also progressed to full development physically by the end of high school as well. Along with this example, psychologist Jeffrey Arnett (2000) proposed that the ages between 18 and 22 years be considered a different development stage called emerging adulthood. This proposal means the range of what could be considered as Marcia's late adolescence in current American society would be the age of 15 to approximately 18 years. With this evidence and observations, the end of adolescence would be what is typically considered a senior in high school and mark the edge of when a BLAST participant could participate in this study.

Adolescent Identity Development

The scope of potential literature for this study is vast as adolescent identity development is a large topic. In this review, research and literature about adolescent identity is discussed. One of the most poignant details of the literature found on this topic was that almost all studies found on this topic were quantitative in nature. The strength of generalizable data to examine Marcia's statuses seemed to be a prevalent choice in methodology. Lack of studying statuses in-depth using alternative measures is one of the reasons that I chose a qualitative approach for the study.

Adolescent Identity Progression

Marcia's research has been put under scrutiny since its publication over fifty years ago. The consensus is, though, that the order of Marcia's identity statuses is relatively constant (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999). Most of the older studies of the 1980s and prior have used Marcia's claims in one manner or another (Berzonsky & Adams). So, it could be said that until the advent of the newest millennium, Marcia's ideas about adolescence identity development were held to be some level of standard for identity research. However, while several researchers found that progressive change in adolescent identity development was more prevalent than regression, there were researchers who showed the development was more complex than Marcia explained since the original study (Klimstra et al., 2010). This thought was reiterated in studies where Marcia's ideas on the identity statuses were challenged for being too rigid. Since 2000, adolescents have adapted to modern technologies and new social paradigms. While these studies have shown for the most part how Marcia is still appropriate for adolescents in current society, there are some adaptations which others would suggest to his model for the study's participants.

Environment could certainly play a part in how and when adolescents move from one stage of identity development to another, which some researchers believe is not accounted for in Marcia's research that could be a key idea for this dissertation study. Côté and Schwartz (2002) believed that Marcia did not account for socio-cultural contexts in his original study. Socio-cultural contexts could refer to personal relationships and learned societal norms. Crocetti, Schwartz, Fermani, Klimstra, and Meeus (2012) conducted a large-scale quantitative study involving over 3000 secondary students from the Netherlands and Italy. They found through a Likert-scale questionnaire where Dutch students had a higher percentage of the Identity Achievement status while the Italian students were higher in the Moratorium stage. In their

conclusion, the researchers proposed that the reason for this difference was in the cultural standards of a more open society found in the Netherlands versus the Italian society where students were expected to live up to their sometime rigid familial standards (Crocetti et al., 2012). In this study, similarly aged adolescents were not consistent with Marcia's status development. The idea would be that with similar age adolescents in question would have comparable similarities in status development, but this study's results showed similarities were not always the case. This notion may be present in the study as certain influences become a factor, namely the personal leadership development opportunity of BLAST, which would support the claims of these researchers that the progression of adolescent identity development potentially has other factors outside the original ones stated in Marcia's original research.

For this study, the research discussed in this section may support the idea that the personal leadership development at BLAST plays a part in the adolescent identity development. First, there is evidence to support that Marcia's status structure is not entirely the same from his original findings due to changes in society. This means as there are changes and development in our society, there are potential changes and developments in the way adolescents develop an identity. As future discussion of literature show, personal leadership development for adolescents is a relatively new idea in schools and communities which could be one of the changes that is being overlooked by Marcia's original findings. These new programs have an impact on the social and cultural realms of adolescents. So therefore, it is possible that participation in a program such as BLAST could play a part in the identity development process for adolescents.

Exploration and Commitment

Under Marcia's ideas about identity development, the two prominent ideas of exploration and commitment have been dissected to examine the parts they play individually in the identity development process. Identity is combined from these two aspects according to Marcia (Olès, 2016). Exploration can be defined as a process which guides the adolescent to beliefs, roles in life, values, and life ambitions (Olès, 2016). This exploration is what exposes the adolescent to the different possibilities in identity. Commitment, on the other hand, occurs when the adolescent chooses which of those possibilities he or she relates to and how those chosen possibilities will enhance his or her developmental domains of self-confidence (Meeus, Van de Schoot, Keijers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010). In their study, Meeus et al. (2010) found extra steps that arose such as a step when the commitments made were re-examined and new possibilities are explored to develop the adolescent's identity more. Even though Meeus et al. would amend Marcia's status progression to include other steps such as in-depth exploration or recommitment where these deeper explorations were made, the fact remained that these two steps would still rely on the concepts of exploration and commitment just as the original four Marcia statuses. By examining these parts of the development process more deeply, researchers have found how exploration and commitment can be influential to the adolescent identity development.

Some researchers have sought to examine the process of commitment and how it appears in the adolescent identity development process as compared to Marcia's original thoughts. Klimstra et al. (2010) used a longitudinal data project to examine what commitment looked like in adolescents. For the data, the researchers used Likert-scale data of over 1,300 adolescents aged from 12 to 17 years. From their data, they found that commitment was relatively stable throughout adolescence with a slightly higher amount of exploration, or reconsideration of prior

commitments, occurring in middle to late adolescence (Klimstra et al., 2010). This conclusion could confirm Marcia's statuses because the amount of exploration did increase as the adolescents became older, which directly correlated to how the increase of exploration occurred in Marcia's statuses from Identity Foreclosure to Moratorium while commitment remains stable through this stage in life. In this study then, the commitment process indeed has a role in the adolescent identity development, and it was like the original research of Marcia.

For exploration specifically, some writers may have explanations that demonstrate how exploration fits into adolescent identity development as a way of making sense of their lived world. Negru-Subtirica, Pop, and Crocetti (2017) pointed out that a personal sense of identity also included gathering and evaluating self-relevant information. This information could reasonably be the result of exploring new dimensions of identity, which would be the personal leadership development of BLAST in this dissertation. Schwartz et al. (2000) cited Berzonsky's and Waterman's ideas of self-expression and constructivist reality-building in addition to exploration when creating a self-identity. Schwartz et al. (2000) also wrote that adolescents build identities relying on goals, beliefs, and values based on the individual's perceived self-potential. A real-world illustration of these concepts would be the adolescent who chooses to change his or her hair color. The new hair color might represent a beauty standard that the adolescent wants to attain or to either accept or reject what other adolescents are doing. The goal might be to look like the other adolescents or to stand out as an original. The choice would be based on the values of the individual adolescent and could have positive or negative consequences. So, as illustrated in this example, these researchers might say that the adolescent would make new choices about their identity as a result of added information in their lived experiences.

For this dissertation study, exploration and commitment may have a significant impact on the BLAST participants. The adolescents arrive to BLAST with certain commitments made in early adolescence, which studies have shown are a stable process through their adolescent development. Through the BLAST experience, these commitments may be re-examined, and an exploration of these ideas, both old and new, may occur. This exploration would be described as the BLAST participants examine the new information and experiences of BLAST and make sense of it in terms of the individual self by accepting or rejecting this new knowledge gained. Through these two steps, exploration and commitment may make a significant part of the identity development of the BLAST participant as they develop their personal leadership skills.

Psychological Well-Being

Several researchers have published findings on connections between Marcia and positive adolescent psychological development. Crocetti et al. (2012) found positive correlations between Identity Achievement and the positive ends of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience. These three aspects were part of the Big-5 Personality Traits. As such, the conclusion showed, like the conclusion of Sandhu, Singh, Tung, and Kundra (2012), that Identity Achievement correlated directly to positive personality aspects. This conclusion meant that as an adolescent developed a full identity, the aspects of the adolescent's personality development might also be positive ones. The connection that these researchers found was that Marcia's statuses also made a difference in the positive psychological well-being of the developing adolescent.

In contrast to the positive psychological connections of Identity Achievement, Identity Diffusion and Foreclosure are related to negative aspects of development. Sandhu et al. (2012) completed a correlation analysis of Indian adolescents aged 17 to 20 years old to evaluate their

psychological well-being as compared to their identity status. Their hypothesis of Identity Diffusion being inversely correlated to well-being was supported by their evaluation. This low well-being included connections to low self-esteem, substance abuse, and delinquency (Sandhu et al., 2012). Norozpour et al. (2015) agreed how Identity Diffusion and Foreclosure were harmful for the overall development of the adolescent. So, while the top status, Identity Achievement, was correlated to positive psychological well-being, the opposite could be said for the lower two, Identity Diffusion and Foreclosure, where negative psychological aspects were connected to the lower levels of the Marcia statuses.

From this discussion, it could be possibly believed that the progression of identity development as a result of the BLAST camp also leads to an increase of positive well-being. For the BLAST participant, this may be evident in their reflections of BLAST when the participant describes how the experience changed him or her. In listening to how the adolescent describes this change, the description could be evidence of an increase in one or more of these attributes of positive well-being.

Relationships

Relationships have been shown to make an effect to the adolescent's identity development. In his description of his research, Marcia (1980) even stated that the Identity Foreclosure status was marked by commitments that may be made "parentally" (p. 161). This acknowledgement of the parents' influence showed how Marcia's theory accounted for the family's influence on the adolescent's identity development. So, while some earlier discussion was used to show how some researchers believed that Marcia overlooked it, not everyone agreed completely stating that Marcia's ideas failed to recognize these socio-contextual influences like family and parents on the identity development (Côté & Schwartz, 2002). These relationships,

regardless of the opinion of how Marcia connected his ideas to these influences, have been shown to make an impact on the adolescent identity development.

Relationships within the family unit were a factor in at least one study of adolescent quality of life. Olès (2016) used cluster analysis with 232 adolescents in middle to late adolescence to measure how the quality of life depends on identity development. Olès (2016) used Marcia's questionnaire and analyzed the findings using ANOVA and MANOVA statistical analysis. From this analysis, the data was sorted using a K algorithm to cluster the data into five groups (Olès, 2016). The statistical means of the overall quality of life was higher for the Identity Achievement than for Identity Diffusion; however, the highest means were found with the adolescents in the Identity Foreclosure and Moratorium statuses. These latter two statuses included higher subjective quality of life in terms of relationships for the adolescent participants (Olès). Even though this rank was clear, the only statistically difference among these means was the difference between Identity Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion. This difference could be the result of factors of subjective quality of life, sense of self, and environment, which also were a part of the study and subsequent analysis. In this research, there was a connection between adolescents' relationships and their identity development.

The relationships created among the participants at BLAST may make a difference in the identity development of the participants. Marcia's (1980) thoughts included how a parent-like relationship made a difference in the adolescent's identity development. At BLAST, each participant has a family group leader who acts like the parent for the group. Like a traditionally defined parent, this person looks after the welfare and safety of the participant and provides guidance through the BLAST camp experience. Even if minutely, it is possible that this relationship could lead to identity development. Similarly, the relationships the BLAST

participants make in their family groups may make a difference on their identity development. One of the camp's values is that each participant of the camp has a positive experience and build positive relationships (Shih, 2018). Those relationships are correlated to what is hopefully a positive quality of life for each BLAST participant, at least in terms of their time at BLAST. This means that there could be a greater chance that these adolescent participants are experiencing events causing their identity to develop through the positive interactions of these relationships. In this study, these relationships may make a substantial impact on what the participants see as being meaningful to their experiences. These relationships may be a significant key to their identity development through BLAST.

Adolescent Leadership Development

Identity development is the phenomenon being examined through the BLAST camp. However, the factors discussed in the previous section may only explain a part of the identity development the adolescents experience at BLAST. For this second portion of literature review, studies about leadership as it pertains to adolescents is presented. These discussions may help explain some more about how the adolescent develops in a holistic view, which may include their identity development. First, a definition of leadership is developed. Then, a dichotomous relationship of leadership processes is obtained through consideration of leadership research. Following this discussion is studies on leadership education followed by a review of studies which focus on leadership programs just for adolescents. Finally, a section reviewing research on adolescent leadership development models is examined.

Leadership Defined

Leadership is a term which can be explained and has been explained with assorted definitions, metaphors, and quotes. In the twenty-first century, research has added to this list

with insight from assorted studies. Hinder et al. (2008) found a similar conclusion when they stated that leadership was indeed complex and difficult to explain. Due to the range of views within research, leadership has been given multiple meanings (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). This complexity is possibly due to the various practices where leadership has been applied.

Leadership can be studied in any arena where teamwork or collaboration is needed, thus research on leadership is not just a social science topic of research. In the social sciences though, leadership can be studied as a practical skill set used to achieve goals (Redmond & Dolan, 2016), or it can be seen potentially as a moral action (Whitehead, 2009). For this dissertation study, each participant potentially describes and/or defines leadership differently, so it is important to accept that leadership has a vast collection of potential definitions depending on the experience had by the participant. They may use different examples, ideas, or metaphors to define what leadership is for them just like how researchers have attempted to define it.

External and Internal Process of Leadership

For this study, the definition of leadership could also include an even split into two different processes which could eventually lead to influences on the adolescent identity development process. The first is the idea that leadership is an external process that is observable behavior, while the internal process would be the unseen aspects of leadership that occur within the individual. Within these two contrasting modes, leadership is indeed complex and difficult to understand. We can see these opposing perspectives of leadership being used within one study as well as throughout other research. Redmond and Dolan (2016) emphasized that leadership was an ability that an individual used to communicate, to solve problems, and to make progress within a team setting. The external process of leadership could then be described as what the leader does to create change for the group or team. In contrast, Redmond and Dolan

(2016) recognized the internal process by including the idea that leadership was also a set of learned skills used to create change. Learning a new skill is certainly understood as an internal process so this internal process is the change which occurs on a personal level within the individual who is the leader. Using this one study as an example, possible to see both the internal and external perspectives of leadership being examined in one study. These two contrasting processes may be influential aspects of the experiences the adolescents have at BLAST that could influence their identity development.

These two opposing processes of leadership appear in other studies as well just like they may appear in the BLAST camp program. For example, college students created portfolios and participated in focus groups in Sorenson, McKim, and Velez's study (2016). The participants were found to develop leadership in both the external process such as communication skills and empathy as well as the internal process such as commitment to self-development and desire to create a legacy (Sorenson et al., 2016). As in Redmond and Dolan's (2016) study, two different leadership processes developed: one that focused on external processes of leadership and one that was internal. In this study along with Redmond and Dolan's research (2016), leadership was viewed as development within the individual and within a group setting. At BLAST, the participants have several experiences where they are asked to work with a group to solve problems or completed a task. These tasks could exemplify the external process of leadership which has been described. The internal process is just as present as the participants are also asked to reflect upon what they learned and what they observed about themselves. This part of the exercise exemplifies the internal process where the participants use this self-reflection aspect to learn new skills or new ideas about him or herself. These two opposing aspects of leadership

development appear in the BLAST curriculum just like they do in these studies in the forms of exercises for communication skills and personal reflections about legacy.

Recent studies have been used to demonstrate an understanding of the external leadership process to show how it has connected to observable skills and behaviors just like it may be observed at BLAST by the participants. Cansoy (2017) found in his experimental research that increasing interpersonal leadership competencies was one of the most integral parts of any effective leadership development. These interpersonal skills relate to how one person communicates to another. Other studies were conducted to measure the increase in these external-type leadership skills such as communication, teamwork skills, and goal setting (Coers, Lorensen, & Anderson, 2009; Fincher & Shalka, 2009; Garrin, 2014). These studies emphasized the external process of leadership as they relied on recognizing the team aspect of leadership. In addition to skills like these, researchers like Priest and Clegorne (2015) found that conversations with peers and mentoring relationships were important for leadership development. These conversations were exercises in the external process of leadership. The leadership competencies developed by these studies' participants could be used by a leader to achieve a goal within a group or team. The BLAST participant has similar opportunities for these same kinds of experiences such as communication, goal setting, and personal relationships. Like these studies, the external process of leadership is present.

There is just as much, if not more, research supporting that leadership is an internal process and how it occurs for the individual could also occur for the BLAST participant. Posner (2009), after researching leadership for more than 30 years, wrote that the development of a leader was certainly an internal process. Researchers who have sought to understand the internal process of leadership have relied on qualitative methods to answer their research questions

(Albert & Vadla, 2009; Archard, 2013; Coers et al., 2009; Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Albert and Vadla (2009) found that using narrative life stories in a college course led to leadership development through self-reflection and identity formation. The researchers found that the narrative approach could lead to the development of a confident leadership voice. This voice came from the deeply personal self-reflection narratives which the participants created. The self-reflection these researchers examined would be a part of the internal leadership process. Fincher and Shalka (2009) also stated that developing oneself as a leader was a work of developing the self. If the self was the part that developed, including the internal beliefs and values, then this type of leadership development would be a part of the internal leadership process. Self-development, which included leadership development, could only occur at the personal, or internal, level. The BLAST participant is asked to use self-reflection through many of the activities of the camp. This emphasizes the internal process of leadership development which leads to the identity development referred to in Albert and Vadla's (2009) study. In terms of the dissertation study, these studies that emphasize the research on the internal process illustrate one way in which it can occur.

These researchers have conducted studies which can be used to understand leadership and leadership development as both an external and internal process that could be factors in identity development process as well. The external process includes those parts of personal leadership development which include interactions with other individuals that one takes in problem solving procedures. The internal process is the result of those exercises and how they affect change in the thoughts, beliefs, and values within the individual. For this dissertation study, both the internal and external processes may be influential factors on the adolescent. Being asked to work with others and reflect on those interactions could also resonate what identity development

researchers described as exploration and re-commitment by pushing the adolescent participant to challenge formerly committed values and beliefs and/or participating in an experience he or she had not had the opportunity to try yet. So, the external and internal process of leadership development could lead to adolescent identity development while also leading to leadership development, which may be found in this proposed dissertation study.

Leadership Programs

The effectiveness of leadership development programs has been scrutinized in recent years, and the results of these studies have not been particularly generalizable. Many programs have been developed, but few have been validated empirically (Hindes et al., 2008). The reason behind this lack of validation could be tied to difficulties in how researchers determine what was a sign of leadership and what was not in terms of an individual. Hindes et al. (2008) found that effective leadership programs resulted in increases in self-esteem and self-awareness. The problem with these results was how could one measure these self-developments empirically and reliably. Along with this difficulty in quantifying such personal leadership developments, each program has its own goals and objectives for its participants (Posner, 2009). As no two leadership programs are alike, determining what effective programs look like is hard. Only with reliable analysis of multiple perspectives can concluding on what an effective program might look like be possible. At BLAST, the curriculum follows an established curriculum emphasizing personal leadership development. For this dissertation study, one of the reasons for the choice in qualitative measures is to contribute to this lack of knowledge of how personal leadership development may emerge. As prior studies have shown that leadership development does occur, but not in a system which is empirically sound due to the vast forms and goals of the programs, understandable that their conclusions are hard to generalize.

Even with the limitations of finding generalizable conclusions, researchers have discussed and found aspects which are included in effective leadership development programs, courses, and camps like the BLAST camp, and this study may add to it. Coers et al. (2009) found in their case study that leadership could be learned in the classroom and out of the classroom. Leadership development did not have to be in a traditional classroom, nor did it only have to be sequestered to extra-curricular activities outside of the classroom. However, researchers have found in recent years that there were certain elements, when used properly, that increased the effectiveness of the leadership development for the individual participant (Cansoy, 2017). This development can occur regardless of the setting of the curriculum. Cansoy (2017) stated that leadership education programs should focus on leadership knowledge, behavior, and action. He listed the factors of effective leadership development programs which should be implemented to make these kinds of impacts on the participants. These factors included understanding the target audience, developing the leadership program's philosophy, and ensuring the appropriate level of intensity of the program components. Arguably, all leadership development program architects aim to, on some level, increase leadership behaviors and action in the program participants so that there can be observable benefits of the program. Leadership knowledge, then, includes knowledge of what leaders and leadership looks like. Self-knowledge is also important to this leader knowledge. Self-knowledge related back to that self-esteem and self-awareness which Hindes et al. (2008) believed was important to leadership development programs. This knowledge is the key component of leadership development that might also include or be linked to identity development in the adolescents who attend BLAST. In the dissertation study, data could be used to show what kinds of effective leadership development experiences the participants shared during the data collection process. This proposed research

conducted at the BLAST camp can add to the current body of literature where researchers have detailed the aspects of leadership development programs.

As recently as a decade ago, there was a belief that the external process of leadership development should be emphasized. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) believed that the leadership development programs did not yet understand the personal experience of leadership development. Posner (2009) agreed that leadership development in a classroom emphasized the external process over the internal one. The programs discussed were programs where participants did not emphasize the idea that leadership needed to be developed for the self before it could be developed for a team or a goal. In the same year, Coers et al. (2009) wrote that learning outside of the classroom could have profound results on team leadership. This type of leadership behavior emphasized aspects of the external process such as communication and compromise. At the BLAST camp, the external process of leadership is certainly a key aspect of the program components which is reasonable seeing the history of influence on these program components from writing and research such as these discussed. These components reflect the emphasis on the external process highlighted in these publications from the previous decade.

In more recent years, there has been a shift from the external to the internal development of leadership through these programs. Researchers of leadership development programs have recognized the need for including the internal process (Priest & Middleton, 2016). Self-development can inform how an individual develops as a leader (Priest & Middleton). This change in perspective has allowed for more space in leadership development programs to include focus on the development of the internal process of leadership in program participants. Cansoy (2017) concluded in his study that both personal and interpersonal leadership competencies must be included in effective leadership development. These competencies are connected to the

internal and external processes of leadership development. For BLAST, while the program components can be easily viewed through a series of leadership development exercises that emphasize the external process of leadership development, there is also a clear line of curriculum components which emphasize the internal process as well. This study could be a tool towards exposing the shift between these two processes and their development in the participants. Like in these recent studies, the shift from the development of external to internal processes of leadership development could be apparent in the BLAST camp and other programs.

Considering these shifts in perspective on what should be included in a leadership development program, research can be used to determine that BLAST is an effective leadership development program. As seen through the previously discussed research in this section, any effective program must understand how to get the target audience to use and internalize the curriculum's concepts presented in a leadership program. In addition, the philosophy of the program must be held firmly throughout the program just as in any educational setting. Aspects of the program philosophy should include its values and ethics, priority on experiential learning and self-reflection, and access to mentors to be an effective program (Hindes et al., 2008). Last, the intensity of the program refers to how the participant is made to experience the philosophy of the program. If the philosophy contains all these pieces, then the program has the vision to becoming an effective leadership development program. One factor also mentioned by Cansoy (2017) was access to a mentor within the program. Priest and Clegorne (2015) stated that high-impact programs included sociocultural conversations with peers and mentoring relationships. These sociocultural conversations require putting the program participants in positions where they have conversations with other participants about their differences and similarities with others or challenges that they face in society. Together with the other factors, the philosophy can

aid in effective leadership development. The determination of whether BLAST can be considered an effective leadership development program is vital to the reliability of this study. Because these components of effective leadership development are found within the BLAST curriculum, one could assume that the BLAST camp is also an effective leadership development program.

In this section, the discussion of research has shown what effective leadership development programs look like and that BLAST could be an effective leadership development program. Even though some researchers have concluded that defining effective leadership development is a challenging task to do, there have been some studies where researchers have found common factors which are included in what they described as effective components of leadership development. Namely, a shift from the external process of leadership to the internal process of leadership has been a noted shift. Within this shift, other components that have been noted are the program's philosophy and access to mentoring relationships, both of which are key aspects of BLAST. This conclusion is helpful in the successful completion and analysis of the data of this study. In the end, the fact is clear of what constitutes an effective leadership program and BLAST may be one such program.

Adolescent Leadership Programs

Leadership development has been seen in several programs like those discussed in the previous section, but the more precise topic of adolescent leadership development still has areas for growth and development. In terms of empirical research, adolescent leadership development is in its own adolescence (Chan, 2000). Part of the issue could be in the formation of these programs. Adult leadership programs have been adapted for developing leadership in adolescents (Archard, 2013). Adult leadership programs are designed for the target audience,

which means adapting it for a younger audience may cause some loss of its philosophy or impact on the adolescent participants. On the other hand, a program could be too sophomoric for adolescents who are ready for an adult-like leadership development program, but they only receive a low-end development program. In any case, a better understanding of what is best for adolescents for their leadership development could result in an overall better understanding of what is best for all leadership development programs. The BLAST camp program was designed specifically for adolescents, which is why the parts of the program and curriculum are designed with them in mind. The topic of adolescent leadership development is expanded upon with this proposed research.

Some research has been conducted to illuminate what should be included in a successful adolescent leadership program. Almost two decades ago, Fertman and Van Linden (1999) identified three aspects needed for a youth leadership development program: leadership awareness, interaction, and mastery. Awareness refers to the knowledge of what and who is a leader. Interaction includes all the activities and experiences those youth have during the program to teach the practices of leaders. Mastery is the internalization of the lessons learned from those experiences. More currently, Rehm (2014) included the essence of these three notions in his proposed adolescent leadership development model. This model would, in addition to the best practices to enhance leadership awareness and mastery, include development into self-efficacy and identity. While using the history of great leaders and leadership skills to develop efficacy and identity, this model suggests a deeper exploration into these topics needs to be completed to have a through and deeply personal connection to the adolescent's identity and ability to achieve goals. Rehm (2014) also agreed with Hindes et al. (2008) that having mentoring relationships could help the adolescent develop as a leader. This relationship is

impactful as the mentor acts as a guide for the adolescent to explore the aspects of this leadership model. These aspects of what researchers have indicated as successful aspects of an adolescent leadership development program are all found within the BLAST camp curriculum. For this study, these aspects may be found to have a significant influence on the participants and their development based on what these researchers have found to be successful adolescent leadership programs.

In this section, adolescent leadership development programs and their needs have been discussed. Unfortunately, adolescent leadership development programs have commonly been created by some curriculum designers as a watered-down version of an adult leadership development program which may not always be effective. Second, in light of commonly supported theories about the overall development of adolescents, those who develop these types of programs must rely on what is needed and effective for adolescents to receive the best leadership development program that they can have. The three major parts to adolescent leadership development are awareness, interaction, and mastery according to Fertmann and Van Linden (1999). These three parts are involved in the planning of the leadership development curriculum of BLAST. Also, there is again an emphasis placed on including mentoring relationships when examining adolescent leadership development specifically. These are the needs of an effective adolescent leadership development program.

Adolescent Leadership Development Models

In recent years, there have been developments into how an adolescent leadership development model should include skills development. Redmond and Dolan (2016) discussed an adolescent leadership model where they combined multiple proposed models and theories into what they believed to be a comprehensive model for adolescent leadership development. Within

this model, skills development, environmental conditions, and action all needed to be involved in developing an adolescent leadership program (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Skills development should include activities and lessons to develop social and emotional intelligence such as confidence and self-awareness, collaborative skills such as teamwork and conflict resolution, articulation skills such as public speaking, and insight into leadership topics and skills such as ethics and critical thinking. BLAST includes some of these skills' development however, some are more overt than others such as communication skills. Some skills development, like public speaking, are intertwined within the BLAST curriculum even though not overtly developed. More so, developing social and emotional intelligence is a skill related to the internal process of leadership. In reflecting upon previous discussions about leadership development programs then, determining the success of these internal developments is hard. However, still fair to say that these skill developments have been shown to be effective parts of a model towards adolescent leadership development.

While Redmond and Dolan's (2016) model offered a comprehensive developmental model for adolescent leadership development, there is little empirical evidence given that could be used to evaluate BLAST. Seemiller (2018) decided to use a meta-analysis of different frameworks across four domains to develop an adolescent leadership development model in response to the lack of one based on empirical research. Relying on developed professional frameworks, research-based studies, and national youth leadership organization curricula, Seemiller completed an analysis to find which of her previously studied Student Leadership Competencies were listed or found among the other types of frameworks and programs she analyzed. Of her original 60 identified Student Leadership Competencies, she discovered that a large majority of them were used in some form or fashion throughout the different framework

categories she used in the analysis. From this, she created an adolescent leadership development model which had twenty competencies spread across four categories for a youth leadership competency development: interpersonal, intrapersonal, societal, and strategic skills. With this competency model, Seemiller (2018) stated that the four most common factors among known effective and/or research-based frameworks and models included learning about the self as an individual leader, learning about relationships with others, learning to think on a societal or global level, and learning how to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Within the curriculum design of the BLAST camp, it is possible to see these aspects which Seemiller highlighted. So, in addition to being in line with Redmond and Dolan's ideas, the BLAST camp also has the support of Seemiller's research in showing that what is necessary for an effective model of adolescent leadership development.

When the three models from Rehm's, Redmond and Dolan's, and Seemiller's were compared, each part of one model could either be directly found in the other models or at least echoed through other parts of the model. The only real clear difference among the models was the emphasis on environmental conditions which Redmond and Dolan (2016) described. These conditions meant that the adolescent should be encouraged to seek opportunities to practice being a leader in authentic situations (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Redmond and Dolan and Rehm (2014) all agreed an impact on leadership development was made through relationships with a mentor not explicitly stated in the third model. However, Seemiller (2018) did mention that using "other perspectives" (p. 67) was part of the strategic portion of the leadership competency model she developed. These other perspectives she mentioned could be a mentor to the individual in the program. Even though these three models have their differences, the idea of having another other perspective such as a mentor or peer are a shared aspect of all three models.

Within the BLAST curriculum, the family group time is a significant portion of the camp, and those relationships the participants create could be the reflection of the models to which these researchers are referring. While all the models do have some unique aspects that may be seen in the BLAST curriculum and program design, they all echo each other in these influential areas.

Aside from the Generation Leadership curriculum, the remaining portions of the BLAST curriculum can be dynamic based on unforeseen events such as unpredictable weather in terms of outdoors events. Regardless of changes to the schedule, the philosophy of the program is always honored. This philosophy is one that repeats many parts of these adolescent leadership development models discussed. The first model shows how adolescents need opportunities to learn, to interact, and to master new leadership skills (Rehm, 2014). The skills development relating to the internal and external processes of leadership are involved in the second model (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Another model categorized 60 competencies into four different categories, many of which are apparent in the BLAST program (Seemiller, 2018). BLAST is a program which tries to include parts of these models not always in implicit practice but in philosophy.

Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical framework has been presented to show a review of how adolescent identity development occur. In the literature review, two major aspects have been discussed through examination of research. First discussed was how Marcia's (1964) status paradigm had been currently viewed and put through scrutiny. Specifically, the concepts of exploration and commitment have been examined to see their influences on adolescent identity development. Also, connections between Marcia's ideas and other psychological notions were brought to light to see how one was related to the other. From there, adolescent leadership

development was discussed to showcase the research that had been conducted to understand the process of leadership. This portion also contained discussion of how leadership education currently was understood and what kinds of programs existed specifically for adolescents. Last, a review of current models for adolescent leadership development were reviewed.

This chapter has potential high significance to achieving the goals of this study. It has included the discussion of research in two different fields: identity development and leadership development of adolescents. For the identity development, the discussion has shown how the Marcia's (1964) statuses have been connected to various influences and effects on the adolescent's psychosocial development. The leadership development discussion has shown what aspects of effective adolescent leadership development are present at BLAST and how this program potentially aids in influencing the adolescent participants' development. These two topics are separate, but in terms of this proposed dissertation study, they are potentially be intertwined. The aspects of the effective adolescent leadership development programs and the processes of leadership potentially have distinct connections to the process of identity development which Marcia described. In this study, looking at these connections may provide key insights into accomplishing the goals of this study.

In the next chapter, the study's methods are discussed. In addition to discussing the sampling procedures and data collection, the study procedures and rationale are presented. One of the most significant aspects of the chapter is the discussion of the decision of the specific collective case methodology and why it is an effective methodology. Following them is also a description of the analysis procedures to be used. The end of the chapter is a discussion of the steps to decrease reactivity and increase validity of the study.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, procedural methods to the study are addressed. The chapter begins with a review of the research questions presented in Chapter I with a more in-depth justification. Following that segment, a pilot interview with a past BLAST participant is discussed for its influence into the methodology of this study. Next, the research design and setting are discussed which include the rationale of the chosen approach and the role of the researcher followed by the sampling procedures and the data collection process. Because of the chosen approach, a presentation of the issues at hand of the collective case study are introduced with clarifications prior to the sampling and data collection procedures. The methods of analysis of the collected data are explained before a discussion of the threats to validity and reliability are discussed and what steps will be taken to increase these areas in this study.

Research Questions

This study specifically explored the leadership development experiences of adolescents at a leadership development camp in Georgia. The research questions developed for this study are:

1. How do adolescent participants describe their personal leadership development experiences at BLAST?
2. How do participants perceive the BLAST experience impacted their identity development?

In this study, I proposed a collective case study approach to answer these research questions and achieve the goals of this study. The research questions relied on the word *how* because it left space for variations in the data collected (Alvarez-Hevia, 2009). This variance could have possibly occurred within the chosen data collection procedures. Therefore, it was

helpful to have this type of descriptive questions as the preliminary research questions. Maxwell (2013) wrote that research questions for qualitative research may not be fully developed until significant research had been conducted. Thus, these questions were re-evaluated later to affirm their appropriateness. These research questions were significant enough as they covered the purpose of the study as well as thoroughly answered the overall question of how this camp changed the lives of its participants.

Interview with a BLAST Participant Pilot Study

The BLAST camp organizers and directors sought to awaken the inner leadership of the adolescent participants as stated on the camp website (Shih, 2018). By examining the experiences of BLAST, I researched the personal leadership development uniquely and tried to find processes that led to that identity development. The current iteration of the BLAST camp had been overseen by the same BLAST director for the last five years (Shih, 2018). I interviewed one of the participants who attended the camp the second year of its re-opening. The purpose of this interview was meant to be exploratory and practice my interviewing skills from the initial course on qualitative research.

The process of this interview helped me shape some of the components of this study. After the participant spoke about how he changed, I developed an interest into learning more about adolescent identity development. This spark led to the research that became the theoretical framework for this study. The question of what the meaning of his life-changing experience was made me wonder what about how this experience specifically changed his life. From this question, I found research connected to James Marcia's (1964) ideas and found connections that may be associated with adolescent leadership development. Second, knowing this was only one perspective of many. It made me think that a qualitative study would be best to gain the emic

perspective, or the perspective of individuals who participated in the study (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker, 2014) to learn more about their personal leadership development. Last, I learned how the interview process could be enlightening and how to conduct an effective interview. These last two components helped me decide on the methodology most suitable for the study.

Research Design and Setting

In this portion, the rationale for the case study design is discussed and which of the three noted approaches are followed and why. It also includes a more thorough description of the study site and setting including a more detailed description of the BLAST camp and its components.

Research Design

This research design discussion is broken into smaller sections to better explain and give rationale of the choices to the research approach and why it helps satisfy the goals and research questions of this study. The approach and its rationale are explained to help justify the choices for this research design.

Case study approach. This study required a thorough investigation of the personal experiences of the adolescent experience at the BLAST camp. To accomplish this goal, I believe that a case study approach was the most suitable. Because the main purpose of this study stated in Chapter I was to understand how adolescents experience leadership and identity development, a descriptive account of these processes best served that purpose. A case study approach was useful for its ability to accomplish descriptive goals and how the investigator could examine the case in depth (Blatter, 2008). Like this perspective, Coers et al. (2009) believed the purpose of the case study approach was to gain a better understanding of the issue or experience being

studied. With a case study approach, I was able to describe the experiences which these adolescents had while at BLAST to better understand the issues of adolescent leadership and identity development.

Robert Stake (1995) reiterated the phrase, “bounded system” (p. 8), to explain how a case was defined. This term means that the experiences or phenomenon being examined have a clear setting such as date, time, place, and process (Baxter & Jack, 2008). These cases must also be integrated as one system where each piece of the case has a part to the whole (Alvarez-Hevia, 2009). So, a researcher could complete a case study when the goals are meant to be descriptive, the case has a bounded system where the observable events occur, and the parts of the case all work together towards the completion of that event. With this study, those are what the research questions and study needed to be thoroughly answered. Because of this need, the goals of a case study are meant to be more exploratory over confirmatory (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Stake (1995) wrote that this exploration of the case could lead to forms of generalizations that could be modified as more understanding of the case was found. In order to find more understanding that could lead to something resembling assertions or generalizations, a collective case study method was used.

Collective case study. Case study is an umbrella under which several other methods fall and the one that I have chosen to use for this study is the collective case study. Baxter and Jack (2008) reported on the different methods of case study research where they described the difference between a single-case and collective case study research. The difference between a single-case and collective case study is the number of units of study, otherwise known as cases, which are needed to fulfil the study’s goals (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Under Yin’s (1994) guidelines, possible is to have multiple units of analysis within an embedded single-case study

approach; however, this typically includes a quantitative method included in its research (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Therefore, the idea that a collective case study approach was more appropriate to my goals to be descriptive rather than explanatory.

For this specific study, I followed the guidelines and protocols of Robert Stake's (2006) description of a collective case study discussed in his book, *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. His definition of a multiple case study method and the collective case study are similar and thus, the terms could be seen as interchangeable (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A key aspect of the Stake's (2006) protocols for this method is the need of a *quintain*. Stake (2006) defined this as "the object of phenomenon or condition to be studied--a target, but not a bull's eye" (p. 6). With this definition, he believed that the quintain was essential to the collective case study meaning the cases involved in the study must have something connecting them to the overall phenomenon being put under analysis.

Setting the quintain for the collective case study was one of the most necessary first steps needed to be taken prior to this type of research. This study's quintain set the bounds of the cases and influences the research questions (Alvarez-Hevia, 2009). The bounds were necessary to know how and if the case was connected to the quintain. This connection was the basis for building the multiple cases used to eventually describe the quintain in the final reporting. In short, the findings of case A coupled with the findings of case B led to the reasonable conclusions about the quintain only if the cases included rational connection to the quintain from the beginning. The difference between a case and the quintain were explained by Stake (2006) where he stated that the quintain was "the functions or conditions of which we seek examples to study" (p. 6). The functions or conditions he mentioned would be the overall program or phenomenon the researcher examined while the examples would be the individual cases. The

cases can be vast and diverse, but essential that they all have a connection to the quintain in some form (Stake, 2006). The individual cases are analyzed separately before being analyzed as a collective. This cross analysis informs any potential assertions about the quintain. The choice of the quintain is then certainly one of the most important steps in a collective case study.

The quintain of this study was the adolescent identity development at BLAST. The goal of the individual cases was to provide a portrait of the unique case and use it to build potential generalizations (Merriam, 1998). So, each case involved in the collective case was supposed to be an instance of individual identity development at BLAST. Stake (2006) said that by finding what was similar and different about these cases was how a researcher could understand the quintain. The cases were allowed to be typical incidents of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008), but different cases were chosen for their unique connection to the quintain (Stake, 2006). With Stake's idea in mind, the individual cases were chosen for the collective case study. The target collection of cases chosen for this study each displayed some variance of the phenomenon of adolescent leadership development at BLAST and consequently provided answers to the research questions.

The collective case study approach has numerous reasons why it is appropriate for this study. Stake (2006) wrote that in order to conduct a collective case study, the cases chosen for the study must all have at least one factor in common. In doing so, there is an opportunity to study similarities and differences among the chosen cases and show greater detail of the phenomenon being studied (Ary et al., 2014; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggested that a collective case study had the possibility to address an issue while also adding theory to the literature on the topic. Additionally, with collective case studies, it was possible within the final reporting to find generalizations about the phenomenon which were not

feasible with only a solitary case study approach (Merriam, 1998). For this study, arguments for the use of collective case studies could possibly enhance the examination of leadership and identity development at a greater scale in contrast to only using a singular case study.

Research Setting

The 2019 BLAST camp staff was comprised of the camp director, family leaders, junior family leaders, clinicians, and the assistant to the camp director. The camp director and family leaders were adult-aged who are at least 21 years old. Along with the junior family leaders, they acted as camp counselors, guides, mentors, and facilitators for the camp groups. Over half of the staff as of 2019 had been on the camp staff for at least three years. The clinicians were contracted leaders from an outside company. These clinicians are professional youth speakers who were hired for their expertise in the camp curriculum, Generation Leadership. They worked directly with the participants during the camp in the form of presentations, large group activities, and debriefings of those events. Of the two clinicians, the lead clinician worked with BLAST for multiple years, and the other clinician worked with BLAST for at least two years. This curriculum was embedded in the BLAST curriculum as a whole to include a variety of leadership and teamwork activities and experiences.

Procedures

This section includes an overview of how the study is conducted. The methods chosen for sampling, data collection procedures, and data analysis protocols are based on recommendations from experts in qualitative research such as Stake (1995, 2006), Alvarez-Hevia (2009), and Brinkmann and Kvale (2014). After the discussion of data collection procedures and associated analysis protocols, I conclude describing how to manage threats relating to subjectivity, validity, and reliability.

Sampling Procedures of Participants

Case study research does not carry with it a specific number of participants that should be used in a case study approach. Stake (1995, 2006) advised to choose cases that maximized the learning about the case which, in this collective case study, meant to maximize what could be learned about the quintain. Maximizing what can be learned about each case will consequently help answer the research questions and accomplish the purpose of the study. When discussing sampling for a collective case study, Stake (2006) recommended no less than four cases and no more than 15 cases. These were the boundaries of the sampling procedures when finding the appropriate number of individual cases in the collection.

To find participants for each individual case, I used a variation of purposeful sampling to best suit the goals of this collective case study. Patton (2002) described purposeful sampling as a method that chooses members of a sample very strategically and with purpose. One of the goals of a collective case study is to explore the similarities and differences between cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, the purpose for selecting a member of the sample should reinforce the similarities and differences among the cases. To achieve this type of sampling, maximum variation sampling was appropriate because it is used to find similar themes across different cases (Patton, 2002). This type of purposeful sampling best suited the goals and purposes of the study as this type of sampling is used for “capturing and describing central themes which cut across a great deal of variation,” (Patton, 2002, p. 235). This definition of maximum variation sampling is like Stake’s (2006) description of a collective case as “...a study of cases for what they tell us about the quintain” (p. 7). In Stake’s description, the different cases would be analyzed to find the common, or central, themes that cut across the situational variation of each

case. These themes were then used to describe the quintain. This means that Patton's (2002) maximum variation and Stake's (2006) collective case study approach fit together well.

The criterion of the maximum variation sampling was identified because to conduct maximum variation sampling, the characteristics for diversity needed to be identified (Patton, 2002). Age was not a major factor as only middle and high school students were allowed to attend the camp, and the age of all participants fell in the range of adolescence defined by Arnett (2000). However, reflecting upon the literature reviewed in the previous chapters, multiple studies of adolescent identity development (Crocetti et al., 2012; Klimstra et al., 2010; Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017) focused on adolescents categorized into middle to late adolescence. In these studies, the range of this portion of adolescence was 15 to 20 years of age with a mean age of approximately 16 years. To potentially replicate the findings of these studies in terms of adolescent identity and leadership development, the range of the sample were between 15 and 20 years of age for this study. By doing so, the study was able to add to the base of knowledge for this area of research.

The key characteristic was the BLAST family group. The ultimate goal was for each case to be a member of a different BLAST family. This choice was to understand the uniqueness of each case which Stake (2006) stated as an important aspect of the collective case study. This factor was the most important aspect when choosing the sample from the population. The portion of the camp program that spent with the BLAST family group was substantial and the experiences held in this family could be unique as well as influential in the identity development of the participant. As Patton stated (2002), he used maximum variation in one study to ensure each member of the sample was "as different as possible from others," (p. 235). Choosing a

member from each BLAST family group was the biggest factor in ensuring that each sample selection was different as possible.

Due to the sociocultural context of Marcia's (1966) study discussed in the Theoretical Framework, there were other factors included in the sample. First, representation of both genders provided perspective that did not exist in Marcia's (1964) original study. In studies of the identity status development both genders have been represented, which means this study should do the same. Next, as Marcia's study was conducted in a period when minority students were not well represented historically in higher education, race was also a deciding factor in the sampling procedures. In this study, Marcia discussed the limitations of the study due to what he called "the problem of the inter-subject communication," (p. 61) where he feared that with a small population to sample from, there would be an issue of participants being informed of the study's procedures and methods prior to their participation. One way to avoid this was to use the participants' school as a factor for the sample. If each participant were a student at a different school, there was less of a chance that the participants speak about the study and consequently cause issues with the study's validity. Last, the type of home family life the participant was also a factor. In Marcia's (1964) original interview guides, there was a clear assumption that each participant in his study then had more than one parent. For this study, the type of home family life (i.e., who did the participant live with) was also a factor however, it was not a large one. The factor of family home life was also echoed in studies such as Crocetti et al. (2012) where the relationship of the adolescent and his/her family could make a difference on his/her identity development. These four factors of gender, race, school, and home family life provided, in addition to the BLAST family group, provided a varied sample where each member was different as possible.

Timing was certainly a debatable decision for this study. While originally planned to use the current year BLAST camp as the population for the study, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the BLAST camp director and GASC to hold BLAST virtually that year and forego the usual face-to-face experience. As such, the population for this study was the 2019 BLAST camp participants. Because memory attrition was certainly a concern in terms of collecting data, using photos from the 2019 camp helped combat the participants' memory attrition. The potential benefit though was a more meaningful reflection from the participant about the leadership development experiences that did appear in the data collection.

When soliciting participants, I followed the procedure outlined below:

1. An invitation to participate in the study was sent to all participants of the 2019 BLAST camp and their parents/legal guardians (see Appendix A). The BLAST camp director sent the email on my behalf. This email was followed by two other emails: one two weeks after the initial email and another four weeks after the initial email. This process ensured that all potential participants had an opportunity to see the invitation. In this invitation, the purpose and procedure of the study was explained. This email also contained the Participant Application (see Appendix A) that was used to choose participants.
2. Five weeks after the initial email invitation, I assessed how many potential participants I had for the study. I hoped to have at least ten responses to have more potential for variation in the sample. Because I did not have at least ten responses, I asked the BLAST director to send an email again in the fifth week asking for more potential participants. Based on the criteria outlined in the discussion of maximum variation, I chose which of the respondents would be the most appropriate for the study by choosing ones that

offered the most variation in the sample and whose responses to items #11-13 on the Participant Application of the invitation email (see Appendix B) had the highest potential of rich data. There was the possibility that any apparent patterns found across the cases would be of value to the overall case study through the principle of maximum variation (Patton, 2002). The respondents were listed categorized by their family group and gender first. Then, the respondents were sorted within each family by race and family life situation. From this point, the respondents were compared until a group of participants were found that allowed for the maximum variation as much as possible. While the goal was to try to have an even distribution of the variables discussed for sampling, this reality was not achieved. The priority to family group affiliation and school name were given the priority which led to the initial group of potential participants.

3. The chosen potential participants were contacted. If the parent/legal guardian agreed to allow the potential participant to be a part of the study and the participant was willing, the parent/legal guardian and the participant was asked to complete the Parent/Guardian Permission for Child's/Ward's Participation in Research form that had been modified from the Internal Review Board of Valdosta State University's templates (See Appendix B). This step unfortunately led to the dismissal of some potential participants due to lack of communication and response to queries about the status of these forms. This drop resulted in four participants prepared to begin, so they became the study participants.
4. The initial interview was scheduled upon receipt of the forms indicated in the previous step. This interview occurred approximately a month after the participant's confirmation to participate. The location was agreed upon where the participant was comfortable, and the background noise minimal (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). In light of the COVID-19

Pandemic, all the interviews took place via a Zoom© Video Communication conference.

The meetings were recorded and then transcribed using Temi© online transcription.

5. The second interview was scheduled between two and three weeks after the first based on recommendations of Seidman's (2013) ideas about effective interview data collection.

This timeframe allowed for transcription and preliminary analysis that was helpful for the second interview. Each of the confirmed participants completed all interviews and data collection protocols. In the event that the participant was not available for the second interview within that time frame, accommodations were made to fit the schedule of the participant.

For each participant, the BLAST family group leader was also a crucial part of the data collection process for each case. As a part of the data collection process, an interview with each family group leader was used to provide more data to the experiences shared by the individual participants in each case. With such a specific sample needed for this part of the data collection, each family leader was asked to participate, and all staff members agreed to be a part of the study as needed.

Data Collection

For each individual case of the collective case study, there were two forms of data collected. The more types of data used in a case study, the more credible the generalizations can be in the final report (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The goal was to reach data saturation where there was no new information learned about the experiences. The two forms of data used in this case study were interviews and documents. While Stake (1995) recommended observations as well for his protocols, interviews with the BLAST family facilitators were used as they had a more in-depth opportunity to observe the case study participants in lieu of researcher observations.

Interviews. Interviewing was the most effective and therefore, most important method of collecting data about each individual case. Stake (2006) recommended that interviews were the best way to find out about details of the case where the researcher could not be present. Because physically observing all aspects of each case was not possible, the purpose of the interview was to gain a narrative response in the form of a life story of the BLAST experience for each case. This narrative provided insight into each case and was used later for creating generalizations about the quintain (Coers et al., 2009).

Interviews are a strong form of data collection as long conducted in an appropriate manner. Brinkmann and Kvale's (2014) interview protocol for a semi-structured life-world interview was an effective method for the data collection needed for this study because this method provided the narrative of their experiences of BLAST. This type of interview was used to obtain details about the participants' life world and understanding this world through the participants' own words (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). During the study, the identity of each interview participant was kept private. The names of each case in subsequent chapters is a chosen pseudonym by the participant. I used this interview to gain the type of data to answer the research questions. For the quintain of the collective case study, this world was the identity development at the BLAST camp.

The interviews each followed the same procedure. Each case participant was interviewed twice for up to 90 minutes. These two interviews were suggested for the life-world interview process by Atkinson (2002). In a more intense life world interview, the participant would have been interviewed longer extending over multiple days if needed. However, as the specific life world under examination was only a three-day period, two interviews of 90 minutes was more than sufficient for gaining a perspective on the participant's experiences at the three-day

experience of BLAST. This observation was confirmed by the fact that ample rich data was collected without having to use the full 90-minute suggestion for some of the interviews. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) stated that preparing an interview guide for both interviews was important because it provides scope and focus to the study. Atkinson (1998) suggested that the questions for the life story interview should be in chronological order of the events of the interviewee's life categorized by theme. For the interviews of this study, that protocol meant tracing the events of the BLAST camp and discussing each part of the curriculum for its connection to the main ideas of this study. The questions included in the guide were created based on suggestions from Brinkmann and Kvale's (2014) and Atkinson's (1998, 2002) suggestions for this type of interview. The questions in these guides were written to evoke deep and descriptive answers from the participants emphasizing *how* and *why* questions (Atkinson, 1998), which resulted in the type of data needed for this type of study the end goal of a life story interview. The interview guides for the individual case participant are provided in the appendix (see Appendix C and D).

As the boundaries of the collective case study were the BLAST camp, the first interview guide was sequenced in a chronological order tracing the events of the camp. This interview provided the description of the participants' experiences at BLAST. Photos taken at BLAST were also used as a probing tool to evoke more commentary from the participant (Stake, 2006). At the conclusion of the interview, Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) suggested that the interviewer review with the interviewee to review what was learned to make sure all statements were clear and fill in any enriching details if needed. The data collected from this interview was used to answer the first research question. Then, after the conclusion of the interview, I wrote a personal reflection about the interview as suggested by Brinkmann and Kvale (2014). Preliminary

annotations were also made on the first copy of the completed transcript. This reflection allowed an opportunity to record initial thoughts about the interview and what was learned. This reflection was helpful in preparing the interview guide for the second interview.

While the first interview was more narrative to trace the experiences of the BLAST participant, the second interview was more about meaning making that Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) mentioned was one of the purposes of an interview. First, the previous interview was reviewed with the participant to discuss what had been learned (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). This review provided an opportunity for the participant to comment, elaborate, or share on what was discussed during the initial interview. During this second interview, I asked the participant again to discuss the events of BLAST, but in terms of what meaning he or she made from that event in terms of identity development. The second interview added to the breadth of the data collected from the first interview and used to answer the second research question. Together, these two interviews resulted in a thorough life story narrative telling of the experiences of BLAST and their meaning for the participant's identity development. The participant was also asked to describe any "documents of life" (Stanley, 2013, p. 4) that he or she made during the experience and describe their meaning. These pictures, notes, social media posts, and other documents of life they made during the BLAST experience increased the understanding of the participants' understanding of their leadership and identity development.

To further add to the narrative and breadth of the data collected for this narrative, other actors, meaning people connected to each individual case (Stake, 1995), were interviewed. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggested using multiple sources for collecting data. Each BLAST participant was assigned a leader to serve as the BLAST family leader for each group of participants. These adults had an intimate view of the individual case at BLAST that provided a

great deal of insight into the experiences mentioned during the interviews for each case. Their interviews added to the narrative and breadth of the collected data as suggested by Stake (1995). I interviewed this family leader to gain another perspective about the participants' experiences at BLAST. The interview lasted up to 90 minutes much like the life-world interview (Atkinson, 2002) and followed a semi-structured format (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). It followed the same chronological aspect of the first interview of the study participant. It was recorded for later transcription. A similar interview guide from the first interview for the participant was used because it reflected the same boundaries for the collective case study as suggested by Stake (1995). The difference between the interview guide of the study participant and the interview of the family group leader was that the participant's questions and follow-up questions for each event and theme of BLAST was more in-depth for the participant. The group leader could not be expected to know how the participant experienced internally the event, so his/her responses were descriptive in nature. The family group leader was, however, able to give a perspective on what he or she believed how the participant developed and changed during BLAST. An interview guide can be found in Appendix E. When needed, the photos from BLAST were used as a method to stimulate responses (Keegan, 2008). After this interview, the narrative of the individual case's experiences only became fuller and richer with the addition of the data gained from these secondary actors.

Documents. Documents are an excellent way to find unseen data for the case. Stake (2006) said that details hidden from the researcher could be found in documents and interviews. There were several potential types of artifacts and media that could be collected for each case. Not every document was useful, and its potential to aiding the case had to be evaluated in advance (Stake, 1995). At BLAST, the participants were given a notebook upon arrival. Part of

the agreement to be in the study included asking for this notebook and/or social media posts from BLAST. There were certain self-reflective writing exercises that the participants were asked to complete in these notebooks. These personal writings were used to further the study especially as I was able to emphasize the emic perspective necessary to case study research (Alvarez-Hevia, 2009). Their personal thoughts and ideas were recorded in these journals. The same belief could be said about social media posts. These notebooks and posts were analyzed for their potential of describing the participant's leadership development experiences at BLAST. These journals and social media posts provided some insight into the leadership development experience of the adolescent participants.

Methods of Analysis

In this section, the methods of analysis are discussed. The analysis procedure for the two data types, interview transcripts and documents, is discussed first. These analysis methods were used to complete the case report for each case. Then, a procedure for how the cross-case analysis is presented. These methods resulted in the assertions needed to answer the research questions fully and accomplish a thorough description of the quintain of the collective case study.

First cycle analysis. The interview transcripts were the most prominent data source and had the most intricate analysis. For the three interviews of each case, the two for the participant and the one for BLAST family group leader, there were two cycles of coding for the transcripts based on Saldaña's (2016) suggestions for coding. During the initial coding cycle, two coding procedures were used to conduct the analysis of the interviews. BLAST was a specific environment where the participants and staff have a jargon specific to BLAST. With that in mind, along with the fact that the participants were adolescent-aged, *In Vivo* coding was effective

in analyzing the experiences of the camp using the words of the participants themselves (Saldaña, 2016). This coding process, which was used throughout the first cycle coding process, was conducted by annotating the codes on to the transcript itself. There were multiple transcripts as multiple readings took place until no new codes were discovered. This initial coding procedure produced codes used to inform the individual case report. Next, the data was analyzed using values coding. Through this process, the values, attitudes, and beliefs held by the participants were analyzed and coded. This analysis was helpful in informing the case report and potentially forming assertions about the quintain as values coding is helpful in research involving concepts of identity. Using multiple transcripts again, the transcripts were reviewed to find areas that fit into any of the three areas of values, attitudes, and beliefs (Saldaña, 2016). In a study where specific jargon for the group existed and where identity was being developed, these two coding strategies were helpful.

The documents were analyzed using process coding. This type of coding was helpful because the researcher can describe the rituals and routines found within the data (Saldaña, 2016). For process coding, Saldaña (2016) indicated that these codes would be written in gerund form, thus emphasizing the physical actions of the document and potentially the conceptual ones. Documents were coded for their processes to find what themes emerged from them and form potential patterns. These codes helped inform the case reports as it not only described the concrete experiences of the participants at BLAST, but also included what could be potentially occurring internally for the participant involved with the document itself. The process codes, along with the *In Vivo* and the values codes, were then placed into a spreadsheet for the second cycle analysis to be completed.

Second cycle analysis. A second cycle of coding was helpful to create a succinct snapshot of the individual cases. According to Saldaña (2016), axial coding was an effective second-cycle coding procedure that aided analysis of the individual case study. This procedure was conducted by taking the codes found during the first cycle and connecting them to a larger encompassing code much like the spokes on a wheel were connected to the wheel's hub (Saldaña, 2016). The procedure of this second cycle was conducted by sorting all the codes in the spreadsheet from the various sources of data with the aim to find larger, dominant codes to which the smaller, minor codes could be connected. Saldaña (2016) also suggested this type of second-cycle coding for studies where data came from multiple sources such as interviews and documents as in this study. This process unified the codes and ideas from the multiple sources of data and made the final step of case reporting easier to accomplish.

After this second cycle of coding, categorization occurred. Saldaña (2016) suggested multiple ways to organize the codes into categories. From there, each category was evaluated and measured to see if it could be collapsed into a larger category with subcategories. Once all categories were found that aptly encompassed all the coding found in the data, then the individual case report was prepared from these new categories. These categories included superordinate and subordinate categories (Saldaña, 2016) that were then analyzed to create the themes that made up the case assertions for each case. Stake (1995) suggested several pieces should be included in each case report: a thorough narrative description defining the case and context, discussing issues developed in the case, including descriptive details and quotes, triangulating data, and making assertions about the case. Each case report included these areas and presented in the following chapters. The case report was written for each case prior to any cross-case analysis was conducted (Stake, 2006). The goal of each case report was not to answer

the research questions. The purpose of each case report was to provide ideas and assertions that may be evident in other cases that could inform the findings of the quintain in the final report.

These case reports were essential to the cross-case analysis.

Cross-case analysis. The procedure for the cross-case analysis was based on Stake's (2006) procedure outlined in *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. Reading the individual case reports was the first step to completing the cross-case analysis. For this analysis, the main goal was to apply the findings of each case to the research questions of the quintain. The steps for cross-case analysis as dictated by Stake were spread over seven worksheets that Stake provided in his 2006 publication. The first and second worksheets were not necessary for the design of this study as these first two forms were found within this study proposal. The other worksheets were understood as the steps to be followed for the cross-case analysis. This final report is presented in a later chapter.

The third through seventh worksheet delineate the steps of cross-case analysis dictated by Stake (2006). These steps are as follows:

1. Read and analyze the individual cases.
2. Rank the findings from each case based on their utility to describing the quintain and answering the research questions.
3. Identify findings that are similar across cases to describe the quintain, adolescent leadership development at BLAST.
4. Collapse similar findings into larger clusters in order to find merged findings across cases.

5. Develop merged findings into assertions which answer each research question and describe the quintain based on their multi-case evidence and/or their situational uniqueness
6. Prepare final report to include these assertions.

Role of the Researcher

During the camp, my role was the assistant to the camp director. Under this title, my responsibilities included taking photos and video in addition to performing simple managerial tasks as directed such as setting up activities or performing nightly bed checks in the male cabins. A case study approach was also useful because the researcher was able to understand a case on a holistic level within its own environment (Ary et al., 2014). Under the guidance of Stake (1995), the researcher should be as interesting as “wallpaper” (p. 59) to the participants in the case. In this situation, being the wallpaper meant to be present, but as unnoticeable and uninfluential as possible. As the director’s assistant, the participants understood me simply as the photographer that should only change their behavior and experiences minutely. As a staff member, I had access to all camp activities and events. The only experiences I did not witness occurred in the individual rooms where the participants slept. This restriction was due to rules and regulations for the safety and well-being of the BLAST participants. Other than this understandable restriction, I had access to all participants and staff members throughout the camp. Being present in the experience also helped as it allowed for varied types of data to be collected, which was a fundamental aspect of effective case study research (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). I also attended the nightly staff meetings where the day was reviewed and discussed with the clinicians, and the schedule for the following day was previewed. This role minimized my influence on the behaviors and experiences of the campers or decisions made by

the staff in regard to their actions with the participants. This role also allowed me to effectively collect the forms of data that would potentially be useful for answering the research questions.

Credibility and Validity

This study was a qualitative research study and, considering my role as the researcher and camp staff member, one extremely crucial factor that had to be maintained was a low effect of reactivity to minimize its threat to validity. I attended almost all the camp activities, so I was very much involved. I needed to be discreet as Stake (1995) recommended for case study research. Reactivity is a threat commonly mentioned in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013), and this case study is not free of this threat. In my role at BLAST, I had some direct contact with the participants, but I needed to maintain an uninfluential role for the experience. For these moments, I relied on Stake's (1995) idea that the researcher should be "as unobtrusive, as interesting, as wallpaper" (p. 59). I interacted with participants only in the fulfillment of my duties as required and not any extra. By being this type of uninteresting and unassuming participant at BLAST, the bias of my presence was as minimal as possible.

There are multiple ways to increase the validity of a qualitative study, but two have been most helpful for increasing the validity of this study. Maxwell (2013) provided a list helpful in aiding the study's validity, and the most helpful for this study was member checking (Maxwell, 2013; Stake, 1995). In this process, once I completed the data collection process with a participant, I composed an initial draft of my interpretation of the data and allowed the participant to validate initial findings on the meanings and contexts of the data. This process allowed me to assure that what I collected was indeed what the participant said. This process included providing a copy of interview transcripts along with initial notes and interpretations

annotated so the participant had a chance to confirm or correct anything I may have misconstrued unknowingly. Initial analysis of documents was also shared. Participants were given one week from receiving the transcripts and document analysis via email to provide any feedback. This procedure, coupled with the reflection at the end of each interview during the initial data collection, allowed for a more valid interpretation of the data overall.

Triangulation is a process recommended by several experts of qualitative research for increasing validity. Triangulation is a protocol that increases validity by verifying meaning through multiple representation (Stake, 2006). Stake (1995) mentioned data source triangulation as a form of triangulation would be highly effective for this study. This triangulation protocol requires the researcher to see the same phenomenon in the case through different participants, contexts, or periods (Stake, 1995). Stake (2006) recommended that each important finding have at least three confirmations for it to be valid. So, in this collective case study, any assertion within and across cases found in at least three data sources could be data source triangulation. Triangulation may also have occurred when the participant and the BLAST family group leader described an experience in a comparable way, which was also a source of method triangulation (Stake, 2006). With these methods of data source triangulation, the assertions within each case and across cases could be more valid and thus, aided the goals of the study.

Summary

In this chapter, the procedures that were followed for this study were discussed. Appropriate sampling from the population of BLAST campers helped me maximize the learning from this case study. Relying on Stake's (1995, 2006) protocols of collective case study research and analysis, I used document collection and interviews as the primary sources of data collection combined with Saldaña's (2016) coding strategies to find codes and themes in the data. From

these codes and themes, I found what I consider to be answers to my research questions and in turn accomplished the goals discussed in Chapter I.

CHAPTER IV

SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

In this chapter, the context and description of the camp, named Bringing Leadership and Students Together (BLAST), is discussed. The context provides an understanding of the parameters that surround BLAST as a leadership development camp. The various activities of BLAST are described to make sense of the individual case participants' experiences reported in the data.

Site Context

BLAST stands for Bringing Students and Leadership Together and is organized by key members of the camp staff. The Executive Director of the organization made it a priority to re-established this long-dormant experience that had unfortunately been canceled many years ago due to financial and other constraints. The new BLAST Camp Director was appointed and re-established the camp approximately six years ago. The curriculum of the camp is a blend of activities designed by the lead clinician, the camp director, and the family group leaders and camp staff. The lead clinician is a professional speaker paid for his services to the camp. The same lead clinician, A'ric Jackson, has been contracted for BLAST for the past several years. He centers his portion of the BLAST curriculum on his own program, Generation Leadership. He also has an assistant clinician who helps him with some of the activities. The portion of the curriculum designed by the camp director is a mix of best practices and new ideas found through professional development opportunities. Some activities are considered to be BLAST traditions. The family group leaders are mostly responsible for the portion of the camp that occurs in each distinct family group. These activities include icebreaker activities, debrief conversations after

activities, and preparations for events and competitions. The mix of each of events and activities is what makes the experience of BLAST for each participant.

BLAST 2019 has been held at the Rock Eagle 4-H Center outside of Eatonton, Georgia. It is situated in the Oconee National Forest on a property of 1,500 acres including a large lake. The center includes multiple multi-purpose buildings and pavilions, a cafeteria, an auditorium, and some buildings designed for special purposes such as kitchens or classrooms. There are also swimming pools, sports and recreation fields, and walking trails on the property. Over the past several years, the original cabins have been renovated to be more modern and practical. Each cabin is designed around a central common space containing chairs, tables, and sofas. On either side of the central common space is four doors that lead into dorm rooms. Most rooms have two bunkbeds, storage and desk space for four occupants, a sink, and a private bathroom. One room will contain only two beds for adult counselors in each cabin. Aside from this room also containing a small refrigerator, the room is designed similarly to the others. Buildings on the site are connected by a series of interconnected sidewalks and paths. There are several parking lots on site, but it is rare to see an actual vehicle in operation as most travel by foot at the site. This center is the host to several camps and workshops throughout the year including the Georgia Association of Student Council (GASC) annual convention.

BLAST 2019 was an assembly of many diverse adolescents from varied parts of Georgia and with varied experiences. Middle school and high school students were invited throughout the state of Georgia. Advertising for the camp started in February when registration for the event was opened. Most publicity was shared via email and social media from the BLAST camp director. There was a push with this year to also include student council members from schools that were not members of the GASC organization. The camp director also urged former BLAST

participants to use word of mouth to encourage peers to register for the event. The only restriction placed on eligibility was the student needed to be a current middle or high school student. A total of 44 participants registered and attended the event in July of 2019 at the 4-H Center. Of the participants, 14 were male and the other 30 were female. These participants represented 15 different schools from six different counties in Georgia. Four of those counties surround the Atlanta metropolitan area with the rest being in other parts of Georgia. The ages of the participants at the time range from two middle school students who were 13 years old at the time to high school students who were 17 years old at the time of BLAST 2019. Most participants were 15 or 16 years old. Multiple races were represented including White, Asian, African American, and Hispanic. The participants varied in terms of their experience with their respective student council organizations. Some participants were merely members of their student councils, while others held leadership positions for the upcoming school year. Some, including two of the individual case study participants, were members of the GASC Executive Board at the time of BLAST 2019.

Of all the events and activities at BLAST, one of the most significant links connecting them is the idea of being in a family group. Each camper is placed into one of these groups by the camp director prior to their arrival at the camp. Each family group is led by a senior leader and one or more junior leaders and is organized by colors: red, green, yellow, and blue. There were four different senior leaders at BLAST 2019. Two male leaders, who were both White, have been facilitators for BLAST for several years. Both were also teachers and the advisor for their school's student councils. The other two group leaders were female. Of the two, one leader had been a group leader with BLAST for the two previous years of BLAST. She was an African American women undergraduate student at a local university in Savannah, Georgia where she

studied for the last three years. She was recruited to be a group leader three years ago after being a student council member and president. She was the youngest of the group leaders, but eligible to be a group leader as she had turned 21 years old prior to BLAST 2019. The other female group leader was a White teacher and a student council advisor at her former school. At the time of BLAST 2019, she was transitioning from one school in her county to another school that was opening in the fall of 2019. Collaborating through staff meetings and pre-BLAST training, these group leaders would lead the groups through the various activities at BLAST.

Each of these group leaders were assisted by one or more junior group leaders. Most of these junior leaders were mostly former BLAST participants who had just completed high school or were now university students. The exception to this standard included one junior leader who had attended BLAST as a middle school student when BLAST was re-established. After participating two years in a row, she was allowed to return the following years as a junior group leader based on her dedication and experience. Other junior leaders were rising seniors in the summer of 2019 and also served as officers in their schools' student councils. All staff members arrived the day before BLAST began for training with the camp director and the clinicians to prepare for the camp experiences that would take place within the family group.

Camp Activities and Traditions

In this section, the various activities and traditions of the camp are discussed. Most events were described by more than one of the individual case participants, some by all four. In contrast, there were also some events only described by one or two of the participants. The activities and events discussed here are presented so that their discussion during each case is understandable.

Leadership Quadrant

The Leadership Quadrant was one of the first exercises the participants completed. It was also the activity referenced most often throughout the rest of the experience due to the nature of categorization that occurs during the activity. To start the activity, the clinician instructed the participants to stand on a line of tape on the floor reaching across the room. Each participant was given a bandana and asked to use it to cover his or her eyes. The lead clinician then read a series of statements using a format of “If you [perform this behavior] more than [second behavior], take a step [forward/backward].” Participants raised their hands if they believed they should take a step in either direction, and then a staff member would help guide them to prevent injury. Once all the statements were completed, students could then remove their bandanas. Then, they moved to a center line of tape that was perpendicular to the previous one. The process was repeated, but this time the steps were either to the left or to the right. After the second portion of statements, the participants were in one of four quadrants as designated by the two lines of tape on the floor.

Working with their fellow members of their quadrant, the participants had to use a poster board and markers to create an invitation or flyer for a party they would be hosting. They were instructed to include all necessary details and information about the party including location, who was invited, what the party was for, and other ideas they thought would need to be included. Unbeknownst to them, the camp staff was discreetly observing their behavior and taking notes of their collaboration process. Once the activity was completed, the lead clinician announced that they were “set up” to act in a specific manner through this activity. He then discussed each group based on their quadrant and what their team behavior type is. Each quadrant was given a title: *Directors*, *Relators*, *Socializers*, and *Thinkers*. These titles were based on common

behaviors attributed to members of each quadrant. These words would be used often during BLAST.

After each discussion, the lead clinician asked the observing staff member to point out behaviors that the group and/or individuals demonstrated that were indicative of their quadrant type. More details were given for each quadrant type to expand on the participants' understanding of themselves and the other quadrants. The last step of this activity was each group having to discuss and to decide what animal would represent their group based on what they learned about their quadrant type and present their reasons and decision to the rest of the camp.

Bunker Activity

This activity was completed within the individual family groups while led by the lead clinician. The scenario was announced that there was a nuclear fallout which caused life impossible above ground. The only way to survive for the next five years would be to live in a subterranean bunker. However, each bunker would only support ten occupants, and each group had 13 or more members. The task was that each group had to decide who would be allowed in the bunker and who would not meaning they would die. Adding to this imaginary lethal scenario, each participant was also given a new identity he or she would have to use for the duration of this activity. Each identity typically included a name, age, profession, and other detail about their personal life; however, these personal life details would incorporate an unappealing detail such as a person who was a recovering drug addict or a member of an Aryan society. These characteristics would make up their identities for the duration of the activity.

After introducing themselves to each other within their groups, each group then had to decide who would be allowed to survive and who would die. They were given a certain time to

discuss at first before the lead clinician made an announcement that there was a murderer within each group. If allowed to survive, the murderer would kill everyone in the bunker except for him/herself and an accomplice. The clinician emphasized that there was a correct group of people to choose to survive in order to succeed in this activity. After allowing more time to discuss, the clinician then goaded all participants by asking if they knew the negative details about all the participants. The clinician added stress to the exercise by repeatedly announcing how much time was remaining to the groups to make their decision of which ten would survive. Once time had passed, each group announced who they chose to survive to the camp. Afterwards, the clinician admitted that there was no murderer nor was there a correct solution to the activity. Instead, the activity had been used to make observations of each group and how they work together. This revelation was concluded by a discussion of the activity as a camp and then in their family groups later in the day.

Chaos

Chaos is an activity that is a complete surprise to the participants. It started with the participants being dismissed to lunch while the staff announced a staff meeting. This meeting was a ruse to disguise the fact they were creating a mess in the seminar space. Chairs were all scattered, papers and trash were thrown around and spread across the floor, and anything else that could be moved was not in its proper place once the staff finished. The participants' part of the activity began when they returned from lunch. Once allowed to enter, the participants saw the clinicians sitting silently at the front of the room, and the staff sitting silently along the sides of the room. There were no instructions, details, or explanations given to the participants. When asked, neither the clinicians nor the staff members responded to any question or statement except to say, "Good is the enemy of greatness." This statement was intended to be enigmatic during

the exercise, but during the post-activity discussion, it was revisited to bring clarity to its meaning.

To solve the problem presented in Chaos, the participants had to complete three tasks. First, they must clean the room and put everything back in its original place. Secondly, each participant must sit in their seat. Lastly, they must be silent in their seats to show they had finished the task. Once the participants completed the task, the clinician reviewed what transpired from his perspective, highlighting individual and collective choices and actions made. The family groups then had an opportunity to talk more about the activity.

Talent Show

The Talent Show is a BLAST tradition not a part of the clinician's curriculum. Each family group was made aware of this task from the first time they met with their family group to begin planning. There were two parts to this event. During the first, each family group performed a skit about their BLAST experience. The only real stipulation they must follow was everyone in the group must have a role during the skit itself. It could be a song, a dance routine, a rap, or a fully acted scene. After each group performed, the camp director then presented four bags. Each bag contained random objects that the groups then had to incorporate into a new skit that involved the lessons they learned at BLAST. They were given only a short amount of time to plan and to prepare this new improvisational skit. Again, each group performed the skit with each member having a role in the skit. The event concluded with the announcement of which group had the best performances.

Dance Line

One of the final activities facilitated by the lead camp clinician was called Dance Line. One substantial difference of this activity to others was that the entire camp, participants and

staff, had to participate. It began with the participants and staff forming two lines facing each other creating an open aisle between the two lines. Each participant was told he or she must dance enthusiastically down the entire line. Meanwhile, each person in the line was required to cheer just as enthusiastically for the dancer at that time. If either the dancer or the person cheering was not enthusiastic enough, the dancer would have to start again. As a final instruction, no dance move could be repeated. The clinician then played very loud, highly energetic music for the participants to use for the duration of the activity. This activity led to the conclusion of the clinicians' portion of the camp.

Family Olympics

The Family Olympics is also an activity that are a BLAST tradition facilitated by the camp director. She was aided by one member of each family group to act as overseers and organizers to facilitate the competitions. This event included a series of physical challenges that the family group had to compete together. Some activities only required a few competitors from each group, but most competitions involved the whole family group. One of the first relays involved each family group member having to run to a chair on the opposite side of the room with an inflated balloon and then had to use the chair and their bodies to pop the balloon before returning to their group. Another competition was a human-sized version of Hungry Hungry Hippos where a participant was placed on a scooter board with a basket, and then the other family group members would have to push this person out to the center of the room to gather balls and bring them back to the family group's base. The final activity involved a volunteer from the family group donning a shower cap and having his or her head covered in shaving cream. Then, from a short distance, the group members attempted to toss Cheeto Puffs so that the volunteer can catch the Puffs in the shaving cream.

Rap Battle

The Rap Battle is a part of the clinician's curriculum. Occurring typically before the midpoint of the BLAST curriculum, the groups were required to create and perform a group rap. Within this rap, they were instructed to include what they had learned about leadership. The other rule was that everyone in the group must have an active role in the rap. The family groups were then dismissed to their group rooms to begin preparations. They were given less than an hour to prepare before they reconvened to the main seminar room. The performance order was randomly chosen by the clinician and each group performs their rap battle. One group was chosen as a winner of the battle and announced at the final banquet.

Leadership Practices Inventory

This activity was a part of the lead clinician's curriculum. The BLAST participants were asked to complete an online survey prior to the camp. The survey comprised of a Likert-scale series of statements where the respondent responds on a scale of one to five to indicate their agreement with the statement. The results indicated which aspect of Kouzes and Posner's (2013) leadership practices were most embodied by the respondent. These five practices are *Inspire a Shared Vision, Model the Way, Challenge the Process, Encourage the Heart, and Enable Others to Act* (Kouzes & Posner, 2013). The results of the survey were kept a secret until a revealing ceremony during BLAST. Individually, the participants were called to the front of the room by the clinician who briefly reviewed the aspects of the individual that matched up to the results of the survey. The results were then disclosed where the clinician highlights the highest-ranking leadership practice as indicated by their survey results. The activity concluded when each person had received their results and then the family groups were able to discuss them.

Bafa Bafa

This activity is led by the clinicians. Each participant was divided into one of two cabins, typically with each family group being divided somewhat evenly between the two. Each cabin represented a different society, the Alphas and the Betas. In the context of the activity, each one had a separate way of living including customs, and rules. The Beta society also included a new language to be learned. The Betas would receive higher society status through a gem trading game whereas in the Alpha society, the oldest male participant was deemed “Father” and given the utmost respect and admiration. In the Alpha society too, women were given less social stature, but still cared for in the society. After the participants have learned their new cultures and well-versed as members of their respective societies, an ambassador from the Alphas was allowed to visit the Betas. When the Beta ambassador visited the Alphas, he or she witnessed a new culture where some people were held in lower stature than others due to their societal rules. Then, as was typical to this activity, a chaotic and combative relationship emerged between the two societies that resulted in participants visiting being taken prisoner and other such acts. In 2019, a unique event occurred where some members of Alpha and Beta decided to leave their societies and establish a third outside society. Meanwhile, the other two continued their conflict that erupted in aggressive dialogues between the two clinicians. Finally, rather than escalating it further, the clinicians agreed to a mock peace summit in the main seminar room.

In the seminar room, the two societies were divided along different sides of the room and each side was allowed to send an ambassador to the center to speak for the group. The ambassadors described what they thought they understood about the opposing group and explained his or her group’s treatment of the opposing group’s members. Each ambassador was also allowed to explain his or her groups customs and behaviors. This presentation was then

concluded with the activity being concluded when the clinicians admitting that they were indeed playing into fake personas during their aggressive conversations and facilitated a discussion about the activity that had unfolded.

Banquet

The banquet was a culminating BLAST tradition. It was held in a private dining room of the cafeteria. Each family group was responsible for making place mats and table decorations for their table. They were given supplies at the beginning of the camp and allowed a meager budget for additional items from a local Walmart. Participants typically wore outfits fitting of the special occasion and each group sat together. The camp director, the clinicians, and any special guests or staff members who were not group leaders sat a head table at the front of the banquet room. During the banquet, each family group leader gave a short address about his or her group followed by presenting the members of the group with a certificate. Then, each group leader also announced the two selections for the Honor Council. This choice was made within the family group to honor and to recognize two members of the group who best embody what BLAST meant and how it resonated with each person. Following this announcement, a member of the group also gave a short address to summarize the experiences of the family group. Before concluding the banquet, the camp director shared her thoughts as well as announced the winners of the family group awards such as the winner of the Family Olympics and other competitions throughout BLAST.

Bonfire

This event was a BLAST tradition and was overseen by the camp director and group leaders. As the name implies, a campfire space was reserved, and a fire was lit for the participants to enjoy as a social event. There were supplies for the participants to make s'mores

if they so choose, and the participants were allowed to listen music and to enjoy time together. There was no official agenda or procedure for this event. It was the one occasion when the participants get to interact with one another outside of the clinician- or director-led activities.

Take a Stand

This activity is organized by the clinicians but facilitated by the campers completing the second year of BLAST. The second-year campers had a series of sessions with the assistant clinician to practice and to facilitate this activity. The family groups directed to one of four rooms where a pair of second-year campers was waiting for the family group. The family group was asked to stand in the middle of the room in a single-file line with their eyes closed. While their eyes closed, they listened to the second-year campers read a scenario aloud. The scenarios involved situations that may be considered controversial such as one where a high school student was censored from the school paper due to speaking out about her identity as a lesbian. Other topics include scenarios about illegal immigration and gun ownership. Once the students heard the scenario, they were asked to take a step to either the left or to the right to show their agreement or disagreement with the actions taken in the scenario.

Once they have done so, they were allowed to open their eyes. The second-year campers then led a discussion between the two sides to express their opinions and why each participant chose the side that he or she chose. The second-year campers gave guidance to effective communication so that the participants understood to discuss the arguments given and not the person who made them. At certain intervals, the participants could switch sides if they so choose. This switch prompted more discussion about why participants changed sides. Each discussion had a time-limit, and once it was reached, the family groups would move to another room to continue the activity with a different scenario.

Communication Module

This activity module was a series of brief exercises that would be referred to throughout the other activities where communication would be key. The module was essentially broken into two major components. During the first component, the BLAST participants would find a partner for the exercises. The pairs decided who would be the first speaker and who would be the first listener with the understanding that these roles would switch during the exercise. The speaker spoke about a given topic to his or her partner. The listener, meanwhile, was told to act as if he or she was not really listening and be otherwise distracted while the speaker was talking. After, there was a brief group discussion as to how the speaker recognized the listener was not listening and how it impacted him or her as a speaker. Next, the roles were reversed where the other partner spoke on a given topic, but this time, the listener had to demonstrate good listening skills and attention. A similar discussion occurred after this portion followed by conclusions of what good listening skills are.

Also in this module, the participants and staff were asked to stand on one of two lines facing each other. The instructions were to stare at each other silently for an extended period of time. After the initial moment, the lead clinician asked the participants to take a series of steps closer to their partner. Also, he gave thinking prompts for the participants to think about in regard to their partner such as thinking of their partner achieving their goals in life. This activity concluded with a discussion about the feelings and impacts it made.

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY 1: KATE

In this chapter, the first case report is presented. The case report discussion begins with a profile of the case participant, Kate. Following this description is a summary of her two interviews followed by a similar profile of her family group leader and his interview. There is also an overview of the documents shared and what the case participant highlighted and discussed about them. Lastly, the case assertions and discussion of them are presented with connections to the data and their analysis.

Profile of Participant

The first case for this collective case study is Kate. She began her senior year at a large public high school in Georgia in 2020. She attended the Bringing Leaders and Students Together (BLAST) camp in the summer of 2019. In speaking with her during the two interviews, she was warm and laughed often about her BLAST memories. She rarely paused to think about her responses in the interview sessions as she was a natural orator. She was well-spoken and could speak at length about any topic. She demonstrated an ability to see a larger perspective by discussing ideas like how she learned skills at BLAST that would help in professional environments. Kate called herself the type of person who could be reserved, but also be “kind of out there.” Her family group leader described Kate as caring and personable. He also said Kate was a leader through their initial interactions on the Georgia Association of Student Council’s (GASC) Executive Board. He also described her as a “sweet” kind of person who listened to others to understand what they were trying to say or express, and also strongly encouraged others. She described herself as competitive in her personal endeavors and preferred to be controlling and calculated about what was happening when it came to completing tasks.

Furthermore, she did not see herself as funny when talking about how she was with a new group of people and trying to make new relationships. She considered herself to be nervous around new people in social situations after having attended BLAST.

She had been involved with student council for several years starting in middle school. As a sophomore, she was her class president for the student council, ; a predominant feature of her extracurricular life at the time of BLAST. She also served on the GASC's Executive Board the year she attended BLAST. She stated that a part of her reasons to attend BLAST 2019 was because fellow members of the GASC Executive Board were also attending. She attended BLAST due to encouragement from the camp director and a close friend who had been working as a junior family group leader at BLAST for numerous years. Before BLAST, she had some preconceived notions about what she thought BLAST was going to be like because she heard the lead clinician give a keynote address at a student council event. However, she did admit that the experience was actually much more than just "hear about his experiences...then a few fun games here and there."

Summary of Participant Interviews

In this section, a descriptive overview is given about Kate's two interviews. She appeared comfortable during the interviews, and she did not seem nervous to answer any of the questions. The first interview occurred July 28, 2020, and the second interview occurred October 4, 2020. At the beginning of the first interview, Kate described how a friend motivated her to attend by saying how BLAST would be an experience Kate would never forget. When asked to describe a typical day at BLAST, she used the phrase "...filled with like an action-packed day," along with other descriptions of the days being full of activity. It was a very interactive learning experience, "...learn about leadership, but like through very interactive

hands-on ways...” After lunch each day, she mentioned a change to doing activities that blended the leadership development modules with bonding experiences with her family group. Then, there would be competitive activities such as the Family Olympics. During the second interview, Kate used the phrase “energizing and very large-scale event” when asked about the meaning of BLAST to her. She highlighted a sense of community that was developed at BLAST where, while they did develop as leaders, it was more so a youth development experience.

Kate was one of the first campers to arrive to BLAST. After meeting the camp director, her family group leaders and some other campers was in a cabin to complete some initial games, commonly called icebreakers, while the other campers began to arrive. She mentioned in the first interview how some of the games played were to help them learn each other’s names. After all the campers had arrived, they met in the main BLAST building for their first large group session. She remembered the camp director opening the camp session with a rap-style intro skit followed by the junior group leaders explaining the BLAST camp rules to which Kate decided BLAST would not be boring as previously thought. She believed prior to arriving that the BLAST environment would not be that big of a deal, but it became something she considered a specialized community. However, a new vision as a result of the different leadership development activities such as quadrant activity and the chaos activity occurred. One idea expressed about BLAST was how she was “exposed to people from all across the state.” In the second interview, she mentioned a facet that made BLAST unique in terms of leadership development in that “you actually take away something from it.” She also reflected how the interactive and hands-on activities helped her see how these activities could apply to the real world of her school and her peers.

She also said that some of the unfamiliar and unexpected circumstances she experienced resulted in an overarching idea where she found meaning. As one example of unexpected, after the lead clinician introduced himself, one of the key observations that Kate described was how he remarked that the campers were not prepared for the events of the next few days. Kate admitted her immediate reaction, "...I was like, what is that supposed to mean?" She genuinely had no idea what he meant even though she had heard him speak in previous events. She responded positively to knowing not what would happen at BLAST, "...a lot of things at BLAST was really, really awesome because we would go into things not knowing what's happening but then end up seeing the bigger picture as an end result." Along with this realization, she also mentioned "I became friends with people that I never thought I would be friends with." She did not think members of her family group would become as intimate as friends as they were because she measured them initially as "they don't seem like they're kind of like my people..." The significant difference between her and her family group was how she was more of a reserved person. She also described this same reluctance in making close relationships with her cabin roommates. However, she eventually did call these peers her best friends.

Of all the BLAST memories, her favorite was the Family Olympics where her family group bonded the most. Kate described it as an igniting atmosphere. She shared an anecdote in the first interview about how energetic the family group was during this event:

And so, we were so hyped because we were like, wait, like, we might actually win this one. Like, things like that. Like this could be it. And then we like, got like, it was like the final round, and it was like them and us. And like, we were like, okay, we're going to get it.

She noted how this competition was one clear illustration of the diverse types of leaders in the family group although the Family Olympics was more of a bonding activity over a leadership development activity. She described the bonds made with the family group as quite spirited when the group became voiceful.

Kate believed that BLAST developed her as a leader. Leadership development occurred through the various engaging activities completed. She elaborated that the Leadership Quadrant activity was the most prominent activity where this development occurred. She highlighted how the differences between the four quadrants were not discussed prior to the subsequent poster activity. During this presentation portion of this activity Kate saw the various aspects of the different quadrants through their posters and the observations shared by the lead clinician and camp staff members. It became evident that this activity helped her learn the four leadership styles being illustrated. This activity not only helped her learn about personal leadership style, but also others' by seeing it in action. She reported, "One thing that I really learned from BLAST was there's not necessarily one specific type to lead." She summed up this activity by calling it a defining moment for BLAST. She would be able to apply outside of the camp much like she did when copying the exercise in part for a workshop she hosted after BLAST.

One idea that Kate shared about the camp's impact on her leadership abilities was the ability to think of others, "I'm more keen to, uh, kind of not just thinking about myself but also about others." During Take a Stand, Kate stressed how the participants were allowed to switch sides on the issues being discussed that she found to be interesting. She would see others' ideas about any situation change or evolve based on newly presented ideas from opposing sides on the issue being discussed. This activity helped her learn more about having difficult conversations about such topics as gun control or other issues. One conclusion shared about this activity was

that "...it's not hard to have these conversations, and there's a certain way to have these conversations..." One other thought expressed was the connection with more people and discussed the kinds of topics used in the Take a Stand activity without it becoming divisive. While her horizons were broadened, she developed the ability to accept a variety of perspectives not typical to behaviors prior to BLAST. As an additional result, she also did not see herself as being as sheltered prior to BLAST; meaning that she was more open to potentially difficult conversations. Although still nervous about what people may think of her she said, "It's nice knowing that, like, not everyone's against you." This was an idea she admitted to using to stay more confident since attending BLAST. The camp experience allowed opinions and beliefs to be expressed while not dividing groups of peers. She applied the same kinds of strategies used during this activity to facilitate discourse in other situations like school since BLAST's conclusion.

The bonfire was a significant experience even though Kate first compared it to what she thought was typical for a summer camp in multiple instances in the interview. She used phrases such as "such a summer camp experience," and "I feel like that's such a summer camp thing to do." She used this description for the various activities such as participants making smores, singing songs, talking and laughing, and taking pictures. This event was the first time Kate said she stepped out of her family group. She called this action as a way of stepping out of her shell. Between the first and second interview, she recognized that this activity was less about leadership development and more about forming bonds with her peers. Overall, the experience at the bonfire was a memorable experience.

The Bunker activity also provoked detailed events. The first clear memory she had was the forceful way her group communicated in this activity, "I remember our group is just going at

each other, like literally wanting to like, like literally like yell at each other.” She described how each person would mention their negative traits, but justified them by making points about their indispensability. She clearly remembered that her family group was the loudest of the four family groups during this activity due to their arguments. She described how the group used process of elimination to choose who was the weakest link to the survival of the group overall. She learned how separate groups could act in stressful situations. She noticed another group was not as heated, “...like they were all sitting down and having like a very like, um, like a very, um like peaceful conversation.” She concluded that it showed that in stressful situations like this one, she needed to learn to step away from the situation and collect her thoughts.

While not recalling the specific name of the activity, she remembered the Bafa Bafa distinctly as a military simulation that resulted in her understanding new sensations. She learned a new language with gestures to earn gems before everything became chaotic. She also spoke about feeling lost and confused on more than one occasion during this activity. After she decided to leave to see the other society, she returned only to confront isolation when her original group treated her like a traitor. When witnessing the two clinicians beginning to argue, she admitted to being unsure where the simulation ended and reality began, “...and I was like, ‘Is this real, or is this not real?’” She was part of the group of participants who abandoned their assigned society and started a third faction during this activity. After the large group discussion in the main building, she expressed relief it was merely an illustration of what could happen in society. In the second interview, she compared this activity to a situation in her school where she was a virtual student while others were physically in the classroom and how she was able to negotiate her feelings of being the “outsider” to not have negative feelings about that situation.

She also called it interesting to see first-hand how being in a foreign situation such as this activity could easily collapse into disarray.

She distinctly remembered the Chaos activity as “being one of the key moments that I remember from BLAST.” She became irritated by how everyone was trying to solve the problem and suggesting solutions to the presumed problem of a space where “everything was like such a mess.” In light of the silence of the clinicians and the camp staff, Kate shared her observation that this activity was a situation where they found themselves in literal chaos where they had no assistance in solving the problem. She described ways BLAST participants together tried different approaches to solving the problem and how relieved she was when they finally solved it. Kate admitted not understanding the purpose of the activity in its immediate aftermath, but found relief in understanding it when she had a chance to discuss with her family group. After this discussion, the activity helped her develop as a leader by giving a situation of solving a problem with a group with no guidance. She connected it to the situation at school where she was to take over as the student council president the following year in addition to having a new student council advisor for the council, “It was like my role to kind of like put it back in order.”

Kate described the final banquet as a moment to see how fellow family group members blossomed. First, she discussed how each person used their best strengths in creating decorations for the family group table prior to the banquet. Kate’s contributions to the banquet were a paper rocket she made. She was not pleased with the final product of her centerpiece and described the process of creating it, “...that was quite the struggle.” Kate felt her group was the least prepared that resulted in feeling stressed about the situation because the table decorations were part of one of the BLAST mini-competitions. Kate saw the new relationships and bonds among the family group members during this preparation. She described the growth in the other family group

members as blossoming frequently like when she described her fellow a group member who was recognized for the Honor Council. She spoke later during the second interview about how she was not jealous about someone else winning this distinction in contrast to her usual attitude of competitiveness.

The final activity discussed was the Talent Show. Her group decided to do a dance routine after the family group had a brainstorming session to discuss it. One member suggested doing the routine and set in charge of teaching the dance because she had experience with the choreography. Kate felt nervous about this skit because she reportedly cannot dance. Regardless, she had fun doing the skit with her group. During the second portion of the Talent Show, Kate remembered the improvisation skit very vividly. After brainstorming again, Kate described how they tried to make a scene following the theme of their family group's mascot. However, Kate concluded that their performance was bad because it did not go according to the plan. Even though the skit had not succeeded, she accepted what happened with the thought, "We're not gonna win again. We're going to have to live with that and laugh about it." She remarked on how this experience impacted her thoughts about how plans and working with a team would not always succeed together from reflecting on the experience.

Namely during the second interview, Kate discussed several aspects of how she grew as an individual. As a result of the specific leadership development activities, she realized, "...you need to grow up to be a leader" even though there is more than one type of leader. Kate described feeling "...opened up...more willing to just like, let loose..." after the bonfire. This feeling would also impact how she changed from a person who "...cared a lot about what people thought of me," into someone who "...like all you can really do is have fun with it because it's not a situation where it's the end of the world." She also mentioned "broadening her horizons"

and not feeling as sheltered as she had felt prior to BLAST. She admitted to feeling like “they literally hated me because I left them,” during Bafa Bafa. While she did report feeling frustrated during the Chaos activity, she admitted finding a new sense of optimism due to her new understanding that “...ultimately, there’s a way to get out of the mess.” She discussed this optimism again as a tool to help her to overcome the stress she felt from preparing for the Banquet and how she felt about the Talent Show like she said, “embarrassing, but it wasn’t a negative experience.”

Profile of Group Leader

Kate’s Family Group leader was a middle school math teacher. He was from northern Georgia originally and a graduate of the University of North Georgia. He grew up in a small town outside of Atlanta, and currently resided in that same town. He had been a middle school math teacher at a large public middle school for approximately six years and was 28 years old as of September of 2021. While in high school, he was also a member of the high school’s student council from his freshmen year through graduation in 2012. Additionally, he also served as a member of the executive board of the GASC as a student under the current executive director of the association. Once becoming a teacher, he also became his school’s student council advisor. In 2019, he was chosen as the middle school Advisor of the Year at the annual GASC convention.

When asked about his start with BLAST, he started his explanation in 2017. He explained how he became a group leader after the executive director of GASC asked him to join the staff when the new iteration of BLAST was re-established. He said, “...sure, why not? You know, it’s a leadership camp.” He believed that BLAST was a beneficial and good leadership opportunity for the students who attended as well as the advisors. He volunteered with BLAST

each year "...kind of selfishly for me to bring some things and perspectives back to my school in order to benefit my kids..."

Summary of Family Leader Interview

The conversation during the interviews were relaxed and easy going with a friendly attitude throughout the interview. This mood would be helpful as this group leader was the leader for two different participants in the study. The two interviews completed occurred on a weekday afternoon and early Saturday morning during August of 2020. While he did remember both participants with clear differentiation, he had trouble remembering events at BLAST without stimulus from photos shared by the study's participants. Using the photos shared by participants as a stimulus, he remembered more events and experiences at the camp. There were certain times when he could not remember specifically details about Kate's behavior or actions during specific activities, but gave general details about what the campers overall experienced. These general descriptions were to be understandable given the period of the interviews occurring a full calendar year after the conclusion of BLAST.

The interview took place on August 11, 2020. The beginning of the interview started with a description of how the group leader was initially asked to be a BLAST group leader in 2017. From there, the conversation shifted to describing Kate as a person. Most of the descriptions given were about her personality such as "she's a socializer," and "she's a people person." The group leader also included that she was very sincere and spirited. One phrase he used, "She cares generally about other people," was followed up with a question about how that was made evident. The group leader discussed how she genuinely listened to others who were speaking. Further in the interview, he clarified by stating that she was not shy, but "definitely an active listener." Within the group dynamic, the leader described her as regularly active in the

group activities. His final description of her overall as a person was, "...friendly, genuine, and friendly, personable caring." These personality traits were referenced in many of her behaviors mentioned throughout the interview. He mentioned towards the end of the interview how Kate became more vulnerable through the conversations and experiences with her group.

The group was used during the interview as a way to describe the environment and how BLAST affected each family group member, Kate included. The interview included a description of the daily roll calls and the Family Olympics. Both, he described, were energetic and fun for the group. He emphasized that Kate's group was especially spirited. In fact, he pointed out that the group won the award for most spirited at the banquet. When asked about it, the group leader described how the group was already in a positive position as "I didn't have to work hard to get their spirits up 'cause they were already pumped up to be there." The group leader also commented that, "...we just fed off each other's energy," when he described the nature of the group during the Family Olympics. During the games, he recalled how, "Everybody was cheering, yelling out for each other." Even though the group ended up losing the competition, it was still a positive energy, "I didn't expect to have that much fun losing, but I did, and the kids did as well." When asked about how that appeared in Kate's behavior during group discussions, the group leader described how Kate would make a hand gesture to encourage her fellow group members while sharing their ideas and thoughts, "Like if someone says something that was really good, you know, Kate would 'snap' it." By snapping, he meant that she would reinforce agreement with the statement by snapping for the person, a behavior the lead clinician introduced and fostered during BLAST. As a result, each group member was encouraged to share their opinions and feelings, which in turn helped fostered bonds among the group.

The next major event reviewed was the Leadership Quadrant activity. While the group leader did not have many specific details about Kate's personal experience during this activity, he did remember actions of the group she was in, the *socializers*. He recalled that they were a group easily distracted by the task at hand of creating the poster for their party, but that behavior was also an indicator of their leadership quadrant. When asked about the impact this activity would have had on Kate, he described it as one of the best exercises. After the blindfolded sorting process, they were given a task to complete, but he pointed out that "they didn't really know what was going on." This particular unfolding of the activity allowed Kate to see her leadership style in real life.

Bafa Bafa was an activity where the group leader had a distinct memory about Kate's experience. This experience was both unique and crazy in his perspective. When asked about how Kate would have experienced this event, he described it as a challenging experience for Kate and all the campers to be split into diverse cultures then forced to confront those differences. He remarked how Kate was one of a small faction who chose to leave and start the third society. He believed that Kate learned how "...to see different perspectives and be able to figure out what you can do to reach across and find a common thing." He considered this activity to be a positive life lesson.

Being an activity repeated each year, the Chaos activity was one that took the group leader a moment to remember clearly from BLAST 2019. For Kate, he described this activity as symbolic, "...there's so many life lessons you can get out of it like real world applications." These lessons became apparent, in his opinion, after the reflective discussions that occurred after the activity ended where the campers derive meaning from the experience. He recalled how Kate entered the room in a state of confusion when she and the other participants saw the room in

disarray. He described how they tried to put the chairs in a circle, but that action did not result in success. Other ideas and suggestions were also denounced which resulted in even more chaos.

He also discussed the Talent Show and banquet from the last evening. He recalled how the group did a dance routine that was embarrassing. He explained how this sentiment was due to the lack of preparation the group had put into the skit as “It was one of those things that they were like working on it very hard, but like not much is getting done.” He mentioned how Kate was a “go with the flow kind of person,” and just ready to be a part of the skit in any role given. In the end, he believed they did a great job with the prepared skit. Although the skit was not that good, he recalled it being a great bonding experience for Kate and family group members. For the banquet, he described how the process of creating the decorations became somewhat panicked as they worked, “...we were just trying to throw things together last minute.” He said that being a non-participant as the group leader helped the team to bond together over the task.

Concluding the interview, the discussion turned to how Kate changed during the course of BLAST. When asked about her development during BLAST, he mentioned definitively, “You could tell that BLAST was a game changer for her.” He mentioned how her leadership abilities improved through a metaphor, “So she already had something, she had raw material going in Wednesday...Saturday, she was a manufactured goods.” She came to BLAST with the skills to be a leader, but because of BLAST, those skills were refined.

Summary of Documents

In preparation for the second interview, Kate shared photos, videos, and social media posts she kept from BLAST. She shared a Google Folder that contained 23 total documents. All the documents were photos except the last two which were video clips she recorded. One photo was of a decoration Kate made for final banquet. Two were photos of mementos she kept from

the experience. These mementos included a group photo of the entire BLAST camp participants and staff, and the other was a photo of a sheet of paper where her fellow family group members had written short notes to her. Fourteen of the images were group photos including photos with cabin roommates, fellow family group members and their group sign, family group at the banquet, and fellow campers who attended the same school as Kate. The other photos were pictures showing Kate during the Family Olympics and the bonfire. There was one photo of the “mascot” of the Kate’s family group where one of the family group members was wearing a green morph suit while holding the family group’s sign. The two videos were short clips of 23 and 5 seconds long. The first was a video taken during the bonfire showing the BLAST participants singing along to the song Sweet Caroline. The shorter video clip showed Kate’s family group leader performing a dance move to music playing.

Kate specifically mentioned 15 of these documents during the interview. The first one she mentioned was a group photo taken in the early morning with family group members outside on a bridge near their cabins. The next few documents were the family group sign and mascot and pictures of her family group during the banquet. She humorously described herself as a victim in the photo where she had shaving cream on her head as part of the Family Olympics. The term was used loosely as she also described a photo of the aftermath of the shaving cream fight that occurred after that particular game where she “...plastered like shaving cream, right on their faces.” She explained how that photo became a part of her school’s yearbook the following year. More photos highlighted those taken with BLAST participants from other family groups. She pointed out the photo of her fellow schoolmates describing specifically the female peer who inspired her to attend BLAST. She also mentioned the photo of the rocket she made for her family group table at the banquet, and the one of her group’s mascot in the green morph suit.

She also talked about both videos and what they were, highlighting how the bonfire singing video was a very "...Summer camp thing to do." When ending our discussion of the documents, notes from her family group members were posted on her corkboard in the bedroom because "So it's something that I look at every day. It makes me feel good about myself..." She kept the group photos because of the friendships formed while at BLAST.

Case Assertions

The three interviews and documents that make up the data for this case were analyzed. During the In Vivo coding process, 496 unique codes were found. During the Values coding process, 493 codes were developed. The Process coding of the documents shared yielded 15 codes. These codes were evaluated using Axial coding to find 49 Axial codes. These 49 codes were then analyzed based on Saldaña's (2016) ideas of finding "categories of categories" (p. 278) until four themes emerged. These themes are presented and explained below in terms of what they mean for Kate's experiences at BLAST.

Theme 1: Learning Collaboratively. The data showed support that learning collaboratively was impactful for Kate's development as a leader and as an individual. This theme contains multiple sub-themes: making new relationships, learning as a group, learning from others, and communicating with others.

Before the discussion about learning collaboratively, there was an aspect of building relationships mentioned in the data. There was a connection among many of the activities where the activity's results included that the family group was able to bond more. This connection was reiterated by Kate and the family group leader. As the family group leader repeated multiple times, Kate's family group was a very spirited group, "more so than most groups I've worked

with.” Discussed during the second interview, her pictures from both the Family Olympics and the Banquet showed how her group bonded as she described one photo of the latter event:

That’s actually a picture I posted on my Instagram story, and I think that’s below. I wrote, ‘a green team, a dream team.’ So, I think it’s very obvious that we had the, uh, spirit going on of, um really like representing our team.

As a result of these experiences and bonds made with the group, she was able to participate more in conversations than the “small talk kind of thing,” which she considered the typical type of conversation with people with whom she was not comfortable. She mentioned that these new relationships exposed her to new people from across Georgia highlighting the fact they were relationships she would not have had the opportunity to build if not for BLAST. The relationships were not just the ones she made in her family group as made evident in her photos. She showed photos with other BLAST participants such as her cabin roommates or peers who went to the same school. In this sense, it was possible to see how BLAST created more than relationships within the family group, but also with other BLAST participants.

There were multiple occasions of collaboration described throughout the data. In fact, there were not many individual-based activities discussed in the any of the interviews or shown in any of the documents. Learning collaboratively occurred when Kate worked with her fellow participants to solve problems like in the Chaos activity. Kate mentioned, “...we were just kind of like, what is going on...” which showed how none of the camp participants were aware of what to do, but they had to solve it together. The collaborative learning was apparent when Kate described how someone eventually declared that they should clean the room. Kate’s group leader remarked how the campers concluded to put their chairs in a circle rather than the rows as they were originally. This collective choice resulted in a discussion where campers took turns

making suggestions as to what they should do next. Kate interpreted personal meaning from this experience:

Like it wasn't just me. It's just everyone else's kind of going through the same thing. So I, yeah, for sure, like the sense of optimism of, um, there is going to be something like that in the end, but also you have to realize you're not alone.

This statement was one illustration of how Kate was able to find a lesson in her BLAST experience during those times of collaboration. She found value in working with others when it came to resolve metaphorical and literal chaos.

The Bunker activity was also a situation where Kate found applicable ideas about working collectively. The family group leader described this activity as, "The scenario required the family group members to decide which of the characters would survive an oncoming nuclear holocaust in a bunker or who would not be allowed to enter." His description of the event's objective was coupled with Kate's memory of the event to show that this activity emphasized working collaboratively. Kate remembered, "our group is just going at each other. Literally wanting to like, like literally like yell at each other." In the end, her group decided on a democratic way of keeping those identified as those they needed the most and then let go of everyone else.

Kate also learned from others through witnessing their experiences, opinions, and ideas. Kate learned from the BLAST experience with the others and learned how groups collaborated and bonded through a shared experience. One direct fashion of bonding was through the collective failure of her group during the Family Olympics, "my family...really bonded because we sucked." She also mentioned how team interactions like planning the decorations for the

banquet showed how different strengths could come together. She described seeing how everyone participated in the preparations:

Um, so we were like, ah, what does everybody want to do? So I'm like, I think everyone just kind of threw themselves out there, like, oh, it was like yeah, I'll make a rocket. Then someone else was like, oh, well, like I'm good at calligraphy so I'll do this.

Again, in this situation, the act of collaboration with her group occurred. She reported this same kind of collaborative process in describing the group's process of creating the skit for the Talent Show, "...everyone just kinda like, was like, oh yeah, like I can do this. Like I can do that." She also developed new ideas through seeing how the collective group of campers would act such as during Bafa Bafa. During this activity, Kate experienced other cultures as her family group leader described the experience, "Originally you only saw that one side and then you encounter a whole different side that has nothing in common with you." She witnessed how easily different cultures could clash and create conflict through those clashes. Her family group leader made an observation about how he made them work together to identify strengths in family group members to focus on certain tasks to best utilize each person's skills whether they were a "task oriented" or "people oriented." In these examples, the data showed that Kate learned about leadership and about herself in collaborative setting whether it was alongside her peers or if it was learning from them.

While Kate did not report specifically on any specific communication development activity, she did give details that one result of BLAST was improving interpersonal communication abilities. She was able to maintain conversations more than the "small talk kind of thing" meaning that she could have meaningful and comfortable conversations with others

whom she had just met. Some conversations occurred in formal and informal activities. One of the formal activities was the Take a Stand activity where she expressed a change of opinion after hearing about a fellow participant's experience with gun control. She changed her opinion because, "Someone shared their story, and they kind of like changed everyone's perspective." She described how she spoke to campers who were not in her family group at the bonfire, "...that was like the first time I started talking to other people that weren't like, not just in my family, but were from other groups as well." Her family group leader added that part of the bonfire also included informal chances to talk about what they had experienced thus far at BLAST. From these types of conversations, she experienced what can be called growth in interpersonal communication skills.

In addition to these conversations, there was a chance for Kate to learn from observing the collective group of campers during activities. During Bafa Bafa, she was able to watch how others acted in certain situations and then make insights about these behaviors. After returning to the original Beta group from visiting the opposing Alpha group, she felt like being treated like a traitor by others in the group, and she was isolated upon re-entering her Beta group. She stated that this activity was interesting because it showed how quickly people could lose trust when she abandoned the group and how their intentions towards her changed. Her family group leader also talked about how seeing different points of view helped the campers learn from this activity, "And like I said, whether the kids are able to see those different perspectives, you can kind of understand each other." His thoughts on this activity emphasized how Kate learned from the experience by taking in what she saw in others and learn from the experience.

Theme 2: Making New Experiences. Under the theme of making new experiences, the data analysis showed how reflecting on novel moments impacted Kate's personal meaning of

BLAST. These moments were divided into multiple sub-themes. The first sub-theme was the idea of new experiences. Kate had reportedly been to several leadership development experiences prior to BLAST through her longstanding experience with student council and GASC. However, numerous times in the data, she never participated in similar activities prior to BLAST. In the Talent Show, she never performed in a dance routine skit prior to the opportunity at BLAST. Even though her family did not win the talent show, she described it as a fun experience never done before BLAST. She never experienced a bonfire before as a typical summer camp experience. In fact, her only prior experience with anything similar was through movies and television. The Dance Line activity was a challenge because, again, she had never done anything like this exercise before BLAST. Kate described these activities as impacting her personal and leadership development. One phrase she mentioned for many of these new experiences was it put her out of her introverted shell. This shell was significant because Kate believed that one of the purposes of BLAST is to, "...[break] down your outer social shell to develop your true, introspective self and be vulnerable to others." In her documents, the photo of her covered in shaving cream also highlighted an experience she had never had before BLAST. These new experiences resulted in her stating that part of her growth at BLAST was through these experiences that caused to broaden her horizons to new ideas and people.

The second sub-theme that affected her experiences was the idea of mystery or revelation surrounding these experiences. During the opening session when Kate heard the lead clinician state that they were not prepared for what was in store. Kate confronted this notion of not understanding what was going to happen. During the Leadership Quadrant activity, Kate and the campers were given instructions for the poster activity without being told its purpose until the end when Kate had what she called the "Aha moment." She described this revelation only

arriving after the conclusion of the activity during the family group discussion that occurred later in the evening. Her family group leader made a similar remark, "...seeing their leadership style in action without them even realizing what's happening." Kate made observations about what transpired during this activity to create her own meaning of the BLAST experience.

This kind of mysterious experience occurred several times throughout BLAST where the experience would not make sense until the end such as the Bafa Bafa and Chaos activities. Although originally shocked at the turn of events during Bafa Bafa, Kate reported that she understood at the end of this activity how easily this situation could play out in the real world. She was relieved that it was only a simulation. During the Chaos activity, her family group leader described how the activity's mystery affected Kate and the other participants, "...I remember all the kids just standing there confused." At the conclusion of this activity, Kate admitted she did not like the activity while doing it, but also said that it made sense. She shared that "...then once we were finally there, I was like, okay, I kind of get where he was coming from," referring to understanding the purpose of the activity and how it transpired. In these activities as well, there was also a strong notion of confusion and lack of understanding, which the data showed multiple times. The thought of mystery was evident in this notion because in that confusion, Kate did not know what was going on which added to the mystery of the activity.

The most impactful events that Kate mentioned were also reportedly the most fun to her. A part of her personal development occurred during the Family Olympics where she remarked about the importance of working as a team. This competition was also where she indicated that she had the most fun during BLAST. Of the spirited events that occurred during the Family Olympics, one event that was poignant to Kate was the time when her family group mistakenly thought they had won a particular game and completed a "victory lap" because they were so

caught up in the moment of the Family Olympics. Even though Kate's family group did lose this game, Kate remarked that after she felt "kind of like on a high" from the exciting events that had unfolded she felt positive and delighted during the events regardless of the outcome. Her family group leader pointed out that some of this energy that encompassed the group was a competitive group, Kate included especially. In her photos, she smiled in every photo to highlight the positive and fun environment during the Family Olympics as well as other activities. The Talent Show was also a large part an impact on her development as a leader and as an individual, and she again mentioned how fun this competitive event was. The high-spirited nature of the campers and the activities of BLAST aided Kate to have those new experiences and to find meaning in these activities.

Theme 3: Change in Self. After the data analysis, self-development was a supported theme. At the conclusion of the second interview, she was asked to describe how she changed at BLAST. Her response included describing how she broadened her horizons as a result of the new experiences and new peers that she met. There were several new experiences that Kate had at BLAST that had an impact on personal development. She believed that Take a Stand was more about "growing as people," than growing as leaders. This growth could be described as developing their own ideas and sense of value in these real-world scenarios. The cause of this growth could be the fact that she felt at ease talking about these topics with new peers, whereas she admitted to avoiding such difficult topics in conversations prior to BLAST out of fear of being judged negatively for her opinions. She expressed the reflection, "I know these people so much better, but I also like respect their opinion regardless of like, whether they agree or disagree with me." Her family group leader described how Take a Stand was potentially difficult for the participants because, "...you're talking about things that are perceived as controversial

and awkward in our society.” For Kate, feeling awkward appeared also during Bafa Bafa when she was made to feel like an outsider for the first time. When she was forced into a chair because she had left the Beta society and returned, she shared that “...they actually made me feel like I was an outsider. Like I felt like I was, they literally hated me because I left them.” This feeling, she said, was a new experience for her. She saw herself typically as someone who easily fits in and never felt like an outsider prior to this exercise.

Also suggested in the data that a shift in Kate’s overall attitude and abilities occurred. In the data, examples showed a person who started as being somewhat reserved transformed into a person more willing to have open and potentially difficult conversations with others. One key example was her story of how competitiveness was eclipsed by seeing others succeed instead. She was not expecting a shift in pride she had for the award recipients at the Banquet. Her family group leader stated that he also saw this change as well. In regard to the preparations for the Banquet decorations, Kate shared how the anxious and competitive side of wanting to have the best decorations changed to a different feeling, “...like the sense of optimism, um, you get just, you gotta do what you gotta do and it’ll end up working out.” Through these innovative ideas and reflections, the shift in Kate’s overall attitude could be seen. Her family group leader noted a large transformation in Kate by displaying vulnerability. He further added how the lead clinician used this activity to “bring out a personality.” After being asked if he saw this kind of development in Kate, he responded she had, “She, you know, she had that same personality now, but she was able to take that personality and use it for good, use it for improving her leadership.” His metaphor of Kate as raw goods being transformed supported this idea as well.

Theme 4: Real World Application. The theme of how the different activities applied to the real world was a theme that originated in activities not necessarily real-world activities. For

example, Bafa Bafa was a simulation, but the lessons and ideas Kate gained from that activity were very much applicable to the real world. She discussed one key lesson learned from Bafa Bafa that, “It encouraged me to become more socially and culturally aware of what's going on in the United States.” Although it was an imaginary set of societies, the impact it had on Kate was very real; she found a real method to apply what she learned to the real world. Secondly, her family group leader also discussed the importance of Take a Stand, “We’re not going to agree with everybody, but we also can be respectful to one another, and I think that’s something that that exercise teaches a hundred percent.” Being respectful to a difference of opinion was one lesson that this group leader believed Kate learned from the Take a Stand activity. During the Chaos activity, Kate concluded that the activity taught her a solution to everything existed among other ideas applicable to the real world. In both of these examples, like many others, the activity was not necessarily an event likely to happen in her real life, but Kate still found that what she experienced was applicable to her life regardless.

Conclusions

As a result of BLAST, this experience impacted Kate’s identity development like it affected her leadership development through her increased ability to establish relationships and to communicate on a more interpersonal level. Her identity development occurred through the exposure to new experiences that forced her to try new activities and to interact with new peers. She was able to explore new ideas through the activities at BLAST by participating in activities she had never experienced prior to the camp. Being able to meet people and hear their experiences allowed Kate to explore her own ideas and reconsider what she knew to be true for herself. As an additional sign of development, she became somewhat more optimistic and more extroverted through as a result of attending BLAST. In theoretical terms, this increase in pro-

social behavior was also indicative that she progressed in developing her identity according to Marcia's framework. As for her leadership development, it can be said from the data analysis that the largest impact was on her ability to communicate with others and establish new relationships. With interpersonal communication being an essential aspect of leadership development, Kate was given opportunities during the various activities to develop this skill. These developing opportunities were evident in activities, in discussions after these activities, or in the moments when she was able to make new relationships. Her communication skills were developed in opportunities where the goal was explicitly to develop effective communication skill and other times it was implicit through the act of the activity where communication was a part of the activity. So, from the data and their analysis, it could be suggested that Kate experienced leadership and personal development at BLAST through new relationships and new opportunities.

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY 2: LYNN

The second case report is included in this chapter. Following a similar structure of the previous case report, it begins with the profile of the case participant and summaries of her two interviews. Her group leader is profiled, and his interview is then summarized. The discussion of the documents she shared comes next before the case assertions and their analysis.

Profile of Participant

Lynn was one of the older cases of this study. At the time of Bringing Leadership and Students Together (BLAST) 2019, she was preparing for her senior year at a competitive high school in Georgia. However, at the time of the data collection in July and August of 2020, she was a first-year student at a large public university. One of the details about Lynn's experience with BLAST 2019 was one of the first times she spent such an extended length of time away from her family without communicating with them. She had just joined her school's student council during the prior school year. She explained that her decision to attend BLAST was the result of a sense of obligation given her leadership role in student council. Regardless of her motivation, she overwhelmingly reported a positive and fruitful experience at BLAST.

Lynn described herself as someone shy and reserved. Her inclination to observing was something her family group leader noticed, "She definitely is very analytical, and she, like, writes everything down." He added she would volunteer to take notes for the group often and was also the only participant who showed taking notes during the BLAST modules. He also called her an active listener who, "was very interested in hearing other people's perspectives before sharing hers." This behavior was illustrated in her description of the Chaos activity, "When it comes to a lot of like tension, tense situations, I tend to sit back and analyze the

situation to see what went wrong.” After making observations about the activity, she shared her opinions during the activity. Her family group leader described her as a *thinker* borrowing from the Leadership Quadrant activity being analytical and loving to making lists. Lynn also had an interest in art demonstrated by volunteering to illustrate the party poster her group made during the Leadership Quadrant activity and other events. Her family group leader confirmed that she was a creative person in his opinion.

Even with this attitude, what may be called timid, she was described as “very sweet,” “personable,” and “very supportive” by her family group leader. Working with her on the GASC Executive Board after BLAST, he had the opportunity to work with her in a different environment and viewed her very task-oriented and motivated to complete tasks, “...you can tell she’s literally on top of everything, like she has a deadline, she’s going to get it done.” Combining the idea of her dedication to finishing a task and positive treatment of others, her family group leader concluded she was well-rounded. However, he also stated that she may work too hard. In terms of her leadership ability, he remarked that she was a strong leader who knew that “...she was kind of a role model and that she needed to set the tone.” He supposed she needed to be a role model because of the Executive Board of GASC position she held that year. One aspect of Lynn funny to the group leader was her tendency to fall asleep during the late evening activities, “...she would literally like fall asleep and all of us would be talking.” He attributed this habit to her brain being overloaded with stimulus from the activities and just becoming tired from the day’s events.

Summary of Participant Interviews

Both interviews occurred on a Saturday morning. Lynn lived up to her description of being pensive as she would take some pauses to think about her answer to some questions. She

was enthusiastic about the interviews, but somewhat clinical in certain times to make sure answers had no possibility of being deemed incorrect or inaccurate. Of the four cases in this study, Lynn recalled the most specific minute details including the names of certain buildings used. Her interviews were also some of the longest in terms of length with the most data in pages transcribed. Her summary reflected both her description of experiences and what she learned from the activities in the interviews.

One large aspect of BLAST for Lynn was exposing her to new people and possibilities, especially her family group. Her family group leader and junior group leader were the first people she described meeting when arriving at BLAST. She mentioned meeting other BLAST participants, like fellow family group members, allowed her to meet, "...so many different people who are just the complete opposite of me who lived in a different part of Georgia." During the first session with her family group, she said, "No one knew each other, but everyone was putting for efforts to get to know each other and bond as a family." Further sharing, this exposure allowed everyone to share their own idiosyncrasies and talents which led to them bonding as, "...a diverse, actual family just meeting each other." She described how she met other adolescents who were different culturally and geographically. Even with these differences, she shared how the family group members "...would find ways where we all could connect as a whole family, which helped break the barrier between group mates and a connected family." She recognized that the differences among her family group members were in contrast to her school life where the student body was homogenous. These connections made her feel like a "brighter," more rounded person when it came to meeting new people because of the new perspectives saw and heard.

She also described her family group during the second day's morning activities during the Rap Battle activity. It was big moment because when no one in the rest of her family group was willing to be the rapper for the skit, she decided to do so. This choice was because "...it's good to do something that I'm not comfortable with." Within her family group after this and other experiences, one thing that stood out to Lynn was how, "...it showed me that you really don't have to know these people for a long time to establish close connections with them." During the second interview, she described this moment in terms of what she learned from it, "I think BLAST changed my values in the way that it's kind of similar to, 'You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.'" Although she remembered the rap battle being a struggle for her family group to accomplish, afterwards she learned to be less timid when it came to opportunity.

She then started to describe the events of the first day, with the Leadership Quadrant activity the first one recalled. She referred this activity as a test to discover how much an individual was "...an introvert or an extrovert and how much of a task- or emotional-related person." She was not surprised at her results because the same activity was completed a few weeks prior to BLAST. From the previous experience, she scored in between two separate groups, so landing in one of the two was not surprising. She then started to see the behavior aspects of her quadrant come to life as her group started creating the party poster. She commented how this activity showed, "...how one specific set of behavior styles work together compared to having maybe a mix of different styles." She also talked about how this activity was impactful on her family group during the conversations or activities:

Whenever we would see something, that aligned someone's style, we would mention it.

Because of that, we were all very aware of how we would interact with one another. And

because we were more cautious of that activity, I think that allowed us to be able to know how to deeply communicate with each other, beyond it being like a difference in style. Seeing how her group worked together was a topic mentioned during multiple activities she discussed in the interview. As a result of this activity, Lynn tried to become more flexible in connecting with new people and with herself. This activity showed where her skills and values were and how she could modify these traits to work with new people as a result of seeing how the different traits of the quadrants work in tandem. She also learned to compromise some of her traits to better work with others who did not have the same traits.

She tried to recall other activities completed during BLAST's first day. She included describing how her group had to make a family group sign and a roll call chant. She said these tasks were delegated based on "...who is more of maybe artistic versus who is more coordinated when coming up with a roll call chant." Delegations were used multiple times in her descriptions of her family group's task completion methods. She also described the lead clinician as very energetic and "not afraid to be himself," which taught her to be "authentic." She used this term to describe how she believed a leader did not have to have a precise "cookie cutter," personality in order to be a good leader.

Next, the conversation moved to the next day when Lynn had exhausted all her memories of the first day. The first lesson she recalled was the activity to practice effective communication. She described the different conversations where she spoke to a partner who was either actively listening or ignoring her talk. She remembered how she felt neglected by the partner when she was talking during the latter portion. She detailed how both were following the instructions precisely that led to the impact on her leadership experienced during this activity:

It showed me that, while it is important to listen, it's also important that your body language and the way you present yourself is also very important as well because, even though you may be actively listening, it may not show it.

She concluded describing this activity by explaining how the lack of effective communication could result in a barrier between two people trying to communicate. She learned how to think about what was happening during the conversation and "...also out of the situation as well in order to fully get the big picture about what's going on." She also mentioned how the activity as a whole was a demonstration of the importance of body language. She was previously aware of how important body language was in a conversation, but this activity was an authentic demonstration of that importance.

The conversation then continued to the Bunker Activity. This group activity was one of the only experiences about which she struggled remembering the most specific details. She described it as, "...based on the character we were given, we had to, oh so it was, out of a group of characters, a certain number had to stay alive..." Her group started by being rational in her family group's discussion, but Lynn said that it became very irrational in the end. This change was partly due to the slow progress they made initially. She described how they worked together to choose the survivors using a simple democratic, majority-rule vote with each person having a short amount of time to plea to be one of the survivors in the imaginary bunker. She believed this activity tested, "...how we communicated with each other during a very short timeframe." One lesson learned was how to be concise with her message when speaking. She also had the opportunity to observe how she acted with others, "I think that activity showed me how I, as a person, interact with people." She tended to absorb all the information before drawing a conclusion. During the second interview, she spoke about how this experience was one time

where she was put into a setting where she had to understand communication with others such as knowing when to voice her ideas instead of being more introverted.

The next major activity she remembered was the Take a Stand activity. Of all the discussions they had during this event, the one topic on the right to bear firearms resonated because she especially spoke about the experience during that discussion. She discussed how being forced to make a decision about her beliefs and opinions with only minimal information was “eye-opening.” She mentioned how many people showed a change of opinion during this conversation once the dialogues began:

Like, for example, I know that I had a friend initially, a lot of people, were opposed to, bearing arms and, the person was, news, an example of how, his or her, father's house was robbed and, in the middle of the night and because he had a weapon and I don't recall whether he used it out of self-defense or not, but, the person's father was put in danger and because, he stated that example of how he was able to defend the father was able to defend himself a lot of persons switch perspectives on that, on that issue.

Then, the discussion turned to what she learned about being a leader from this activity. She mentioned that the activity was about civil discourse and how important to “keep yourself very intact and present while listening to the other person.” During the second interview, she shared the realization that, “...I truly do not know a lot about what’s going on in society...” As a result, since BLAST, she tried to learn more about current events in her immediate community and more.

The next aspect of BLAST Lynn described was the Family Olympics. When asked to describe what stood out from those competitions, she mentioned the challenge where the family group believed they had won a challenge involving scooter boards, but unfortunately, they had

not won. Even though they lost, Lynn recalled that, “We bonded over failure” and that this experience was about having fun. She also mentioned that she learned how winning was not always the goal of working with a team, “...when working with other people, sometimes it’s not necessarily about getting to the end.” Not winning was in direct contrast to her usual competitive nature. During the second interview, she shared that this activity emphasized the idea of teamwork. She repeated the idea of connecting with her family group members in describing the Family Olympics and making strong bonds, “And it’s just connecting with those people during those stressful moments [that] brings a deeper level of intimacy.” She connected this mindset at BLAST to using a similarly positive mindset with her peers during the stressful time of applying to colleges and when working on a prom committee at her high school.

Although not discussed much in the interview, Lynn mentioned the bonfire as an opportunity to be with the other BLAST participants in a “cozy, warm, welcoming atmosphere.” The bonfire was one of the first bonfires ever attended. This activity was “more everyone as a camp, camping together, and it was just fun.” While it was not a leadership activity, the bonfire was an important activity because, “...it’s very important to just be able to like, be comfortable with the people around you.” She also mentioned this activity helped her see the importance of balancing between focusing on completing tasks and focusing on other aspects of life. From the new relationships, she later knew there was “...more to life than just like your academics or where you went to high school.” Lynn also noted how BLAST offered new experiences she never would have considered before attending the camp and how she was shaped by her education and life experiences. She also mentioned how, “BLAST, as a whole, breaks down your outer shell to develop your true, introspective self and be vulnerable to others.”

She then recalled events of the Bafa Bafa activity, referred to as a scenario of different islands. She highlighted the differences between the groups such as different forms of communication or different perspectives of each group. After describing her group's identity as "very straight forward...we had our inner confidence," she mentioned that the other group "...was kind of offsetting since it was just so drastically different." From these differences, Lynn then started talking about the conflicts that arose from these differences including things that she believed were not supposed to occur during the activity. After the conclusion of Bafa Bafa, Lynn discussed how the activity gave her a clearer perspective on society. She also connected the notions learned to being a leader and how to communicate with others from different backgrounds. During the second interview, she explained how learning about different perspectives was important because it could lead to negative events. The activity even encouraged her to become more aware of current events in the United States.

After lunch that same day, Lynn remembered BLAST campers were confronted with the Chaos activity. Lynn thought they were returning for another general session with the lead clinician, but "...everyone came into the room in Callaway and then the entire room was just trashed with like toys everywhere." Lynn shared her initial reaction to this activity, "Everyone was very confused and scared to be quite honest." It was a challenge for the group as it had to "come forth together and to listen to each other's ideas," because everyone was unsure of what was transpiring that resulted in some feeling stressed by the activity. She recognized that the activity was "...testing who you are and how you communicate with others and a situation where you weren't supposed to know about that sort of situation." The group decided to give everyone a chance to "...kind of pitch like their problem-solving ideas..." and then "...eventually we all came together to like clean the room and then like rearrange the chairs as they were." Lynn

spoke of being less vocal than others at first, “I tend to sit back and analyze the situation to see like what went wrong.” She observed others trying to re-align their thoughts together. Eventually, the campers did resolve the activity. This event taught Lynn about conflict resolution and working together:

I felt like as a group, we could have done better in terms of like tackling the problem, because I remember our told us it took us 40 minutes to get the room back to normal and, it just, it kinda showed me a lot on how, it's just like, because like everyone's like viewpoint is different. It's very hard to just control, how other people felt. So, I felt very, I didn't learn that in like similar situations in my life that I would need to just like make sure to not be hot-headed, to stay level and look at the problem with, with rational reason, reasoning.

She concluded this activity also taught about listening to others, especially in a tense situation, and how a group effort was needed to confront adversity.

Moving on to the last day of BLAST, the first activity Lynn recalled was the Dance Line activity. Her biggest memory was making sure no one else used the same dance move as they were not allowed to repeat one. Lynn described a feeling of “...like a spike of energy that like filled me...” after this activity. She described during the second interview how this physical activity pushed her to “not being afraid to be yourself” and more so being comfortable with herself. The last day also included the improvisation skit during the Talent Show. Lynn described the end result as a “poorly rehearsed skit,” but she said that it did help with some ideas about teamwork. She mentioned the intimate connections with her family group members emphasized during the activity where “...we just like, kind of cherishing our memories and our team as a whole.” She mentioned their brainstorming session for this skit although they did not

succeed. Even so, Lynn said, “As much as we messed up, we messed up together and that was what mattered to us.” Personally, Lynn learned about balance with teamwork, “It showed me while it is good to let loose. It's also good to not completely go off track and away from what you're supposed to do.”

Lynn described her growth in leadership development at BLAST in terms of intellectual understanding. She described learning about herself through the BLAST experience. She also identified added terms used in terms of understanding leadership abilities and beliefs. She put leadership dynamics and practices into better use and could articulate them better with this new vocabulary. She was now a more thoughtful and analytical person when working in collaborative situations because of the activities involving working or communicating with others. When asked about the meaning of BLAST, she covered multiple facets of learning:

I think BLAST for me is an opportunity to learn more about yourself, where you come from, how you are shaped, the way you are and how, the way you perceive yourself affects the way you interact with the things around you.

Lynn learned much more could be learned about herself through new experiences.

Lynn’s personal development after attending BLAST could be described as new growth when asked about it during the second interview. The growth was the result of being “forced to be uncomfortable” by completing activities that she would never do and completing them with people she had not met prior to BLAST. From these actions, she learned more about who she was as a person and how she interacted with others. When asked specifically about how BLAST changed her, Lynn described herself as more open-minded to others, and it was “pretty life-changing.” She also became more open-minded of herself and accepted who she was as an individual. She attributed this growth to the new relationships created with her family group

members coupled with the fact that the time of BLAST was the longest she had gone without speaking to her parents. She also pointed out in this second interview a link between making new connections with new peers to also how she made a choice to get out of her comfort zone and “exploring the unknown.” As far as life-changing, one possible aspect of that was a “realization of self-discovery” Lynn experienced. She learned far more about who she was as a person, not just as a leader.

Summary of Group Leader Interview

The conversation with Lynn’s family group leader was on a Saturday morning. As this was his second interview, he was more comfortable with the proceedings. Although this interview was his second time participating for the study, his responses about direct experience with her were different as the focus was Lynn. He started the interview with a description of Lynn. He mentioned that she was sweet and analytical. He continued to describe how she liked to write everything down in her family group, and she even became the “note taker” during family activities usually. He also described her as attentive and as someone who would contribute to the family group’s conversations. He also marked her as someone who was more of a listener, but attributed to her being a *thinker* as revealed during the Leadership Quadrant activity. Also, he described her interactions with others in the family group and her overall demeanor as positive. Then, he discussed how she was a task-oriented person “on top of everything” when she had a deadline to meet. From all of these details, he summarized it by saying that she was a well-rounded person. He also talked about the family group overall as a very enthusiastic group and his belief that Lynn positively influenced the tone within the group. He responded that, “...she did realize that she knows she was kind of a role model...” when asked about her role as an executive board member influencing her behavior with the group.

He then discussed the Rap Battle. His initial description of his family group's performance was "a little interesting," but said so with a tone of sarcasm. He did remember Lynn being highly active as she was in all the activities. He recalled her being active in creating the lyrics to the rap. He recalled their rap being about leadership. Rather than being active in the rap, he chose to be more of a facilitator and let the group develop the rap without his influence. He continued to give details of how active she was with the creation of the rap, and then confirmed her participation while looking at one of photos showing her from the skit, "I'm looking at these pictures, and she's actually standing right in the front of the center." He believed that this activity helped the group to bond while they had fun.

The next topic of discussion was the bonfire. He referred to this BLAST tradition as a culminating event where "...the kids just kind of cut loose and have fun." He described it as a fun event in multiple statements in fact. Although he did not recall specifically any memories of Lynn during the bonfire, he did give details about what someone like Lynn would have experienced. He believed that this activity would have pushed her "out of her comfort zone" because he believed that sometimes she puts accomplishing the task at hand ahead of enjoyment. He pointed out that as a student in a very selective school, "if you go to [Lynn's high school], you're probably stressed." He then said that coming to BLAST could leave students feeling refreshed, and that was what would have happened to campers like Lynn.

The Chaos activity was one of the group leader's "favorite things we do at BLAST camp." When reflecting on Lynn, he said he believed this activity made her feel stressed. He recalled how the whole group of participants gathered in a circle in an attempt to solve the issue as a group:

...They were just arguing, not arguing, but like one person would talk and somebody would totally disregard their idea and the next person would talk and they would disregard that idea. And that happened for a while. Like that happened for a good bit. The group leader then shifted to explaining the debriefing conversation after this exercise of what was more important, "...that activity in isolation doesn't mean much, but once you put it all together with a debrief, I think it's very beneficial." The benefit, he said, was that the Lynn gained insight into questions such as, "circumstances might be out of control and like things might happen in our life, but it's like, what we, we do we do with that chaos?" The debrief conversation after the activity was the important aspect of it according to the group leader.

The final portion of the interview covered concluding thoughts and impressions of Lynn and her experiences. He said that he believed that "[Lynn] realized who she was as a leader" through her time at BLAST. Her leadership prior to BLAST was a "raw material" and at the conclusion of BLAST, it was more of "a finished product." She learned how to use her tools and strengths as a leader better in his opinion. He also mentioned that she seemed "a lot more comfortable in her skin" and knowing who she was as a leader.

Summary of Documents

Lynn submitted a wide array of documents from her BLAST experience. Her ample collection was partly due to her responsibilities to the GASC Executive Board. All of her documents were submitted through a shared Google Folder that was organized into Mementos, Videos, and Photos.

The Mementos folder was also broken down into other categories based on the document's nature or purpose. In the Mementos folder, she shared five documents and a photo of her BLAST welcome package of materials in her family group's color such as a bandana and

necklace. These documents included two pages of her written notes and her Leadership Practices Inventory results. She also had a document that was a final written exercise not discussed in her interviews called the Leadership Legacy. She kept these paper documents because it would help her remember what "...I was as a leader and what I wanted to do with my leadership legacy." These two documents were also important because they reminded her to be "genuine to myself" and reminded her "how others act when they're in this leadership position and working with other group mates." She also spoke how these documents were related to her desire to improve who she was as a person through innovation, experimentation, and risks.

She shared three different video clips in the second folder. Two videos were similar in content, but one was created as the official video used by the GASC organization and the shorter one was used to be presented on the GASC Instagram profile. The official video was almost four minutes long and shows photos and videos throughout all the activities of BLAST set to music. Lynn described this video as all-inclusive, "I wanted to include a video that captured all the things that happened at that BLAST..." The second video was similar to the first one but edited to be only 43 seconds long. The third video was only six seconds in length, and it showed Lynn facing the camera while wearing glowsticks at the impromptu dance social where the campers danced and sang along to songs playing on an audio system. She did not discuss this video much because "It was just some time for us to enjoy ourselves while listening to music." She also sent this video to her parents that night realizing this was the first communicating with her parents throughout the entire time at BLAST.

In the last folder, she split her photos into two categories: one for personal use and one for GASC. The first had 17 pictures in it, and the GASC folder contained 63 different photos. Lynn described nine photos specifically during the second interview. One photo showed her

smartphone's pedometer feature showing her average step count during the week of BLAST, "I was very impressed at how many steps I took compared to before camp." Other pictures she highlighted displayed the camaraderie with her fellow BLAST participants and the activities of BLAST, similar to how she described one photo that she had sent to her sister, "And I was just telling her, 'Oh look, look at the friends I made and look at what we're doing before I come back home.'" Other photos included a series of group shots of campers in various situations such as during the energizers, at the Bonfire, or when asked to take a photo by a group of campers who went to the same school, "...one of them stopped me and asked if the [redacted] school executive members could get a photo together." From the photos she did not mention specifically, they all were similar in scope to one of the photos she took of her fellow BLAST participants to be either portraits or group photos throughout the experience.

Case Assertions

The analysis of data from the conversations with Lynn and her family group leader was coupled with process coding of the photos and other realia. Using the same coding procedures as the previous case, 612 codes were found through In Vivo coding; 589, Values coding; and 13, Process coding. These codes were analyzed through Axial coding to develop 44 categories. Their analysis was concluded with three themes from Lynn's case when these categories were sorted into super- and sub-ordinate categories using the same strategies that were used for the previous case. Each theme contains one or more sub-theme as a result of this re-categorization.

Theme 1: Collaborative experience. This theme encompassed all the ideas and impressions of how much BLAST was a collaborative experience for Lynn. There was support in the data that BLAST was very much a group-based experience for her.

The engagement with others in her family group was a very prominent aspect of Lynn's experience at BLAST. The connections she made with her family group played a large part throughout many activities and experiences, and they were also integral to her experiential learning according to the data. When asked about her family and the relationships developed with her family group members, she described the idea that, "You really don't have to know these people for a long time to establish close connections to them." Lynn expressed that being with a family group helped her understand how to make deeper connections with others to promote more productive conversations. This idea was promoted in the data at multiple points. As her group was very spirited, showing the team spirit would be apparent in her experiences with her family group. In her documents, she showed a picture of the materials such as a bandana and a beaded necklace in the group's selected color. Lynn said that they always wore their color to all the activities in addition to being a very spirited group. Lynn also said that these deep connections showed her how to be a brighter person who was not afraid to talk to new people as a result of seeing how connections with her family group occurred. Lynn concluded the second interview by confirming that one of the most impactful moments of BLAST was coming together with her family group. Once that family group bond was made through interactions and activities, Lynn described her family group interactions as a positive and impactful experience throughout the camp.

Some activities allowed Lynn to make observations about others and learn from what she experienced with the family group and other BLAST participants. For instance, the Chaos activity was more provoking to Lynn once there was time to reflect on and discuss the observations of her behavior and the behavior of others. Her family group leader demonstrated how realizations and new ideas were the result of the Chaos activity when he proposed, "...that's

always the lesson with Chaos is like, what do you do from there?” The group leader demonstrated how the discussion after the Chaos activity was where the learning occurred, and only through discussing the meaning in the experience emerged. In Bafa Bafa, she continued to make observations that would eventually become new ideas. Lynn stated clearly that this activity impacted her leadership development by giving her a new perspective by watching the other BLAST participants. In describing this experience, she made judgements about the actions of others during this activity as to whether they were supposed to transpire or not. Her family group leader described how Lynn learned a certain degree of empathy towards others who were different in the family group and from activities like Bafa Bafa. Lynn confirmed this same idea when disclosing how she wanted to become “more socially and culturally aware of what’s going on in the United States.”

Certain activities like the Bunker activity allowed opportunities to practice communication skills, but Lynn was also able to learn from interactions with others in these collaborative activities. Lynn’s engagement with the family group was a vehicle by which she was able to make important discoveries about group collaboration. Lynn’s family group took a rational approach at the beginning of the Bunker activity as she disclosed, “We went around the circle, our family, and we would talk about just what were the strengths of our occupation, what were the weaknesses.” Lynn noticed as time progressed, they were making slow progress. With time running out, she described how the decision-making process for her family group became less rational and more acerbic, “So towards the end, we kind of just took it on a very irrational basis. And we were like, ‘Oh, maybe like you’re a mother. Well, you’re going to die anyways...’” So, she saw how communication skills were all that more important in terms of completing the activity in a collective and rational manner. She also learned to participate in a

group collaboration as she described, "...like a majority may think a certain way...it may not be the best way to go per se. So, it's not always a bad thing to just kind of chip in an idea."

Lastly, Lynn was able to grow in her mindset of society by being with others at BLAST. She mentioned on multiple occasions how she made comparisons between what happened with others at BLAST to what happened in her personal life. Relating to observations on the teamwork observed and exhibited during the Family Olympics, Lynn learned, "Teamwork is ultimately what brings people together and not the end result itself." Working with her family group during the Family Olympics was similar to the types of conflicts she discussed experiencing working on the Prom Committee at her school. Her experiences at BLAST, as she stated, helped her find some new point of view for that situation in school. As a result of Take a Stand and Bafa Bafa, she opened her mind and perspective to new points of views and decidedly made a point of learning more about the world and exposing herself to ideas not considered in the past. She described how the real examples used in the scenarios led her to recognize the lack of experience and knowledge she had on many facets of society. Her family group leader also discussed how they learned about real world actions in these activities. Since her time at BLAST, she had made choices to be more pro-active in her decision making, and in learning more about what is happening in the world and in herself. This choice to learn about new ideas was a result of meeting new people and their new ideas and perspectives at BLAST.

Theme 2: Self-Reflection and Growth. The theme of self-reflection and growth was apparent in the data and experiences that showed Lynn's self-observations and how she changed during BLAST. There were three primary areas of this theme that demonstrated how Lynn perceived herself internally, how she experienced internal growth, and how she understood that growth for her leadership and identity development.

Her self-reflection included moments where Lynn was able to recognize parts of her identity and personality. In the Quadrant Activity, she pointed out her leadership behaviors and how they fit into her identity. She stated specifically that this activity was, “The first step to finding out who you are as an individual leader,” by forcing Lynn to decide how she would act in given situations across the two parameters. Lynn said that this activity ended with her taking note of her personal values and beliefs to see how they affected her actions. Additionally, she recognized the importance of being flexible with others through compromising as she explained, “I compromised a bit of mine, of my most comfortable zone in order to be flexible and maybe be more social with them in order to reach out to different types of people.” This activity was impactful as an internal experience where it very much was just a deep and personal development. More evidence included the picture of her Leadership Practices Inventory results that she kept. To Lynn, she affirmed that she is, “a person who likes to like seek improvement.” If she had not participated in this activity, she may not have had an opportunity to self-examine and find the pattern in her behavior for this leadership practice. These activities, as she described and reflected on them, would be used to demonstrate how she was able to reflect on individual parts of her identity and development.

Lynn had many positive feelings from her experiences at BLAST, but there was data that supported Lynn’s BLAST experience including a range of positive and negative experiences. She had to face challenges that left her lost, confused, struggling with her own ideas, or anxious such as in the Dance Line, Chaos, and Rap Battle activities. In the Dance Line, she referred to the potentially “nerve wracking” anxiety for the participants like herself. This anxiety was the result of being forced out of her personal comfort zone during this activity. Lynn reported a feeling of confusion during the Chaos activity as she was not expecting an activity like this one

immediately after lunch. Her family group leader described seeing the reactions of Lynn and the other participants as, “Some people come in with a shocked face...,” highlighting the fact that this experience was a surprising and confusing activity for the campers as it was so abruptly introduced to them. Her decision to volunteer as the leader of the Rap Battle performance reminded her of the importance of serving others in spite of being nervous or anxious to do so. However, she overcame all these obstacles and arrived at a place where she was able to reflect and learn from the experiences even though they started from a negative state of mind or emotion.

Lastly, Lynn recognized how her journey at BLAST led to her own change. She observed the changes in her behavior during several of the activities of BLAST as noted previously. She made the choice during the Rap Battle activity to be in the front of her group to lead the performance, which was a step into unfamiliar territory for her. For the family group, Lynn explained how she had to “take one for the team” and volunteered to be the rapper even though she admitted to not being adept at the spoken word form. During the performance, Lynn led her group from the front as their family group leader described the scene, “I’m looking at these pictures and she’s actually right in the front of the center.” This reported choice was a change from her usual behaviors and mannerisms typical to her personality before attending BLAST. Similarly, in the Dance Line, she also had to make a change where she had to put on a better version of herself to complete the activity. She used terms such as “let loose” and “going out of your comfort zone” that would be the integral pieces to completing this activity successfully. As a result, Lynn remembered feeling a “spike of energy that like filled me...a different person of a version of myself,” after she had taken her turn in the line. In these data, Lynn recognized personal change as a part of her BLAST journey.

Theme 3: Leadership is Dynamic. This theme was a minor theme, but embedded in Lynn's BLAST experience. It was also a theme connected and intertwined with the previous themes as it pertained to how Lynn saw herself as a leader. Supported in the data, Lynn learned how leaders and leadership were diverse and dynamic. For example, she learned multiple ways to be a leader and multiple ways to view a problem in the Leadership Quadrant activity. She described this activity as impactful because, "...each leadership and behavior style works together, it showed me how, one specific set of, behavior styles work together compared to have maybe having a mix of the different styles." The mix of leadership styles caused her to learn that leadership could be diverse in approach.

A second idea that Lynn expressed was the idea of having dynamic leadership lessons throughout BLAST. In her final reflections, she referred to many aspects of BLAST as a lesson or the applications of the lessons of BLAST to the various activities they completed. She spoke about all the new terms learned as a result of the experience:

BLAST put a lot of definitions, a lot of terms to my leadership abilities, because before coming to BLAST, I knew things like dynamics of leadership and the practices of leadership existed but going to BLAST showed me how not only thinking about those practices and dynamics are important, but also being articulate.

The unfamiliar terms learned during BLAST could be connected to the terms from the Leadership Quadrant and the Leadership Practice Inventory activities where categorizing terms were used to help Lynn and other participants understand their leadership styles and practices. With the Bafa Bafa activity, she described it as an opportunity to learn from the dynamic experience as compared to some other activities, "I know like the other, activities we did, like the civil discussion show, like our differences in real life. This one felt more of like an, a cultural

difference that can be applied...” Even though she saw a similar lesson in the Bafa Bafa activity learned in Take a Stand, she saw the lesson in a dynamic situation during Bafa Bafa. The idea of learning about the dynamics of leadership was an important aspect of Lynn’s BLAST experience.

Conclusion

Throughout BLAST, Lynn took what she experienced and put it into terms of lessons for self-development. On many occasions, she was forced by the experience to overcome novel challenges not encountered prior to BLAST such as meeting diverse people and unique activities. The challenge she faced was mostly internal when examining her leadership development. She saw BLAST as a learning opportunity of which she tried to take advantage of each moment. Possible relationships she developed at BLAST amplified her ability to learn through this experience in addition to personal motivation to learn. She was in a safe, fun, and positive environment; therefore, she would have possibly known that even in failure, she would gain something from the action chosen to follow. As for her identity development, she did demonstrate some theoretical aspects of Marcia’s paradigm. As BLAST was the first time reportedly away from her family and peers for an extended period of time, BLAST could have pushed her towards the gap between Identity Foreclosure and Moratorium. More to the point, she decidedly chose to start exploring more diverse points of view and learn more about diverse cultures as a direct effect of the Bafa Bafa activity. This desire and willingness to explore others’ points of views could be construed as an aspect of the Moratorium stage where exploration and release of prior ideas and commitments are essential. If so, then as a result of BLAST, it can be said that Lynn experienced personal leadership development and identity development through the collaborative and self-development experiences of BLAST.

CHAPTER VII

CASE STUDY 3: NATE

This case is the third of the collective case study. The presentation of this case will mimic the previous two. There is first a profile of the case participant followed by a summary of his two interviews. After, there is a brief profile of his family group leader prior to a summary of her interview. Lastly, there is a description of the documents shared by the case participant and then the presentation and discussion of the assertions of the case.

Profile of Participant

Nate was an African American male and currently a college student. Bringing Leadership and Students Together (BLAST) 2019 was during the summer before he began his senior year of high school. He was a part of his high school's swim team and a member of the school's student council. He did not report holding any significant office as a student council member. As a college student, he lived in a dormitory, but he reported living primarily with his mother during the time of BLAST 2019. The fact that he lived with one parent primarily and was an African American male made him a direct contrast to the typical demographics of Marcia's participants in his 1964 study, which made him a good case for the study.

Nate described conversations that he had with his peers when asked about his motivations to attend BLAST, "...they were telling me about it and telling me like sign up and stuff like that." He also described how he wanted to see the difference between BLAST and the annual Georgia Association of Student Councils (GASC) Convention, which he had attended in the past. He cited his peers' description of BLAST as his definitive decision to attend, "BLAST differs because it's more about the individual..." alluding to the idea the convention was specifically about development as a student council group in contrast to BLAST's mission. He also

described how he was interested in meeting other student council members throughout Georgia. With these motivations, he was eager to attend BLAST that summer.

He was not very self-centered when talking about his BLAST experiences. Nate was quicker to share anecdotes and stories about what his peers did at BLAST more than share about his own experiences. One strong characterization of his retelling of his BLAST experience certainly would be the collective experience highlighted repeatedly. For example, in discussing the Leadership Quadrant, he described the Socializer group, “Like for socializers, I think it was really like, it was a very good way of showing their attributes,” which was notable because he was not a Socializer himself. This detailed knowledge of others’ experiences was something unique about the interview data h provided.

Nate did not display an outgoing personality to his group leader. He was nicknamed “the quiet storm” by the clinician due to his quiet, but strong personality. His family group leader reiterated this though when she described him as, “He was one of our quiet kid members but still very involved.” She also mentioned that on the first day that he had to be asked directly to respond to questions asked in the family group setting. He was not a negative influence in this method as the family group leader said she enjoyed interacting with him. Another notable impression made on his family group leader is that he seemed not outwardly thrilled about some of the more energetic activities at first such as the roll calls and energizers. However, by the end of BLAST, she saw him change, albeit not to the extent to other BLAST participants. While Nate was not very bold and outgoing in most situations, he did become conversely more so in a competitive setting and in more collective scenarios. His family group leader noted specifically how he became highly active in the Family Olympics competitions that she associated with his competitive nature as a swimmer for his school’s swim team.

While he did come across as more reserved, he was a social person. When describing his leadership style results, he called himself more of a “people-person leader.” He mentioned joining the initial activities on the first day to meet the other participants as a way to jumpstart his experience. With his family group, he was competitive during certain activities. He also described using a given task at hand to solve the problem when needed. Social interaction was an important aspect to his experience in making bonds with other BLAST participants frequently.

Nate had one experience at BLAST that made him unique as a case study. Nate, along with several participants, violated the mandatory curfew and visitor restrictions on the final night of BLAST. They were given consequences including a required phone call to their parents to inform them of the situation. In the data, this event was not asked about directly, but he elected to discuss it in the last moments of the first interview. Nate did find this event to be a significant moment of his personal development.

Summary of Participant Interviews

Nate’s initial interview was the first one of the data-collection process to be collected. While the first interview was while he still lived at home, his second interview occurred when he was living in his college dormitory. Both interviews took place via Zoom in the mid-afternoon in July and early September. He was eager to participate in both conversations.

Starting the conversation at the moment he arrived at BLAST, he felt a “sense of security” when he saw a friend he knew from school. He described this feeling as, “...like I had somebody to back me up in a way...” However, he also said that the unknown people and events to transpire was also intriguing. After he finished unpacking in his cabin, he was directed to a common area to begin activities to meet the other campers. One icebreaker game involved

throwing a ball and having to name an animal associated with an element like earth or water. During these games was when he met new people, "...it was just like quickly like meet somebody who I don't know yet, could potentially be a good friend."

His next memory was meeting his family group. They chose a group name, as Nate described, by "just like randomly blurting out like different blue things." When asked about his family group, Nate remembered many specific names and details about various members of his family. He also mentioned how the family group included varying ages and experiences with student council. He then recalled how they had to create a roll call for their family group as a way to show team spirit. When it was just his family group, he recalled how completing icebreaker games and activities like the roll call helped with the interactions among family group members, "...it's just like conversations sparks out of the little things that came from the games and those little sparks build into more and more things." During the second interview, the discussion included how he noted one of his family members being significantly younger than the other family members, but still being an outspoken leader in the group, "...it's her leadership style being super assertive, being a director that really like came to like the front rather than her age and like her experience." Seeing her as a leader at her age showed him that limitations were set only by the self. He even drew a comparison to his first year of college and how he strived for anything he wanted to obtain or experience. He said in the second interview that one thing learned from BLAST was the best way to have the most positive and impactful experience was through participation, and then explained how getting involved on the college campus merely required him taking the steps to get involved.

The conversation shifted to talking about the Leadership Quadrant activity during the first interview. Nate did not remember most of the specific names of the activities discussed. He

pointed out the purpose of doing this activity while blind-folded was to be “really onto yourself,” meaning that the person focused on the self. After they had found their different quadrants, Nate recalled that his quadrant group designed a party invitation for a pajama party featuring household pets. He had difficulty remembering the name of his quadrant, so he called it “caretakers,” and then described the qualities of this group and how accurate it was for him, “...there was like while they’re being named, I was like, ‘Yeah, that’s true. That’s true. That’s true.’” When asked, he responded that this activity was impactful because “...it got you a sense for who everybody is within their selves...” He then described how understanding differences would be poignant in future activities so each individual’s strengths could be used effectively. He also remembered having to participate in an immersive part of this activity where the group had to pick a representative to explain why their quadrant was the best quadrant. This debate was a fun way to “claim the talent as your own” as it immersed him and fellow quadrant members in their quadrant’s positive attributes. In the second interview, he mentioned how these talents and attributes were more than just about leadership because they could also be styles of people and their personalities. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of his specific quadrant helped him beyond a leadership setting.

He did not remember much else about the first day without looking at photos, but he did share thoughts on the “little energizers.” He explained how these moments prior to sessions beginning involved doing a dance along to a YouTube clip from the Just Dance video game franchise. He mentioned how he and other boys would participate enthusiastically, “We would always like run up together and there's usually like four people. Cause they're trying to like super inclusive, like everybody together.” He added that he would just “go out like nobody’s watching.” When asked about what was meant, he clarified:

Because especially when you're trying to get a very good experience out of something or like a really fruitful experience, the only way to really get that is if you fully immerse yourself, like you can't expect to have the time of your life if you're watching from the outside cause you're not in it.

During the second interview, the discussion returned to his ideas about the energizers. He mentioned how it is "...easier to connect with people or to really grasp what you're doing or really feel involved with it." He also felt like his eyes were more open since then because a positive experience would require him to be willingly and actively involved. He described how this realization was something that arose after BLAST, "...it's not like BLAST I was like immediately got it." He also had one of those moments after BLAST to connect with. He finished this thought by explaining how the impact of these minor activities at BLAST will continue to grow and influence him.

The discussion of the first interview then moved to the second day of BLAST. The first session Nate recalled involved following instructions from the clinician without knowing what was transpiring, "So it was like, it was weird 'cause it's like, you never know what he's thinking or what the point of any of his activities are like where it's going to lead, but you're always like super interested." This activity was part of the communication module where the participants had to maintain eye contact with a partner across the room. Nate explained the purpose, "And it was all about the eye contact and just like giving like your, all your attention there." In giving his all attention by being focused on the activity at hand regardless of lacking situational understanding, he had a fuller experience that potentially became one of the changes and growth Nate reported experiencing at BLAST. He also mentioned that it was serious and somewhat uncomfortable to

complete this particular activity. As a concluding thought, he responded negatively when asked if he understood this particular activity's ultimate purpose.

When revisiting his description of this activity and the lead clinician during the second interview, Nate made a comparison of his BLAST experience to learning Calculus. He used the analogy of learning derivatives in Calculus to explain how the lead clinician used the activities of BLAST to foster learning:

Even though it's like, whenever you go to any Calculus class, they never, they never tell you there's an easier way when you're doing that first part. So, it's like, you think it's going to be so difficult for this whole time and just like preparing yourself for like the worst. And then you, once you've finished that topic, that like section of the unit, and they split to the easy part and it's like, 'Oh, this makes sense with this.' Like, it's that whole mystery of that buildup? Like what exactly is going on? Why is this going on? And then the mystery solved it's like told then you're like, 'Oh I get it now.'

In his analogy, Nate compared learning Calculus to learning at BLAST by saying the activities were difficult to understand initially, but once the activity was completed a reasonably understandable idea was gained from the experience. He continued saying that there was so much mystery at BLAST until the reveal of the activity's purpose became known. As a result of these experiences, and now as a college student, he was more open to mysteries to see where they lead rather than seeing them as an annoyance.

The next portion of the first interview surrounded the Family Olympics. He described this competition by giving details about the individual events that took place. He mentioned that this event was a positive time for his family group, "...just like random events that really just like bond you together as a group at the same time." He also shared how these various games

would allow distinct types of leadership traits to be highlighted, "...different people would like pop out and like it gave people different people, like moments to shine leadership wise," like when a family group member would offer a solution or idea. The final competition, the one involving tossing Cheetos onto a team member's head, was the one that stood out the most. He said this one stood out not because of the game itself, but of the chaotic fun that erupted afterward when all the BLAST participants began to throw the shaving cream at one another. After the Family Olympics, Nate reported feeling high energy. He said this energy was a mix of the competitive spirit from the Family Olympics combined with the energy that "...came from just the different little interactions that everybody had within their different like family groups." These interactions would lead to a wave of stronger bonds Nate reported having with family group members.

Further in the interview, he recalled another memory about one specific competition involving using inflatable circular tubes to be worn around the waist while two contestants try to push each other out of a circle like a Japanese sumo match. He reiterated the idea of energy and passion when describing one contestant's experience:

Like a girl from the green team went against [a male participant] from, from our team and [he]'s a big dude. And this girl is like, she's obviously not like his size, but she had no fear. Like she just ran up and just like the passion and the energy, just like really exciting.

He would describe later in the interview how this energy encapsulated the whole day, "The second day was ultimately very energetic." However, he did mention some observations he made during one event involving relaying water with cups as a team about how to communicate as a team, "...like the flow of information...needs to be like clear, concise." He was saying how

communication needed to have a specific message to be effectively heard and understood. After all these positive descriptions of the event, interestingly, he still did not see a significant development in himself as a result of this competition in the second interview.

He continued this idea of built-up energy while discussing the bonfire. He mentioned the large group rendition of camp songs and other songs that were popular childhood songs. He was not sure if he learned anything about leadership specifically from this event, but he did suppose, “It's very important to like bond and stuff.” He furthered this idea by describing how being a leader was easier when “...you know yourself...” which Nate described as living in the moment and what could also be named the authentic self. While he did not say much about this activity during the first interview, at its conclusion, he did mention that the bonfire was the best part of BLAST. The bonds he made then were beyond those from his family group, but with other BLAST participants. He said that it was an encapsulating activity where everyone was comfortable with one another that resulted in the positive atmosphere of the bonfire. However, Nate did not share much more about this experience during the second interview except that it was not a considerable experience on his personal development.

His next memory was the Take a Stand activity. For him, it was being split with other family groups and then, “...this was like the most serious topic or serious like activity during the whole BLAST experience.” He pointed out how it was not a debate, “...it wasn't an argument, but it was stating your case and your thoughts.” He mentioned that the activity was a way to see different mindsets of each member of the group. He observed how it was a civil activity, “Everybody listened to each other, and it just showed how much, like our bond was stronger than anything.” Nate described how these bonds were potentially stronger because everyone stated

his or her opinion without the fear of being ostracized or condemned. This positive environment made everyone feel safe to share.

When asked about the impact this activity had on his leadership abilities, he declared that it definitely did have one. He drew a contrast that discussing these topics was more difficult than the kinds of discussions held in high school. One juxtaposition he made was choosing a theme for the Homecoming Week at his school versus debating gun-ownership rights at BLAST. He highlighted one girl who was the only person on her side of the room regarding a topic. Nate noticed how she handled this situation, “She stayed confident stated her case...didn't like get super...she didn't get defensive at all.” He mentioned how this activity let him again see the mindsets of different people. He said that he felt relieved after this activity, “...it was like a weight off your shoulder,” because there was no longer a fear of sharing his thoughts or opinions. He concluded that even though these topics were clearly divisive, the civility of it resulted in no judgements against one another after the activity's conclusion. His confidence was reportedly affected by the fact it was a communal activity, “Everyone is participating in the game, and it was the only game, that discussion.” Even though everyone had different opinions, this activity forced him to declare what he believed through having to discuss the different ideas presented. As a result of discussing these topics, he said, “So there's no reason to be fearful of your thoughts.” He concluded his thoughts on this activity in the second interview reiterating that he was more confident as an individual to express opinions as a result of participating in this activity.

He then described the Bunker activity. He recalled the premise of the activity and how each person in his family group had both good and bad qualities about the character each person was portraying. Nate recalled how he was portraying a decorated police officer who had ties to

the Aryan society. It became a hectic activity as those marked to be a survivor would be switched for another person in his group once the lead clinician revealed the bad qualities. These revelations added a sense of stress to the activity, “Cause it was all fun and games, but it was like very high stakes in a way.” It also added a sense of distrust as Nate described his thoughts of what else someone might have been hiding if they had hidden one detail from the group because that trait or characteristic may be socially baneful. Eventually, his group did decide on who would be the survivors in the bunker, and Nate described how they anticipated the results to find out if they had chosen the correct survivors. He felt “played” by the lead clinician when he announced that there was no correct solution to the activity’s premise. He summarized from this experience, “The idea is that like everyone thinks there's, there's a right way to solve it, but there's not really like, you can't just know what's going to happen like that or where every decision will lead you.” What he meant in this statement was that he learned how there may not be an ultimately correct solution to a problem. He also said that this activity made him think about the nuances in society in regard to choices and decisions, “And no matter how much you think like there's going to be a completely right thing, there's always like, you never know exactly how things will play out...” During the second interview, Nate said that the experience of not having a singular correct answer to the activity’s premise left him more open-minded, “There will be multiple right answers.” He highlighted that this idea applied to life and not to school, “...in life for solving simple problems throughout everything, there's different ways of going at it.” He made a reference that there was no blueprint or definitive map to success for life, and he believed that everyone had to find their own path to success.

Nate then described the Talent Show and the improvisation scene from the third day. He said it was a fun event with the skit his group made with their required props. He mentioned

how this improvisation skit coupled with the planned skit of the Talent Show showed him a dichotomy in leadership:

I think like the big contrast between the two is like planning ahead. So like it really like shows like the duality of like leadership because leadership for a heavy part is making decisions ahead of time and laying them out so things don't go crazy. Whereas it's also being very adaptable and working with what you have when you're leading, you don't always have everything you need.

In this experience of the planned skit versus the improvised skit, Nate saw how leadership, in his perspective, was a balance between having a plan and also being flexible. He discussed the planning process his group used to prepare the improvisation skit. He mentioned how they brainstormed the different lessons and ideas they had learned at BLAST and eventually decided on the lead clinician's Platinum Rule of how to treat others. He talked about the skit's theme, the Platinum Rule, and explained its meaning. He said it was a good rule because it described the idea of treating others how they wanted to be treated based on ideas such as their leadership styles and other traits. During the second interview, he mentioned that performing the improvisation skit made him use his more creative side, which was not the strongest quality. He had to use this creative side because there simply was not enough time to plan how each person in the skit was going to react to someone else's actions or statements. In addition to an increase in creativity, he also saw a change to his ability to adapt, "I'm able to like combat different experiences faster," meaning he was more proactive when confronting new experiences. He concluded saying that he was able to adapt more due to the experience in the Talent Show.

Nate also discussed how the idea of the Platinum Rule influenced him since BLAST, "So it's just like, even like beyond leadership was just like using it so you can help. So, you,

everyone feels the most comfortable.” In the words of the lead clinician, the Platinum Rule dictated how one should treat others how they wanted to be treated. When asked about the impact this activity made on leadership development, he described how he had to act in the skit, “I had to do a lot of talking for me,” which was a new experience for his less outspoken nature. By nature of the improvisation skit, he had to listen to what was being said and think of what he was going to say next. He said, “It forced me to be very more like proactive,” which again was in contrast to his inclination to be more of a follower than leader. He concluded this portion of the interview by discussing the different types of leadership styles and traits he learned at BLAST.

He described his experiences with the Chaos activity next. His first thought was that it was “...definitely the most wild activity or definitely the most confusing for sure.” He worked with other campers to understand what was happening. He admitted that they were not certain what they were supposed to do in this challenge. Eventually, the group started cleaning the room and while they were seated, “Somebody else stood up, started talking and then people, more people start talking and we started discussing more...” Once the group did finally complete the challenge, Nate said that the lead clinician led them in a discussion about the motivations behind the Chaos activity. Nate summarized his thoughts on the meaning of this activity as a metaphor of fixing problems:

And it was the whole idea that throughout the world, everything's like, everything's always crazy. And we always try to fix stuff, but when, when we fix stuff or at least we think we fix it, we never give it time to actually like show.

He also discussed this idea of allowing a solution to come to fruition fully before trying something else. He also mentioned in the second interview that learning this idea helped him to

understand to take a step back to see if his solution is effective. He then connected this idea to how the actions of another camper who saw one item that was still out of place, but when he stood up to fix it, others stood up to look for other misplaced objects as well rather than just sitting still. This same camper, Nate observed, was somewhat shy and did not voice his opinion during the activity. The choice to stand up like that was a significant leadership moment for that camper who had been potentially talked over by the other more voiceful campers during the activity because that camper had to make a deliberate choice to be active in the challenge. Nate related with that camper's actions more than the other more talkative campers during the activity, "So I didn't like voice any like huge opinions I was trying to, at some points I was trying to keep us like more like contained." He also talked about how he would occasionally move some items through the activity while others were more active. He was now more accepting of things unknown and hidden much like the activity's objective was hidden until the end.

After the activity was complete, Nate felt the activity was a portrayal of the real world. He saw a need to let effects settle from their collective efforts before trying something new. As for his leadership development, the activity did not affect it much. He discussed how this activity would have been more impactful for the leadership development of others from a different leadership quadrant. He admitted one of the reasons he was less voiceful had been influenced by the lack of substantial thoughts he had about solving the activity's problem. He ended by calling this experience a thought-provoking activity because of what he experienced and how it made him think, even if he did not experience significant leadership development.

After recalling minute details about some smaller activities including the Dance Line activity, the conversation turned to the events of his final night at BLAST. On the final night, he was one of the campers who was caught violating the mandatory curfew. He said that this

moment really impacted his leadership development because of this moment of personal accountability. He learned about accountability from this experience, and he also said that now, with this experience, “You have to be prepared to hold it up and like keep moving forward even with that.” He said that the accountability of his actions was the biggest lesson learned from this event. He repeated this notion of learning from this particular experience during the second interview, “There's a lesson you can learn from anything really.” Learning from this experience was important because that was the key to self-improvement.

When the first interview was drawing to a close, Nate discussed his overall opinions and thoughts about his BLAST experience. He used what he learned at BLAST throughout the following school year with the younger members of his school's student council. One key aspect he included was helping younger members learn what kind of leaders they were, similar to the Leadership Quadrant activity, to equip them with skills to develop as leaders much like he learned at BLAST. When asked why he believed BLAST made him a better leader, he compared BLAST to other leadership development events he has attended, “...none of them were as focused on myself as a leader and learning what type of leader I am myself...” which meant that BLAST, to Nate, was about the individual's leadership development rather than learning about leadership in general. He said that in the BLAST environment, there was no fear of judgement. He also mentioned the idea of meeting new peers. Participating in the small groups helped him to be more willing to open up with others and learn because he was able to make strong bonds in a short amount of time resulting in more open conversations. The bonds he made with others is what stood out most with Nate.

During the second interview, he explained his opinion of BLAST and its impact on his leadership development. He also shared that BLAST was also about personal growth and

development. He said it was very impactful to his leadership development. He wished he had attended BLAST earlier in his high school career because it would have allowed him to have more time to develop, "...having more time with that would've allowed me to go even farther using that leadership quality and all." Of the events noted as being impactful, he mentioned some of the leadership activities such as the Chaos activity, the Bunker activity, and Bafa Bafa. He also highlighted the bonfire; however, he made a note that it was not a leadership impact, "...it was very impactful, but not for the same reasons as the others." He said that the impact of the bonfire was more about being with the community of BLAST participants and building that community. As a result of attending BLAST, he was more confident in himself and in his opinions. It helped him to build confidence and have less doubt about himself. As a final thought, he mentioned that he would do more with pride as a result of attending BLAST.

Profile of Family Group Leader

Nate's family group leader was a high school's student council president during her senior year in 2014. When the BLAST director was looking for more staff members over twenty-one years old to serve as family group leaders, the family group leader indicated her interest when she was approached about joining the BLAST 2018 staff. Then, she asked to return again in 2019. In 2019, she was an African American undergraduate student at a small technical college located in Savannah, Georgia where she currently studies informational technology. She lives with family in Savannah while she finished her education. In 2019, she also worked part time as a barista in a popular coffee shop. As of 2020, she moved on to other forms of employment. As an individual, she was not a very outspoken individual. Because she was more pensive and analytical with her thoughts and actions, she used fewer words to express her thoughts than others might use.

Summary of Family Group Leader Interview

The interview with this family group leader took place during an afternoon after she completed her work shift. Her interview took place while she was in transit from her workplace to home. Compared to the other family group leaders' interviews, her interview was short in time in light of her self-reported struggles to remember specific details about Nate's BLAST experience.

The interview began with her describing why she chose to come back. She highlighted the impact the experience made on her even though her development was not the goal, "...even though it's meant for the kids, I do actually learn something." Then, she described Nate. She remembered him as "one of our quiet kid members" of the group although he was involved in the activities. She specifically recalled how Nate was given the nickname *Quiet Storm* by the lead clinician due to his less outspoken nature. She said that Nate was noticeably quiet at first and that he had to be verbally prompted to speak. She described how he opened up as the days passed, "He started like volunteering to answer questions, volunteering to help with certain group actions and stuff." This change could have been due to him becoming more bonded and comfortable with his family group. She also said Nate had an impact on his family group and other participants. She said that everyone enjoyed having him around.

The activities mentioned in his interviews were discussed next. His family group leader remembered the roll calls not being the best positive experience, "He was kinda just enjoying it the roll call; he was just very awkward." She posited that the experience of participating in the roll calls possibly made a positive impact on his self-confidence due to his awkward involvement. She repeated this same description of his involvement when discussing the Talent Show. She said that he was not very enthusiastic about the event, but he did participate. The

interview also included discussing Nate's reaction to the Family Olympics, "He loved the Family Olympics. Like everybody, almost everybody loves them, but he loved the team." She recalled seeing him smile throughout this event and seeing him cheering on his fellow family group members. She expressed hope that he learned about teamwork and the importance of supporting your team through this activity.

The next activity discussed was the bonfire. His family group leader highlighted this event as one where he was not the withdrawn person she described at the beginning, "...he actually got really involved with, um, with all the other campers in the fun that they were doing." She even remembered him being an active participant during a rendition of a camp song. She liked seeing his behavior at the bonfire, "So it was really interesting to just watch him open up like that." She did not recall him expressing any thoughts about the bonfire to her or the family group. She did mention that the bonfire was a part of BLAST's camp history, and its purpose was the togetherness that it created.

The next activity discussed was the Chaos activity. The first clear memory she had about it was how the participants reacted, "I think the groups were the most confused, so they just sat there for like ten minutes." She believed the participants started to see the objective was to clean the room. She had a distinct observation of Nate:

...The one thing I noted, he was a bit of a follower in that exercise. He wasn't one of the first people to actually get up and do anything. Um, once he saw one of the people sit down and he just kinda sat down, but, and then once he saw one of the other people get up and do something, he got up, and did something as well.

She hoped Nate learned to be more proactive in solving problems instead of being a follower as she described in her observation.

The next major activity discussed was the Take a Stand activity. She recalled this activity as potentially making the participants uncomfortable from the types of questions and scenarios being asked. She could not remember seeing Nate saying much during some of the discussions, "...he did not really make that big of an impact," in regards to the conversations. She then mentioned the Dance Line activity. She believed the purpose was, "...to complete whatever you start finish it, no matter how difficult it makes you feel, how awkward it makes you feel, complete it from start to finish, um, whether people are cheering you on or not." She recalled Nate participating fully because the activity's rules demanded it, but she connected this notion to the roll call and the Talent Show where he was somewhat awkward being the center of attention. However, as she said, "he still did it."

To close the interview, the family group leader described how Nate changed over the course of BLAST. She emphasized that he opened up overall during BLAST. He was enjoying himself more and open to the people around him. Lastly, she did note that he did not have the type of extreme growth and change as some of the other campers, but he did change at BLAST as an individual.

Summary of Documents

Like the previous two cases, Nate shared photos and other media he made or kept from BLAST. He shared a total of fifteen items from BLAST, nine photos and six video clips. Of the images, most show activities at BLAST including the bonfire, banquet, and the Bunker activity. One photo also showed Nate with his family group. He described how he shared one particular photo, the Bunker activity, to his social media accounts because it was a simple, but effective way to store memories that were meaningful to him

He described a photo of the whole camp as a conglomerate. He said it was nice how BLAST brought them all together. He mentioned that he preferred photos that contained everyone like a photo of the bonfire where multiple faces could be seen, "...which is nice to have, like, even if I don't have a separate picture with certain people." He said having photos like this group photo would help him remember each person. He also talked about a photo of him during Bafa Bafa where he was the leader of the group during the fictitious peace summit that followed the activity. He said this activity was very profound for him as the leader of the group because he had to step into the role in spite of the intimidating environment with the other group. He returned to this same moment later in a different photo later where he described how he had to be a public speaker, an intimidating act already, and also had to be the leader for his group during the summit.

He responded to a question about why he kept these group photos during the second interview. He explained that the fast-paced schedule and activities was a challenge to capturing singular moments with each person, so group photos helped remember each person, "Maybe like a short little memory, just floods back and the connection with them." A group photo from the Bunker activity also helped him to remember the activity and its impact on him.

Next, Nate described a series of photos that showed more activities from BLAST. He showed a photo from a skit his group performed because, "I feel like we did a really good job on the skit..." He showed a short video of a roll call his group performed. He mentioned how his group worked together on each of these performances, and even though they did not win the event, they were satisfied with what they had accomplished. Another moment he highlighted was when he lost his name tag, and as a playful punishment, he had to sing his family group's chant as if he was feeling constipated. Although this punishment could have been seen as

embarrassing, Nate liked it, “I had a good time. I was like comfortable,” because he did not feel embarrassed by this moment because he trusted his peers at BLAST. Since BLAST, he said that he has felt less anxiety about being embarrassed, “Like when you're laughing at yourself, it's just easier and people realize you're able to let yourself.” He then said that this idea was not necessarily something he learned at BLAST, but it was a natural development:

It wasn't like a learning moment, exactly, at BLAST. I think it was kind of like a natural thing...But like just naturally in a leadership environment with a bunch of people, peers your age, things just start naturally happening. And then you just naturally start doing things and understanding to, like, better communicate and, like, connect with others.

He connected this idea of naturally developing to how he learned to communicate better through the activities saying it happened in a similar fashion.

The last video he showed was a video from the Family Olympics. The particular video was the quasi-sumo match where two competitors representing the individual family groups would try to push each other out of a circle while wearing inflatable innertubes. In the video, Nate described the events of the final match and the competitive spirit that arose as a disagreement started over who actually won the match. He pointed out that all campers, not just those whose teams were in the final match, were eagerly disputing the winner of the round. He said that one of the key aspects of this video and the pictures was that BLAST was fun and that, “everybody was just really enjoying themselves.” He believed that each activity could be described as fun and enjoyment.

The final album of photos he showed were of items and souvenirs Nate kept from BLAST. The first item he showed was an image of his family group's flag, which was a painted sheet of paper with the family group's name, the Smurfs, along with each member's name

painted on it. He also showed the picture of the letter his family group junior counselor wrote to him along with the family group photo he received on the last day. This photo was placed on a sheet of paper where all the family group members had also signed and left short notes to Nate. Lastly, he showed his BLAST shirt that everyone had, and his blue bandana given when he arrived at BLAST. He always wore this blue bandana or another blue article of clothing each day to show pride in his BLAST family group.

Case Assertions

Nate participated in two semi-structured interviews. His family group leader was also interviewed to add to the data. Adding to these data were photos on social media postings, video and physical souvenirs that Nate kept. The In Vivo coding process resulted in 532 unique codes. The Values coding process yielded 395 codes. The Process coding concluded with 17 codes. These codes were analyzed with Axial coding to develop 42 categories. Copying the process of the previous two cases, the categories were re-categorized to develop three themes supported in the data. For each theme, there are multiple sub-themes that will be discussed.

Theme 1: High-energy environment. This theme included Nate's general impressions of the BLAST environment and what its overall impact on the participants as Nate described it. The data was used to suggest that BLAST was a fun, high-energy, and competitive experience while also containing some surprises for the betterment of the participants' experiences. There were also sub-themes of Nate's experience that could demonstrate how BLAST was an immersive and learning experience.

Nate described BLAST as an enjoyable experience that certainly made an impact as suggested in the data. While fun and uplifting may not be an explicit purpose of the BLAST curriculum, it is certainly a vital part of Nate's experience as it enhanced the individual aspects

of his overall experience. One example of an individual piece that was the daily energizers. Nate mentioned how he would get involved in them, "...like we just go out like nobody's watching like go crazy with it." These ultimately inconsequential moments made an impact on his experience probably because it was one major fashion of how he would connect with other participants that was not a direct part of the curriculum. This similar engagement also appeared at the bonfire. He described the bonfire as a release from the Family Olympics earlier in the day, "It was a fun way to like, just get out all the energy," and then it was replaced with a new fun energy, "We were just trying to have the time of our lives..." Regarding a video he had kept from BLAST, he described the fun during the various activities, "I had like a lot of fun and like everybody was really enjoying themselves." His enjoyment of these moments was one of the reasons he kept this video. His family group leader mentioned seeing them enjoying the bonfire as well. He mentioned that these fun moments were significant to his experience.

The idea of BLAST being a series of highly energetic moments was significant to Nate's experience. One of the most prominent moments was the Family Olympics. The energy of this activity remained after the event as Nate said, "And it was just like the energy, the energy just stayed." The energy was also apparent in the photos and videos Nate kept from the Family Olympics. When asked more about this energy and where it came from, Nate described how it came from his connections with his fellow family group members, "...the different little interactions that everybody had within their different like family groups...where people realized they bonded together," through this shared energy. His family group leader also pointed out how they all cheered for one another on the team during the Family Olympics. Nate also mentioned being drained of energy after the full day of activities on the second day, "Like I remember going to like when we're finally going to sleep...we were so drained because it was like so much had

happened...” The energy of the day was influenced by the actions taken by Nate and the other participants that made BLAST “ultimately very energetic.” His ideas of this embedded abstract energy were an impact for Nate.

As stated before, Nate had a competitive spirit eclipsed by his more soft-spoken demeanor; however, competition was a large part of his BLAST experience, which was important to his experience. The idea of a competitive spirit was most apparent in Nate’s description of the Family Olympics, “So like in the natural light, competitive spirit of BLAST, we had family Olympics where we had different little competitions like battle out between families.” He connected the competitive nature of the Family Olympics, which was by design a series of competitions, to other minor activities that had a competitive edge to them. For example, during the Leadership Quadrant activity, the four groups were asked to debate to determine which of the four groups was the best. Nate described this activity as a competitive event and also highlighted how it helped him learn about his quadrant type and the others as well:

...Being competitive is just like such a great way to immerse yourself in something. So it was like a really, really easy way to like get us really within our different groups and help us understand a little more.

Conversely, the Bomb Shelter activity was also a competitive activity that did not put the individual family groups against one another, but rather against the activity itself. Nate called this activity a high stakes event because, “...We were told at the start of the activity, that there's was a correct answer. So it was, it was a really hectic thing.” The competition was to find the solution rather than to beat the other groups in this case. So, whether it was a competition among the family groups or a competition with a problem, Nate felt its impact.

Nate also described BLAST as having multiple surprises. Some of the surprises were in the form of others who deliberately kept secrets from Nate about BLAST and its activities. Nate knew multiple peers who had attended BLAST prior to 2019, but none of them would tell him much about it, "...[they] wouldn't tell us a single thing cause they wanted everything to be a surprise..." His group leader mentioned how they acted during the Chaos activity, "His group was the most confused, so they just sat there for like ten minutes." During the Bomb shelter, Nate felt "played" by the lead clinician who led the participants to believe one idea about the activity where the truth the activity was something different. Nate noted he liked the surprises in his BLAST experience because, "...The unknown is like intriguing in a way." In the second interview, Nate expanded why there are so many surprises in BLAST in a comparison to how he learned abstract math in school, "Like, it's that whole mystery of that buildup. Like what exactly is going on? Why is this going on? And then the mystery solved it's like told then you're like, 'Oh I get it now.'" These surprises added to the impact of his experience at BLAST.

Nate also discussed how he was motivated to get involved at BLAST. Nate discussed the idea of immersing himself in the BLAST environment as a way of having a positive BLAST experience. Nate demonstrated how choosing to immerse himself made this impact by describing, "...When you're trying to get a very good experience out of something or like a really fruitful experience, the only way to really get that is if you fully immerse yourself." This description was after he described the various energizer activities that were a part of BLAST. The choice to get involved in the experience evolved during the time of his BLAST experience. His family group leader observed this effect of this growth at the bonfire:

They're free to do whatever they please, um, and, uh, as far as Nate, you know, him being quiet on the first day, you would figure that he would just, you know, sit off and, you

know, wait, go back. This is, but no, actually he, actually got really involved with, um, with all the other campers in the fun that they were doing.

Her description of Nate at the bonfire showed how he made a choice to immerse himself in the experience. Nate made this choice to get involved in the BLAST experience because, “It's like, it's an easy way to like, cause like easiest way to connect with people is to just throw yourself into the situation and stuff like that.” At one point of the first interview, Nate was asked about his choice to immerse himself in a particular activity, and he responded, “It's just, it's just the atmosphere of student council. It's always, it's almost always welcoming.” This open and inviting atmosphere was possibly a major influence of his choice to immerse himself.

Theme 2: Self-Development. The second theme apparent in this case included the extent to which Nate demonstrated his self-development during and after BLAST. Nate's personal development was a substantial portion of his BLAST experience. For most activities, he was able to find a potential marker for growth. He was able to trace the change while in BLAST, and his family group leader noted the same self-development in her observations of Nate.

Under this theme, there was also a strong notion of Nate's personal development. As discussed earlier, Nate believed that BLAST was a personal experience, demonstrated no better than in his statement that, “BLAST is an experience where you can grow as a leader, as a personal leader by yourself rather than just as a group, but grow as a person to like, grow as a person too.” With his family group, his personal experience was magnified by the small group. He shared how being with a small, intimate family group allowed him to engage in his own experience more, “...Like you're more willing to open up and learn new things.” With this smaller group, he was able to have a more personalized experience throughout BLAST as he

spent most of his time with this family group. This experience was longstanding as he kept many of the items that he was given for being a member of this family group. The purpose of keeping them was to remember what happened at BLAST with his family group. Adding to the personal quality of this experience was the fact that not all the activities had a significant impact on Nate as seen in how he described the Chaos activity's impact on his leadership development, "Honestly, for me, I think it didn't," meaning not every experience sparked momentous impacts on him.

The larger sub-theme here included how Nate gained self-confidence during BLAST. In the second interview, when asked how he changed as a result of BLAST, he responded, "BLAST changed me by like bringing me more confidence in everything I do." This confidence described was twofold: more confidence in his personal leadership and more confidence to share his thoughts without hesitation. This confidence grew over the course of BLAST as his family group leader pointed out, "He really like went from quiet to, um, great overall," in terms of him opening up and being more confident in speaking around people who he does not know very well. The Take a Stand activity was one of the activities that helped him to earn this new confidence. "I think it gave me more confidence in whatever I'm like and what are my beliefs or my like mindset is about like certain things," as he described the confidence gained after this activity. He shared how he was able to gain this confidence through the exercise of forming an opinion on a serious topic and stating those thoughts with others. He admitted this activity helped him develop confidence as the activity made him become less nervous about sharing an opinion on any given topic. As in this example, he mentioned gaining confidence in himself and his ideas.

Theme 3: Collaborative Experience. This final theme was probably the most significant for Nate's experience at BLAST. Throughout the data, BLAST was described as very much a social event that allowed Nate to interact with new peers. These interactions resulted in his development of new understanding about communication, collaboration, and himself.

Communication was the bedrock of Nate's collaborative experience at BLAST. From the start, he was tasked with communicating with other BLAST participants. He remarked that the purpose of the icebreaker activities on the first day were "not only just like forcing conversation," but that they also led to conversations with other participants he met. Communication was also essential to his family group even though it was somewhat haphazard at first. It started when they had to come up with a team name and everyone was, "just like randomly blurting out like different blue things." This version of communication and brainstorming allowed his group to bond through the task. Their method of brainstorming was integral to other activities such as the Talent Show. Again, Nate described the process as an informal process as he said, "...And this was another experience where it's like, you have to listen to everybody 'cause somebody can easily have like a hidden gem. So, we were just like blurting out things." He recognized how this process was a part of problem solving for his group and how the group had to plan their solutions to the given tasks. Lastly, they had to use group communication to face the various games of the Family Olympics. He noted how his family group's approach to communication and problem solving helped them find strategies to succeed:

It's like different people would like pop out and like it gave people different people, like moments to shine leadership wise. Like if they like something popped in their head like, 'Oh this is a very good strategy for say grabbing the per se, like tilting your head back and like pouring the water in your head.'

Again, the idea of an informal communication process was apparent to Nate in examining how his group communicated to solve problems. Communication with others in this informal manner was suggested by the data as a significant portion of his BLAST experience.

Making new bonds with others was also part of his collaborative experience. Bonds were forged and strengthened through the group activities at BLAST in the data. His group leader saw how he opened up to his fellow group members over the passing of BLAST. Nate noted a large portion of bonds being strengthened or made at the bonfire with others at BLAST outside of his family group. He mentioned bonding was important because it “taught like the best group in a way, or like get the most out of your group or community.” These bonds were instrumental in enhancing his BLAST experience. The bonds with his family group members and with other BLAST participants were also a part of the Take a Stand activity. From the structure of the activity, Nate remarked how everyone was allowed to share their opposing ideas about a serious topic. The activity still concluded with stronger bonds among the participants because, “Everybody listened to each other and it just showed how much, like our bond was stronger than anything.” Bonds among family group members specifically would be helpful during group activities like preparing for the Talent Show. The developed bonds made it easier for them to plan their improvisation skit as Nate illustrated, “But during the skit, we were able to come up with a group thought process as a group... we each had to connect to each other in the moment.” These established bonds allowed this skit to come to fruition and allowed them to work together on the task. The bonds Nate made with other participants and his family group members were at the root of how he experienced BLAST. As visual evidence, most of the photos Nate shared during the second interview were photos that depicted him with a group of people during an

activity rather than photos of just himself. He said these pictures were important to keeping the memories of the bonds and connections he made with each person at BLAST.

Lastly, collaborative experiences that Nate had with others gave him the opportunity to gain a more open perspective about other people. It was suggested in the data that Nate discovered lessons from watching others. The Take a Stand activity was one such time where he learned from watching someone else. He described one participant who was the sole person on one side of a given issue:

...We were split and it was everybody in the room was on one side except a single girl. And throughout the whole time she managed to state her case. Nobody, obviously nobody came at her cause that'd be completely unfair...she stayed confident stated her case...She didn't get defensive at all. Even though like for the most part, if anyone else is in that situation, it's like, you feel like the world's against you. So you really get super defensive and stuff. But she stated, her case was very upfront with it. And like, was very confident despite the fact that it's like, she's always by herself.

Observing her actions in this situation showed Nate how confidence was shown, which would be a key outcome of his BLAST experience. Beyond confidence, Nate also learned through observation the different leadership styles and traits in his fellow family group members, “The biggest thing for me, which like played out later on, even more within BLAST was like the different types of leaders, the different types of leaders, like within groups.” Nate experienced how each person in his group demonstrated different leadership styles, yet all were indeed leaders. He even noted how that one group member was somewhat shy and reserved but held a high-level position in the GASC Executive Board. Observations like these helped Nate to learn

about different people. This type of learning only occurred through his collaborative experience with others.

Conclusion

Nate's experience at BLAST could show an internal and social development experience. Internally, he opened up and became more social through the experience. He had to make the choice to get involved, and as a result of the fun, immersive, and energetic environment, that choice was an easier one to make. The competitive and surprises embedded into the curriculum also motivated him to become involved. BLAST would not have been such a prominent experience for Nate had it not been for his family group or the other participants. Sharing that time with his peers was important from the initial motivation to wanting to attend BLAST through the memories and lessons he learned from others. Along the way, he also developed communication skills that will be important in both his leadership and personal roles in life.

Nate learned to be a better leader. He learned to be a better leader both explicitly from the activities of BLAST, but also from others through engaging with them or observing them. He became a more confident leader and individual due to these lessons and experiences. Although he may have made mistakes along the way such as the choices of the final night, he was able to find a lesson to be learned in that moment. Finding lessons in each event and activity of BLAST is one potential reason it was such an impactful experience for Nate.

Theoretically, it is harder to pinpoint where Nate would have been placed on Marcia's paradigm according to the data. While developing confidence had been typically associated with the Identity Achieved status as stated in previous research, it would seem that BLAST was more about exploring new parts of his identity. One of the first comments he made about BLAST was how it pulled him in many directions. This description could be a way of describing how he

rejected prior conceptions of what kind of leader and person he was before BLAST and was ready to build a new version. In this case, then, he would be an example of someone who was in the cyclical version of the paradigm. He was exploring new commitments and ideologies and re-examining them to build something new. In this regard, it would be difficult to state where Marcia would place him on the paradigm.

CHAPTER VIII

CASE STUDY 4: CLARA

This case is the final case of the collective study. It will follow the same structure of the previous cases. There is a profile of the case participant followed by a summary of the two interviews with her. There is a brief profile of her family group leader before summarizing his interview. After discussing the photos and documents she shared, the findings of this case are discussed.

Profile of Participant

Clara, an Asian American female, is the final case study for the collective case study. At the time of Bringing Leadership and Students Together (BLAST) 2019, she was a rising sophomore making her the youngest participant of the study. She attended a large public high in a rural community. In her home life, Clara stated that she lived with both of her parents and no siblings. Her experience with student council was limited prior to BLAST as she had only joined during the previous school year. She expressed on several occasions that she had only attended the Georgia Association of Student Council's (GASC) annual convention once prior to attending BLAST.

Being an introvert was a significant detail to Clara's BLAST experience. She mentioned multiple times throughout both interviews how she was typically a quieter person with comments such as, "I personally am a lot more quiet, um, most of the time..." She spoke about this trait through many portions of her interviews. Her group leader recognized the same personality trait, but he characterized it slightly different by trying to understand her introversion, "...although it comes across that she may be, um, introverted, she's really one of the observing types." He would refer to her as an observer on several occasions, but then would see a change in her

behavior prior to the conclusion of BLAST. This observed introversion and its change as a result of BLAST were an integral part of her experience.

An aspect of Clara's BLAST experience that made her a unique case was the number of activities and experiences not found to be very impactful. While she did report on learning and making new relationships, she did also describe multiple aspects of BLAST not having a substantial impact on her in terms of leadership or identity development. She missed the whole afternoon and part of the evening of the second day which could explain part of this lack of impact.

Summary of Participant Interviews

Clara's two interviews were towards the end of the different waves of interviews. Her first interview was at the end of July with the second one taking place in early October. She was eager to participate in both interviews once we were able to schedule the interviews due to her then demanding schedule.

The conversation of the first interview started with Clara describing her reasons and motivations to attend BLAST. Her motivation to attend BLAST came from several sources. Clara stated that the reason she wanted to attend BLAST was connected to experiences at the GASC convention that previous February, "...I had attended GASC for the first time the previous year, and I really enjoyed the experience." She also expressed hoping to, "...expand on it and meet new people and learn more about leadership over the summer." She was motivated to attend BLAST because of the potential to make connections or increase leadership knowledge. She also looked at photos from previous BLAST camps to see what kinds of experiences she would be having if attended. These various motivators were the reason she ultimately chose to attend.

She then described settling into her cabin and meeting other participants. After meeting everyone as a large group, they were split into their family groups where Clara did more icebreaker games with them. She said that everyone was open during these activities which made it easier to "...get a feel for everyone's personality." She also liked how casual these activities were and how inviting the environment was as it helped her, someone described as being quieter, to meet new people. She then described her group as a good balance among three types of personalities:

I feel like of, um, people who wanted to be super like out there and, um, people with more upbeat personalities, I guess you could say. And then people who were kind of strategic about things whenever we wanted to, um, play games or do challenges and stuff. And then people who are just kind of chill, it was a good mix of variety, uh, in personality, but we all, we all worked pretty well together, I would say.

Even with these varied types of personalities, she admitted that the group collaborated well. She also described the conversations with her family group. One key attribute she mentioned was no arguing, "If people had like different ideas and stuff, a lot of people, um, gave way for other people's ideas." From this observation, she said that everyone was kind and learned about leadership from seeing how certain family group members would take charge during activities, "So by watching certain people take over, I was able to kind of learn how to be a better leader and how to communicate better to the rest of my group." She pointed out how the family group members would demonstrate leadership by showing their strength during the various activities, "...as we work together as a group, we found that certain people were better at certain things." She admitted having, "never made friends with a random group of people so fast," in describing

the relationships she had with fellow group members. She included that they were comfortably bonded on the first day.

The other memory from the first day was her cabin roommates. She described during the first interview how it was fun to have roommates because her parents did not allow her social experiences like sleepovers. Clara noted that living with other female peers was helpful because she had someone to whom she could relate and talk to about the day's activities. She repeated the notion of balance of different personalities among her cabin roommates, "...it's really nice when other people are kind of quick to jump at [talking] and aren't afraid really [like me]." She also described her other roommates and especially the one who was only a rising high school freshman. She said that having the experience of living with roommates did not make an impact on her leadership development directly, but did keep Clara mindful of the activities, "...making sure that we were all involved in what we were learning...we would discuss all things that had happened because they were interesting to us." In the second interview, Clara noted that having cabin roommates from other family groups allowed for a more diverse conversation as each group was different. Having these conversations in her cabin would cause her to continually think about the activities and "take in everything" that occurred at BLAST.

The next discussion surrounded the teaching style of the lead clinician and how Clara responded to it. Clara described how he first told the campers that the idea of BLAST was to make them uncomfortable. She then discussed how he would single out the participants to push them out of their comfort zones:

...If you wanted to answer a question you had to stand up so that they can make sure everyone was looking at you, and sometimes if you gave an answer that he wasn't like

quite sure about, he would, um, add onto it and like make you kind of keep talking about it, even when you're not expecting it.

Clara shared about having one of these moments where she shared an answer. She had to prepare herself mentally to answer because she did not like to make mistakes when speaking in front of others. She said this exercise of answering questions in this manner helped her to develop as a leader some, "...I consider it as helping, um, myself kind of develop in that way because, uh, I'm not very good at that." The development to which she was referring happened to be the ability to communicate with groups and not being afraid to do so.

The next memory she shared was the rap battle activity. She described the task as having to come up with a rap about what she and her family group had learned thus far by that point in BLAST. The creation of the rap was a struggle for two main reasons. First, no one in the group was particularly gifted with writing lyrics. Secondly, as she illustrated, "Everything was really like filled up with a bunch of lessons," so it was hard to fit everything they had learned to that point into a rap performance. She noted that their performance was successful, and she was surprised that they were one of the winning groups of the competition. When asked about the actual performance, Clara recalled that the group created some basic lyrics then one family group member took the lead role because he was more comfortable with being center stage for the activity. During the creation of the rap, Clara described how the family group collaborated, "...our ideas were bouncing off each other's, but not really in a cohesive way," and that observation was an understanding about effective communication that Clara learned during this activity. She reiterated this same notion during the second interview as she learned from others, "...it did have an impact on me because I got to learn more around a set of people that I've never been around." When asked whether the new experience or the new personalities made the most

significant impact, she said it was the new personalities. She said that learning from what happened with these new personalities was overall a significant outcome of this activity.

Next, Clara discussed the Leadership Quadrant activity. She described how everyone had to wear blindfolds and how they were an important part of the activity by removing any personal bias towards the activity's results, and she re-emphasized this fact during the second interview as well. She added that the blindfold, "...made me less afraid to be honest." She was sorted into the *Thinker* group that she characterized as "being quiet and kind of staying away from social, like really action social things." She agreed that this quadrant was the correct category for her. She described how her group sat quietly initially during the party poster activity. She illustrated the lack of initiative within her quadrant group, "We were just like, like nobody was really jumping at it or anything." She mentioned next how the behaviors of their quadrant were pointed out to them like introversion when her group had a challenging time finding someone who would speak about their party. During the second interview, she recognized the traits of her own quadrant while the observing staff members described them aloud. She said that seeing these behaviors and characteristics in action helped her understand personal leadership style and identify the kind of collaborative environment that worked best for her. She discussed how understanding the differences in how others work or want to work could help overcome some of the struggles she faced in her own leadership style. She also said during the second interview that this activity helped her adjust to working with others with different traits.

The next memory, the dance social, was the activity occurring when Clara returned. Clara compared this event to the same kind of dance party that occurred at the GASC convention she had attended months prior. She liked how the social was a positive experience for everyone, "So everybody was, you know, full energy. Um, nobody shied away from the idea of just going

all in and having fun.” She made new friends at the social, but it was not a significant moment to her leadership development. For her personal development, Clara said during the second interview that this event was a helpful experience because it was a novel experience, “...it was the second time that I'd ever gotten to really let loose with people who were all interested in kind of just having fun.” She also mentioned keeping a mindset of having fun in similar experiences since BLAST.

The next activity discussed was the Take a Stand activity. Clara recalled how the family groups were in cabins with the second-year campers facilitating the activity. The questions were about society, “They asked us questions that were really cut and dry and supposed to make us uncomfortable.” She described how the participants then split to either side of the room based on the topic and had a civilized discussion about it. Clara referred to this experience as a serious event. She described how she felt scared initially to share her opinion due to her fear of judgement for her opinion. Even with multiple days with her BLAST peers, she was still not certain about how they would react, “It's just that you never know what certain topics or what certain opinions can really like affect someone's perspective on you as a person.” She then referred to an instance of one camper being on one side of a topic while everyone else was on the other side, “And for the rest of the week, like everybody was, nobody treated her differently.” Clara believed this activity taught her that understanding questions and opinions were important in any situation. She also said that the ability to have civil conversations like these was also an important aspect that she learned. She also said that the activity was impactful because it reminded her the importance of focusing and listening to others. After the activity, Clara felt she understood how to take her opinions on topics such as these and share them with others more than before she attended BLAST. During the second interview, she shared how she continued

practicing what she learned during this activity in other conversations, "...as I've gotten older or as more time has passed, it's been more and more necessary for me to be able to discuss serious or controversial topics without offending anybody..." She also pointed out that this activity was a wholly new experience as she had never participated in anything like it prior to BLAST.

The next memory Clara presented was part of the Communication Module. She discussed a portion of the module that involved each BLAST participant finding a partner and maintaining eye contact with him or her from across the room. She said that they were given specific things to think about in regard to their partner, "...Then you would have to look up and, uh, envision, your partner, um, doing, because we had a discussion actually prior about what our dreams were, what our aspirations kind of were, if money weren't an issue." She remembered that two other female participants started crying during this activity, and the lead clinician asked them to talk about it after the activity was over. Clara remembered how the two girls answered, "Like, you know, she's such a good person, they said this about each other. They were like, 'She's such a good person. I really hope that that happens for her and all that.'" Clara admitted that she knew maintaining eye contact with someone was a challenge for her, and she also said that she would remember this activity. She said that this activity impacted her leadership development by giving her an opportunity to see the result of focusing on someone, "And that really helped me, uh, kind of learn that just if I need to listen to them, like really focused on listening to a person." During the second interview, Clara said, "And it helped me, um, look out for certain signs in my body language that may or may not show that I'm being attentive when I'm listening to someone or discussing things with someone," which showed how giving specific attention to listening skills had helped her personal development.

Clara described one of the final experiences of the BLAST curriculum next. This experience involved all the BLAST participants taking a moment to silently share their feelings towards the BLAST staff and others. It was more than saying goodbye as Clara explained:

You would just kind of go around the room and like hug the people that you thought, uh, um, impacted you within the, you know, your time at camp and, uh, the, the junior counselors, the senior counselors, uh, the speakers and then, um, you know, your fellow campers.

Clara said that the impact this event made on her was the idea of connecting with others. Prior to arriving to BLAST, she was not certain she would make good relationships at the camp. After BLAST, she understood how important a potential new relationship could have. She added during the second interview that the activity was impactful in reminding her the importance of gratitude, but the experience did not make a significant impact on her in terms of personal development.

The final activity discussed was the improvisation skit of the Talent Show. Primarily, this exercise was similar to the first rap the group had created. Clara gained much from this exercise and said it was fun. She saw how her family group members were easily able to engage fully in the activity, "...everybody was like really into it. And that's another, um, example of like what I feel like it was so easy for me to get stuff out of the experience and, um, just be comfortable around everyone." She learned that sometimes, "...you just have to go for it." Clara described seeing how others were eagerly getting involved and engaged in the improvisation skit helped her understand and combat her own feelings of nervousness and lack of engagement in experiences outside of BLAST.

As the close of each interview, the overall leadership impacts and personal impacts of BLAST were discussed. Meeting new people, and everyone being made to meet new people was one of the most important parts of BLAST that Clara discussed during the first interview. Clara said that the ease of becoming engaged in the activities was one of the most substantial aspects of her BLAST experience. From there, she developed as a leader at BLAST through experiences with others that led to her being able to communicate, listen, and understand her peers better. She accomplished all three tasks in different fashions since BLAST in leadership roles that she held. She highlighted the Quadrant activity as the most significant activity in terms of leadership development. She also mentioned the final activity of saying good-bye to everyone as an individual was significant as a way to reinforce the individual connections she made, “I was able to really talk for the last time to every individual person.” Clara said that BLAST changed her in a positive way.

During the second interview, Clara defined BLAST as a learning experience, “...it was a very educational experience, and it was something I learned a lot from...” She learned many ideas that would help her as she goes forward in her life. In her final thoughts, she expressed how BLAST pushed her to step out of her comfort zone, “‘Put yourself out there’ means to me, uh don’t be afraid of whatever is going to happen or whatever you think might happen...” She closed the discussion by stating that both intentional and unintentional experiences at BLAST helped her develop as a leader and as a person.

Profile of Family Group Leader

Clara’s family group leader was a criminal sciences teacher. Currently, he was one of the advisors of the school’s student council. As of 2020, he was a student in a program for educational leadership. As an individual, this family group leader demonstrated typical

introverted behavior. He was not as outgoing as some of the other family group members, and he was also very analytical. BLAST 2019 was the third time he had volunteered to be a family group leader. His choice to come back each year was due to the impact he saw it made on the participants. He also enjoyed the relationships it made and continuing those relationships well after BLAST has ended.

Summary of Family Group Leader Interview

The interview with Clara's family group leader occurred on a Saturday morning in mid-August of 2020. The conversation was casual, friendly, and relaxed. The beginning of the interview started with his impressions of Clara. To him, Clara was reserved at BLAST's onset. He described how his junior family group counselors met with each camper and then they as a group met to discuss the members of their group. From this discussion, he concluded that, "Although it comes across that she may be, um, introverted, she's really one of the observing types." He also said that observing her the final night in preparing for the Talent Show she evolved, "...when we had, we were preparing for our, the Talent Show...like that's when her true self came out." He explained that the change witnessed was due to the BLAST environment and its intimacy. He said the experiences she had with her family group helped her blossom in terms of personality. One key detail he recalled about Clara was her infectious laugh because it would cause others to laugh as well.

Next, the family group leader discussed the family group overall. He noticed during the first time the family group met that the members all seemed somewhat reserved. He described the effort he and the other counselors put forth to engage the members that first night, "It almost felt like that conversation was like, you're sitting in the chair at the dentist office, pulling teeth." He also said the range of different personality types was very wide including people who clearly

did not want to engage in the conversation to those who wanted to talk to everyone. The counselors then removed themselves from the group as the family group leader described, “And they were able to like continue to talk and continue to get to know each other.” He said that after this first awkward conversation, the group members began to open up to their true selves. He then described how observant Clara was with the group typically during a group conversation. He also described she would take notes from planning sessions for activities, and she would review them with the group. He pointed out that this behavior was helpful for the balance of personalities of the family group. He also pointed out that Clara’s efforts helped other members of the family group to become more comfortable with the other members.

The first activity discussed was the Leadership Quadrant activity. The group leader’s first memory of Clara was being shocked after she was in the *Thinker* rather than the *Relator* category that he believed fit her better. Later though, as BLAST progressed, he saw that her category was the correct one. He also shared how wearing the blindfolds was an important aspect of the activity, “So they were, they were able to reflect more on themselves as a person, um, without fear of, you know, subjecting themselves to what their friends may think.” In Clara’s quadrant, he recalled only being a few members to the quadrant. He also vividly remembered how meticulous their poster was for their party. After the activity, the family group met and discussed it. According to the family group leader, this activity was a productive conversation, “...that family group time after that activity is always the, like the most thought-provoked and the most talked out session.” He said that this conversation was in direct contrast to the first one and that this conversation was very fluid. He said that this activity was impactful to Clara’s leadership development because it helped her identify strengths and weaknesses needed for future activities and allowed them to delegate effectively.

The family group leader shared his thoughts about the Dance Social and the bonfire next. During the first, he recalled her enjoying the event, “She was just dancing and having fun.” It was a bonding experience in his opinion, “So that was a good opportunity to, if anything else, it gave them time to be with each other.” Likewise, the bonfire was also a bonding experience, “Everyone was just with people.” From the bonfire, he said that Clara could solidify her relationships, “Confirmation of intimacy, um you know, they’re, they’re able to be, um, they’re able to accept each other.” He concluded with the idea that even after BLAST ended, the campers would maintain their friendships and bonds from BLAST.

The final activity reviewed by the family group leader was the Talent Show. He and the junior family group leaders made a concerted effort not to be actively involved in the skit. The end product, he recalled, was very funny. He said that Clara’s role in this activity was being an active participant in the skits. Later, as the group was discussing the skit during the family group time later that evening, he said that reviewing the skit and laughing about what occurred led to a deeper conversation about other events that had taken place that day.

The family group leader described Clara’s overall experience from his point of view at the conclusion of the interview. He described the changes for all the campers overall including Clara:

Their abilities have changed. They're, they're, um, they've learned they've grown, um, as an individual, as a leader. So, um, every activity that they did just help enhance that person that, you know, they're the same person. They're just a more enhanced version of who they started on Wednesday as.

Repeating what he said at the beginning of the interview, he shared how she changed from being someone reserved to being a person who was comfortable sharing her ideas and opinions. He

said this change was the result of the experiences, activities, and the new relationships she made while at BLAST.

Summary of Documents

Clara shared a folder via Google Drive containing photos and videos clips she recorded during her time at BLAST. The folder contained a total of 62 documents, but with the caveat that many photos have duplicates in the file. Three of the photos were taken during the Rap Battle activity. Two other photos show keepsakes that Clara kept from BLAST including the note that her family group junior leaders wrote to her and a name tag from her cabin door. The other 57 photos are all photos of Clara with one or more people in a group photo. These photos included photos with her family group, her cabin roommates, and school peers. During the second interview, Clara described some of these photos, highlighting the unique ones.

One of the first photos she discussed was a photo with her school peers. She mentioned that they discussed via text message about topics related to BLAST prior to the camp. Once at BLAST however, Clara said that they still maintained this connection even though they were in different family groups, “So when we weren’t separated by colors, we would tell each other about what was going on and how we were finding things with the different people that we met.” She then pointed out another photo with an additional peer from her school, and Clara recalled how they were all in different family groups.

The next photo Clara wanted to discuss was a photo with her cabin roommates taken during the final day. She said it was a bittersweet moment because it was during the time when all the participants were expressing their good-byes to each other. She explained then that even though they were leaving, they were going to stay in touch via social media and other

communications. Clara had maintained contact with each of her roommates, including one she did not interact with very much anymore and another with whom she remained in contact.

The next images she discussed were a series of photos with peers from her school. At one point, a male from another school was near them, and Clara and her peers invited him to join their photo even though he did not attend the same school. Clara said that he had made a friendship with one of Clara's roommates, which was why he joined the photo. Then, Clara described the last photo she had was a photo with her family group and their family group flag. Like the other photo with her roommates, she called this photo a bittersweet moment because of the impact the group made on her, "...we had grown so close in such a short amount of time." She said that part of the bitterness of the moment was the uncertainty of being able to be together at events.

Case Assertions

The data collected for this case was found during two interviews with Clara, one with her family group leader, and analysis of several photos that Clara shared during the data collection process. In Vivo, Values, and Process coding were used to develop 335, 194, and 7 unique codes, respectively. These codes were analyzed with Axial coding which resulted in 15 categories. These categories were re-categorized into super- and subordinate categories to find two supported themes, each with multiple sub-themes. Each is discussed in this section.

Theme 1: Collaborative Development. The first theme suggested in the data referred to the collaborative development Clara experienced at BLAST. Collaborative development for Clara referred to the collective experiences that led to her development. Three sub-themes are discussed under this theme.

The first sub-theme involved Clara's BLAST experiences that included new personalities and bonding with others. During her second interview, Clara summarized this sub-theme best when she stated, "...BLAST was an environment of meeting new people..." More so, she mentioned the new relationships frequently with her family group, her cabin roommates, and other participants. She even made a point to describe how she did not make a strong connection to her family group's junior counselors, but still described the impact of a letter they wrote to her for the final day as sweet. There was also a strong suggestion within this sub-theme of adjusting to new personalities. The family group leader described how it took the family group to bond over time, "...the first night during family group, it was like, 'Oh yeah. Um, let's talk about this great conversation. Let's talk about this.' It wasn't, it wasn't fluid. It wasn't natural." The group leader also stated that there were many different personalities in the group. Once they had time to become acquainted at BLAST, he said, "...so once that all started happening, I really was able to see, um, I was really able to see more of their true ability, more of their true selves."

Adjusting to the new personalities made an impact on Clara's experience.

Each new relationship made an impact on her leadership and personal identity development even though this development was not the objective of the relationships. In her final reflections about BLAST, she commented that these new bonds impacted her leadership development, "And it introduced me to a lot of people who maybe intentionally or unintentionally, helped me grow as a leader. And as a person." She noticed how sometimes these interactions were on purpose like her interactions with the clinician when she volunteered to speak and her junior counselors writing her a good-bye letter. Others, on the other hand, were unintentional such as the discussions had with cabin roommates nightly. She admitted that when first meeting the family group, the inviting and inclusive environment made it easier for her to

make these relationships, “I'm not that good at meeting new people. So, the fact that everybody was just like really casual and inviting was nice. It was really nice.” The impact of these new relationships was also seen in the photos she kept of these new relationships. She referred to saying goodbye to her cabin roommates and her family group both as bittersweet due to having to leave these strong new relationships.

The second significant sub-theme suggested was the idea of developing interpersonal communication skills. As already discussed, Clara reported how she found it difficult to speak publicly, so a major influence if this sub-theme became present in the data. For example, Clara described on multiple occasions of how her family group had to discuss solutions to a given situation like the Rap Battle, “We kind of had to pull together last minute because, um, our ideas were bouncing off of each other's, but not in a really cohesive way.” Seeing how this communication technique was not remarkably effective, she learned how to work in a team. She also saw significant opportunities to share opinions and thoughts during BLAST that impacted her experience. During the Take a Stand activity, she mentioned the girl who was alone in her opinion on one side of the room. After seeing how she was treated, Clara made a distinction in how she would be allowed to voice her opinion as well, “...there were sometimes where I was on the minority side of the, uh, the discussion. So, and after seeing that though, everybody was very respectful.” Being able to be in an experience where she was allowed to speak to others without fear of reprisal permitted her to develop more from the experience. These moments of her experience were impactful towards improving her communication skills.

The benefit of expanding on her interpersonal communication also included the idea of meaningful conversations that allowed her to expand from the new relationships she had made. One key example Clara described early on in the interview process was the nightly conversations

with her roommates. She described these conversations occurred so that, "...like we would all discuss things that had happened because they were interesting to us..." She went on to say that these conversations prompted her to re-evaluate the activities of the day and helped her "... kind of take in everything we had learned about leadership at the actual, um, sessions that we had attended." These meaningful conversations and the connections she had with her roommates were used together to increase the amount of development Clara would have from the various activities.

The difficult, but meaningful, conversations of Take a Stand specifically made an impact on Clara's experience. Her family group leader described this activity and Clara's behaviors, "It was, it was cool to see a lot of reactions. It was cool to see a lot of responses. Um, but it was even better to see the dialogue that went on, um, with these topics." Being witness to these actions and reactions highlighted the collaborative experience in which Clara participated. While she did not mention much about the experience of participating in the dialogue, Clara made an observation about one fellow participant:

And then it got to a point where everybody was on one side of the room and then there was one girl on the other side. So, it was literally everybody against this one girl and she stood by her opinion. She was like, I still think this. And for the rest of the week, like everybody was, nobody treated her differently. So, um, it never got to it didn't get to that point for me. But, um, you know, there were some times where I was on the minority side of the, uh, the discussion. So, and after seeing that though, everybody was very respectful, and I didn't feel like I was getting judged personally.

In seeing how the lone participant stood her ground and not criticized or ostracized for her opinion allowed Clara to see how an opinion could be respected and should not be hidden away

as a leader. She took a lesson away from this moment describing, "...the importance of being able to listen and really taking what somebody else has to say and considering, uh, where they're coming from and what their opinions are." In conclusion, there was a sense that meaningful conversations have made an impact on her experience and development whether through the active conversations where Clara participated in with her roommates or the observations she made of others' dialogues during Take a Stand.

Theme 2: Immersive Experience. From this case's data, BLAST could be an immersive environment based on several attributes. These attributes included the diverse ways that Clara described her experience. Within these categories, there are two sub-themes that appeared that are discussed.

The first sub-theme was the illustrations that Clara used to describe her BLAST experience. Notably, she described BLAST as fun, educational, and an intimate experience. These attributes occurred due to the BLAST environment. There was no other experience that Clara described as more fun than the Dance Social. She described it as, "So everybody was, you know, full energy. Um, nobody really shied away from the idea of just like going all in and having fun." She felt the event helped her make more friends than she had before. The fun of this experience opened her up to more relationships that added to her overall experience. The fun aspects of BLAST enhanced her experience overall.

Multiple times during both interviews, Clara mentioned how the various activities were educational and how much she learned. In summarizing her BLAST experience, she said, "...It was a very educational experience, and it was something that I learned a lot from, and it taught me things that I believe are definitely going to help me throughout the rest of my life..." The educational experiences included learning about leadership like how she reported during the

Leadership Quadrant activity. She mentioned that exercises like this one helped her increase leadership knowledge. This new knowledge would be used in the future, specifically in leadership positions that she would have in her school, "...I've applied the knowledge that I've learned from BLAST into those positions." She also categorized that learning about communication skills was a large part of the educational experience. She included the thought that, "...it also helped me develop my communication skills, which have really bettered me overall as a person," when discussing what she learned at BLAST. She continued that what she meant by communication skills was an increased ability to speak to others. In this regard, sharing of this theme with the previous theme occurred because she learned these communication skills from all the new relationships forged at BLAST. From these details, the data supported that BLAST was an educational experience for Clara.

BLAST was a very intimate and personal experience as suggested by the data. The experiences, while very communal in nature, had a unique effect on each participant. This idea was seen in Clara's experience. Primarily, the family group interactions were essential to the intimate environment of BLAST. Clara's family group leader used the phrase "confirmation of intimacy" when describing how the bonds grew between the family group members and expanded to include others. He said, "...they were all able to accept that they can be serious in a large group because of the intimacy that has led to that moment. Like they all are with each other." In this statement, he is pointing out how the personal relationships started in the family groups had grown to include others at such events like the bonfire. In a specific moment to which Clara specifically referred as personal, she described the Leadership Quadrant activity as very personal when describing the second portion of making the party poster with the other quadrant members, "...this one, it was more like, it was more personal, like what works best for

you? How can you do things better?” Although this experience was a collaborative activity, she found personal meaning in the activity that affected her BLAST experience.

The second sub-theme included the variety of Clara’s experiences at BLAST. While most of her experiences were positive and uplifting, a keen sense of awkwardness and discomfort was supported in the data. Clara described the first session with the lead clinician:

...One of the, um, first things he kind of presented to us was the idea of like making us uncomfortable because he would single out a lot of people in the group when we weren't expecting it. And, uh, just trying to really push them outside of their boundaries.

This idea of being put in uncomfortable or new situations was impactful for Clara as she decidedly pushed herself into these kinds of situations like in the instance when she volunteered an answer in front of the group even though she was afraid of making mistakes. Knowing that one of the purposes of the BLAST experience was to have those kinds of moments resulted in Clara being more accepting of trying these new choices. During the Communication Module, the awkwardness of this activity was followed a moment of emotional reaction for Clara, “I just kinda, I got emotional after thinking about that,” when she was instructed to think about the ambitions of her partner. This module was an impactful moment because Clara admitted that she was not the kind of person to maintain eye contact, so the awkwardness of this activity presented as a challenge for her to conquer.

Continuing, Clara discussed the awkwardness of the societal conversations during the Take a Stand activity. She recognized from the beginning of the activity that it was meant to be an awkward activity, “They asked us questions that were really cut and dry and supposed to kind of make us uncomfortable.” The questions and subsequent discussions were meant to promote division among the participants and force them to discuss their opinions and beliefs. Her group

leader described this event as a potentially dangerous activity for the participants to discuss these divisive subjects. This activity made Clara fearful for being judged for her opinion on the issues discussed at the beginning of the activity, but she pushed herself past the discomfort and participated, which was a breakthrough for her personally, “I feel like that really helped me with, um, an issue that I had kind of been struggling for a while.” The awkwardness of these activities promoted new behaviors and ideas from Clara that made large impacts on her BLAST experience.

The other part of this second sub-theme was her engagement in the different activities that Clara completed at BLAST. These activities were mostly new ideas or activities for her. For example, she described the application activities like the poster activity during the Leadership Quadrant activity as very impactful to her BLAST experience. Her family group leader described the family group’s conversation after this activity, “That family group time after that activity is always the, like the most thought provoked and the most talked out session.” The participants were asked to become fully involved during this activity and the process clearly left an impression on Clara and the other participants. The process of creating the poster was an exercise described in detail more so than some of the other activities due to her immersed involvement in the activity. Likewise, Clara described the Talent Show as a very impactful application exercise due to her level of involvement. As a part of the activity, each family group member had to be in the skits in some fashion. By immersing herself in the experience with the family group, she realized a key idea for herself, “I think just because you always have to be paying attention, you can't really like lose yourself in the middle of a certain activities where you have to, um, think on your toes.” This new notion, like many she would mention in the data,

would not have been grasped without her engaged participation in the new experiences such as the Leadership Quadrant activity or the Talent Show.

Conclusion

As suggested in the data, Clara had a positive and impactful BLAST experience. From her case study, BLAST was a fun and immersive environment where participants learned about personal leadership while making new relationships. It should be noted that Clara's experience was unique as a case. She missed some experiences such as the Bunker Activity and Bafa Bafa, thus necessary was to question how that would have affected her experience. She still experienced most of BLAST and evidently did receive some fashion of impact from the experience.

In terms of leadership, she learned through immersing herself in the various activities the importance of working with diverse types of people and learned what kind of team member she was. She also learned about the importance of effective communication for a leader. The application exercises she completed with her family group allowed her to learn these aspects. In addition to learning to be a better leader, she also learned about herself as a person. Reasonable to say from the data was that her personal development had become a more significant development than the leadership development. Improving her communication skills was a lesson for her personal development as much as it was for her leadership development. One of the most significant personal developments that went along with interpersonal communication was her increased awareness of interpersonal relationships. She made new relationships while being transformed from a self-professed introvert to a more open person by the conclusion of BLAST.

Theoretically, there are a few details that could suggest Clara's placement on Marcia's paradigm. As stated in the data, she had not spent much time at sleepovers that could indicate a

strong influence from her family. This detail could point towards her being in the Identify Foreclosure stage as she had not developed much beyond the parameters and standards set forth by her family. Then, with all the new experiences she acquired and new ideas developed during BLAST, it could be suggested that she started the transition to the Moratorium stage where she started to explore her own ideas. She did not necessarily challenge any pre-conceived commitments to her ideologies at BLAST, but those new experiences would allow her to explore more ideas considered before BLAST.

CHAPTER IX

CROSS-CASE ASSERTIONS

In this chapter, the assertions from cross-case analysis are discussed. Following this discussion, a description of the quintain is presented to describe its manifestations across the four cases of this study. These assertions are needed to answer the research questions discussed in the last chapter.

Cross-Case Assertions

The assertions and findings from the four cases in this study were cross analyzed using Stake's (2006) recommended steps discussed in the study's methodology. Previously discussed with the methods of analysis, the steps included ranking the findings of the different cases in terms of their utility to describing the quintain, identifying similarities among the unique cases, combining similar findings across cases, and developing these findings into assertions to answer the research questions. From these steps, five major assertions are suggested in the collective case study data.

Assertion 1: Dynamic Leadership Development Experiences. The first cross-case assertion for this study involved the extent to which BLAST was a dynamic leadership development experience. Across all four cases, there were experiences that showed how the BLAST experience contained a curriculum in a high-energy, immersive environment full of personal lessons and varying experiences that promoted leadership development to be applied in the individual's life. Table 1 shows a summary of the findings for this assertion.

Table 1

Summary of Findings from Cross-Case Analysis of Assertion 1

Case	Evidence for Cross Case Assertion
Multiple	Applicable to “real world”
Multiple	High energy and competitiveness
Multiple	Unfamiliar situations and experiences
Nate	Personalized, unique experiences that were both negative and positive
Kate	BLAST experience was hands-on and interactive

The BLAST environment was, comprehensively, a personal experience in an immersive environment that resulted in individual leadership development. The idea of it being an immersive environment was summed up by Kate who described the BLAST environment as a way to “...learn about leadership, but like through very interactive hands-on ways...” The personal leadership development was a result of the choices made during the activities and the personal lessons learned from each. Each case presented reactions and thoughts about the different activities in a variety of ways. One clear illustration of this point was the fact that the each participants remembered different activities and experiences and not all in the same manner. While the interview questions were meant to inspire ideas, some experiences were just not strong memories for one or more the participants. For one participant, Clara, she missed two activities that others discussed made an impact on her personal experience. Secondly, participants would discuss the same activity as it related to them personally and how it affected their leadership development different such as Lynn’s and Clara’s reporting on the Rap Battle. Lynn’s experience resulted in a very personal impact as she took the lead of her group’s rap whereas

Clara had a more generic experience. Lynn described how she felt different as a result of the Rap Battle because, “I wasn’t expecting to come to camp and then rap in front of like fifty people.” Meanwhile, Clara, whose group won the prize for having the best performance, described it as, “We were happy because you've put effort into it, but it was, it was kind of surprising. It was really cool though,” which showed that the impact of the same experience for her was not the same as Lynn. These contrasting reflections on the same activity showed how personal the BLAST experience could be regardless of the participant.

Working in tandem with the idea of personalized experiences was the fact that negative and positive experiences at BLAST resulted ultimately in positive developments. Namely, Nate’s experience with his consequences of violating curfew was significant while being a negative experience. This negative experience was one of the key “life lessons” he learned at BLAST, “...It was like everybody has everybody had their own repercussions for one reason or another...So like everybody had their different things we had to like while we had to keep our own and like carry ourselves up.” The unique power of this negative experience was not isolated to this type of event. Clara spoke of negative experiences as well during BLAST. The negative experiences for her were the moments of awkwardness during the different activities. As described prior, she reported feeling awkward during the Take a Stand activity that were purposely used to “make us feel uncomfortable.” She also mentioned hearing from the lead clinician that she would be put in uncomfortable situations on the first day, “I remember our speaker, one of the, um, first things he kind of presented to us was the idea of like making us uncomfortable because he would single out a lot of people in the group when we weren't expecting it.” These awkward moments would have a profound impact on her as she learned from these experiences about using her voice without fear of retribution. The BLAST

experience, as the data showed through these particular episodes, that positive development could occur without it originating in a definitively positive experience.

As suggested in the data, BLAST was considered to be a high-energy event. The high energy was apparent in many of the activities, none more so than the description of competitive activities like the Family Olympics. In light of his natural competitiveness, not surprising that Nate acknowledged the competitive energy raised during this competition, "...at the same time it was still like you were so, like the fire in your heart for your family group was just so intense at that moment." The group activities and competitions helped keep the energy of BLAST at a high point. Kate described a misplaced moment of high energy during this competition for her family group in a comical moment:

And I remember like, we, it was the four groups and then it came down to like the top two groups. And so, it was green and blue. And so, we were so hyped because we were like, wait, like, we might actually win this one. Like, things like that. Like this could be it. And then we like, got like, it was like the final round and it was like them and us. And like, we were like, okay, we're going to get it. And then we like all the balls and then they announced the winner and our group thought they announced like the green team. So, we did a victory lap, but then they said it was the blue team.

Her description of the Family Olympics included how the high energy of this competition also helped her bond more with fellow family members. Continuing, these types of moments immersed the participants in the BLAST environment. Lynn talked about the high energy of BLAST that was in her family group's team spirit, "Green team was always pretty high spirited. So, wherever we went, we always wrapped our piece of green fabric around our arm or foot and wore our beaded necklace." The high energy of BLAST was grounded in the energy of the

individual participants, but possibly multiplied by the bonds made within the family groups during the competitive activities like the Family Olympics and through the family group bonds.

Another factor this high energy suggested in the data was the idea of mystery and surprise at BLAST that influenced the leadership development of the participants. Prior to the camp, Nate confronted mystery surrounding BLAST how his peers who had already attended would not tell him any details about the experience. Little was shared with the participants prior to BLAST. Kate had seen the lead clinician speak before, but not sure what was going to happen at BLAST once seeing him the first day, "...and he was like, 'Y'all aren't prepared for what we have planned for you the next three days,' or something like that. And I was like, what is that supposed to mean?" She had a presumption of what was going to happen. Her lack of understanding related to the mystery of BLAST and its activities that allowed for fuller experiences for the participants. Lynn's experience was similar. She admitted that being in a situation where the idea of unfamiliar experiences helped her develop, "So it was just so a different place where I could just find a different version of myself." The different place in this thought was that BLAST was not what she expected it to be. With it being a mystery, engaging in different activities allowed her to find new parts of herself as a leader.

The last aspect of this cross-case assertion was how the BLAST experience applied to the "real world" of its participants. In discussing what was learned at BLAST, the participants were able to pinpoint exact ways in which the abstract lessons from BLAST could be applied after BLAST. Clara described how she used the methods of discussion recognized during the Take a Stand activity in difficult conversations she had since BLAST, "...It's been more and more necessary for me to be able to discuss serious or controversial topics without offending anybody or, without letting things escalate into something that might not be very civilized." Take a Stand

used difficult topics to push the participants into having difficult and divisive conversations. Clara used that experience in her life since then. Likewise, Kate reported how she directly applied the strategies from Take a Stand into a classroom discussion she had to host as part of class. In one of her school classes, Kate discussed how the experiences of Bafa Bafa helped her acclimate to being a virtual student while the rest of the class was attending in-person. She drew the comparison, “Like I've just realized like, that is just how it is. It's not personal, it's not, they're not talking about me. Like, it is just, um, how the world is.” The participants experienced simulations and experiences that were somewhat realistic, but mostly conceptual such as Bafa Bafa. Although these experiences were not related directly to their personal lives, the participants were able to use these experiences and lessons to manage the real-world encounters after BLAST.

Assertion 2: Encouraging Environment. It could be suggested through the cross-case analysis that the individual BLAST activities and lessons were unique, but they followed the principle of encouraging the BLAST participants. This assertion, in addition, included the idea that the BLAST environment was an encouraging one through the inclusion of fun in the activities and how the participants were motivated to participate. This encouragement reflected some details already discussed like the competitive nature of many activities and the high energy surrounding those activities. The encouragement could also be found in the ways the participants were motivated to get involved at BLAST. Table 2 shows a summary of the findings for this assertion.

Table 2

Summary of Findings from Cross-Case Analysis of Assertion 2

Case	Evidence for Cross Case Assertion
Multiple	A sense of fun throughout activities to encourage engagement
Clara	Feeling more able to speak openly about opinions and ideas
Nate	Feeling included thus wanting to participate in daily energizers

Having an element of fun in each of the activities allowed the participants to have a deeper leadership development experience. To start, the enjoyable aspect of the Talent Show made it easier for Kate to ignore fear and nervousness of performing, "...I've never really done before, but then also just having fun while doing it even, even though I was like, so nervous about it before." If this activity had not been a pleasant experience for Kate, it was possible that she would not have given much consideration to its overall impact as a way to avoid negative feelings. Further on, the fact that she had fun while performing the skit helped her see it as a positive experience when the skit did not go to the rehearsed plan, "...some people in our group, like just really, really, really messed up, but then it's just kind of like, you know, it is what it is, but also at the same time, like we had fun." The spirit of fun allowed Kate to take on a positive, optimistic point of view on the activity that made the potentially negative experience an incredibly positive one. This positivity could explain why this activity was a very impactful one, but it could have been less impactful had she not seen it as a fun activity. Lynn also reported about a fun experience that resulted from something not working out with her family group. During the Family Olympics, she described how her family group resolved to have fun when winning was not in reach:

We knew that we wouldn't be able to win anyways. So, we just kind of let loose a little to have fun, but it just showed that having just, not always being so strict about maybe getting into an end goal and just enjoying what's going on with the people around you, as you're getting to the end goal is more important because that way you can just not be so as stressed about the situation.

One of the developments that Lynn described was how she learned about different leaders and different teams working together. The higher priority given to working together as a team than completing the task was an atypical idea for Lynn. When the group decided to have fun with the Family Olympics and relax on the competitive nature of it, Lynn was able to see a new dynamic of teamwork that made for a big impression on her leadership development. So, as seen here, the data from the cross-case analysis showed how the element of fun and enjoying the activity made it possible for the participant to grow as a leader. Having this element as a foundation to all the activities as the data suggested meant that it supported positive experiences and development during BLAST in each activity.

The BLAST environment, as made evident in the data, was also one where all participants were motivated to be actively involved. Prior to the Leadership Quadrant Activity, Clara's family group leader described having a difficult time with the group being open with one another. Then, during the activity, Clara described how wearing the blindfold made it a better experience, "it made me, uh, less afraid to kind of just be honest about everything [the clinician] said." In this statement, Clara did not necessarily get a choice to be actively involved in the activity, but the impact was felt all the same. In fact, as all the participants were wearing a blindfold for this activity and all actively involved in this way, a similar impact was felt by all BLAST participants. This was evident in Clara's group leader noticing a striking difference in

the family group conversation after the Leadership Quadrant Activity, "...that family group time after that activity is always the, like the most thought provoked and the most talked out session." Nate's experiences also illustrated the idea of being involved, but he described it through a different experience. He described his choice to become involved in the daily energizer moments such as a dance-along video, "You can't expect to have the time of your life if you're watching from the outside because you're not in it." The interesting change was how Nate started as someone not involved, as observed by his family group leader, but then became someone who would "throw" himself into the experience. According to Nate, he would get involved in the energizers with his peers, "We would always like run up together and there's usually like four people. Cause they're trying to like super inclusive, like everybody together." His choice to become involved could have been impacted by the idea of everyone being included; a sense of positive peer pressure among the participants to be actively involved at BLAST may have existed. So, whether it was by design through the activity itself or the result of potential peer pressure, the BLAST participants impacted their experience by being actively engaged.

Assertion 3: Developing Communication Skills. Quite possibly the most discussed aspect of BLAST was communication, and this assertion was prevalent among the four cases. Although each case approached it from a unique perspective, there were two common threads among them that made this assertion. The primary aspect was that participants developed communication skills at BLAST. Secondly, there was also an idea of how BLAST allowed for the participants to make observations about communication in context significant to BLAST's impact. A summary of the findings are presented in Table 3

Table 3

Summary of Findings from Cross-Case Analysis of Assertion 3

Case	Evidence for Cross Case Assertion
Clara	Developing ability to communicate more openly
Lynn	Understanding the importance of active listening in communication
Kate	Developing the ability to have “deeper” conversations with peers
Nate	Understanding effective communication methods

Developing interpersonal communication skills was a significant theme across the cases that showed more than just the impact of oral communication. Clara admitted directly that developing communication skills was one of the largest impacts of her BLAST experience, “...[BLAST] also helped me develop my communication skills, which have really bettered me overall as a person.” Clara mentioned this development in many of the activities. Lynn remembered the lessons from the explicit communication exercises as well, “...while it is important to listen, it's also important that your body language and the way you present yourself is also very important as well because, even though you may be actively listening, it may not show it.” Clara improved her ability to speak with others she did not know often as a part of the BLAST experience during these exercises and other activities. Kate, like Clara, admitted developing communication skills, “BLAST has also changed my interpersonal communication.” For her, the change can be described as an increase in being able to have “deeper” conversations where she could be an active participant. So, under the guise of developing these communication skills, the participants at BLAST developed a better sense of practical communication skills like body language. So, using these new skills could possibly foster more

intimate relationships that influence more than just the way they speak and orally communicate with others.

Various communication methods were observed in different BLAST activities. The idea suggested that the participants developed an understanding about speaking in a variety of scenarios. For instance, Nate discussed how his group had to discuss problem solving during the Family Olympics, “It was like the whole team, not all shouting directions at one person and understanding that like the flow of information. So, it needs to be like clear, concise. So that one person that really translate it transmits it.” Their method of problem solving as a group made an impact on his communication development. Lynn also made observations about different communication methods during the Bafa Bafa activity, “So the other islands, they laughed a lot and, like just like the way they communicated was like, so vastly different. It contrasted the way like the Beta Island, communicated.” She concluded that this difference in communication approaches would make an impact on the conflict between the two groups. Like in these two examples, watching how others communicate and the result of it, whether good or bad, made an impression on the conclusions participants had about how communication made a difference in a given situation even though developing communication was not the specific goal of the activities in question. Communication development through observation was a part of the BLAST experience.

Assertion 4: Learning Leadership Collaboratively. This assertion was relevant to the cross-case analysis because the theme of collaboration was present in all four cases. The patterns that appeared were how the BLAST experience encouraged new bonds among peers, how BLAST required teamwork, and how participants could learn by observing others. Table 4 shows a summary of the cross-case analysis for this assertion.

Table 4

Summary of Findings from Cross-Case Analysis of Assertion 4

Case	Evidence for Cross Case Assertion
Multiple	Impact of creating intimate and close bonds
Multiple	Seeing how different leadership styles work together
Kate	Being treated like an “outsider” during Bafa Bafa
Lynn	Observing actions of others lead to personal development

BLAST was a very collaborative experience by the means of creating new bonds among the participants. Clara spoke about the bonds made during BLAST as one of the highlights of her experience. She described it as one of the topmost significant experiences of BLAST as she described when saying final goodbyes to the other participants:

Even if I didn't feel like we had gotten super, super close over the course of the week when we said goodbye, it was still very heartfelt and it was still very real because, uh, there was some sort of connection there that we had formed simply because we had had a really good time there with everybody as a whole, even if we didn't spend a bunch of one-on-one time together.

Clara described saying the melancholy goodbyes to her fellow group members and others that demonstrated the bonds she made with them; one of the key aspect of BLAST even if the bond was not as strong as others. The fact that they had all gone through this experience together was the base of the bond that made it strong. How these bonds were made have been discussed by other participants. Lynn discussed the intimate bonds she had with her family group during the Talent Show activity, “...it just kind of also like reinforced the idea of just working as a team

and like creating like those intimate connections.” Similarly, Nate described the bonds made with his family group during the Family Olympics, “Like that passion that everybody has in the group came from, I believe, I believe they came from like the little interactions where people realized they bonded together.” The bonds, like Clara showed in her thoughts, were important to the experience. Understanding how these bonds were formed to create a collaborative experience would be pertinent to understanding how the participants experienced leadership development among their peers in the family groups.

The next part of this cross-cross assertion was the notion of how the participants described their experiences of working together. In the individual cases, this development is different from the development of the communication skills already discussed. This communication as discussed in the individual cases was the application of communication skills during the different activities. In one instance, Kate described the different personalities of her Family Group in her first interview. When asked what she learned from that experience, she mentioned how various kinds of leaders could work with a team, “So I learned a lot about, um, like no matter like the type of leader you are, there's really different ways that you can lead in a specific family group.” Clara made similar comments stating how her team was a “good balance” of personalities. Seeing how these groups worked together would be important to their leadership development experience. Lynn and Nate identified moments of their family groups working together and how it was impactful to their experiences during the Bunker Activity. Lynn’s family group was chaotic in comparison to the other groups as Lynn described, “So towards the end, we kind of just took it on a very irrational basis,” when she described how her family group worked together to complete the Bunker Activity and how the process somewhat faltered. Nate described the process of how people’s opinions changed during the Bunker

activity when more information became known within his group, but the process remained mainly stable and productive. So, from the research, it can be deduced that the experiences from these family groups was one of diversity and different approaches of teamwork. Each case study saw a different aspect of teamwork as they were parts of different family groups.

Lastly, there was a strong suggestion in the data from the cross-case analysis of the participants learning from others through the influence of observation. Bafa Bafa was an excellent example of this notion for Kate. She was one of the participants who left her original group during the activity and not welcomed when she returned. Seeing how the others began to act around her was a significant moment, “I thought it was really interesting to see how somehow like people, like people's like intentions can just like turn.” She later discussed using what had been learned from this observation in a real classroom situation where she was again the “outsider.” During Take a Stand, Nate noted seeing one female peer who was the only person on one side of a discussion interesting because it did not turn into a negative experience, “She stayed confident, stated her case. Didn't like get super, she didn't get defensive at all.” He then turned this observation into an idea about judging others for their opinions. Finally, Lynn made observations of others to measure herself:

And I remember that it's always fun to kind of observe how others are doing and then just like, kind of compare it to, I always compared it to like who I am as a person, because consider myself like pretty shy.

One of the effects of BLAST for Lynn was that she became less shy. One of the methods by which she was able to become more extroverted was observing others and seeing what changes she could make to her own behavior. Having the opportunity to observe others was the key part of this change being able to occur. Observing, whether it was seeing how people's behaviors

could change like with Kate or seeing how others' behaviors could impact their own like with Nate and Lynn, was an impactful part of the BLAST experience in the cross-case analysis.

Assertion 5: Personal Change. The final assertion of the cross-case analysis included how the cases measured and described their own change during BLAST. These changes could be categorized as how the cases described the process of personal change and what those personal changes were for the cases. Table 5 is a summary of the cross-case analysis for this assertion.

Table 5

Summary of Findings from Cross-Case Analysis of Assertion 5

Case	Evidence for Cross Case Assertion
Multiple	Stepping out of one's shell
Multiple	Developing more self-confidence
Kate	Becoming more team-oriented in approach to teamwork
Lynn	Compromising rigid opinions and perspectives
Lynn	Pushed out of comfort zone into new experiences

The cross-case analysis showed evidence of how personal change was depicted as a journey. Within this journey, there were various challenges and struggles that resulted in change. Lynn recognized how her journey of change was something of a mystery from the beginning, "I knew that the camp was very, was about, learning yourself, but I didn't really know what that meant until I went to BLAST and I was forced to be uncomfortable." The process of her personal journey was one where she was pushed into moments of being made to feel uncomfortable. In fact, during the Dance she was "forced to shift gears" and be different from

her usual self that resulted in seeing herself in different light. Again, the journey here was one where she was pushed into different or uncomfortable situations. The journeys depicted in this evidence show how the BLAST journey was a personal one for the participants.

Sometimes the change experienced was the result of a choice. Kate described her change as more of a personal choice like this description of the Bonfire's impact, "So like, I felt like I was, that was the point when I was kind of stepping out of my shell, like talking to other people." The idea of "stepping out of my shell" was a phrase used more than once in her description of personal development at BLAST. In contrast to Lynn's personal change journey, Kate described hers as a deliberate volition where she chose to make the change. The more important aspect of Kate's description was the idea of a metamorphosis where she evolved into someone new.

While Clara described her journey as specific changes, her overall journey was described by her family group in a manner similar to Kate, "...You were able to see, um, how she was in her, in her shell, in their turtle shell, um, from day one. And then, you know, just the effect that BLAST has, um, in the intimacy of the environment." Clara described her new connections and relationships with the other BLAST participants more than the other cases. The idea of intimacy that her family group leader described was what coaxed her out of her shell. While she still chose to step out of this shell, like Kate, her choice had more of an external motivation to do so via her new relationships. These choices were made by the participants that led to the changes they experienced.

The second aspect of this cross-case assertion was the impression of the specific changes each of the cases described as a result of their BLAST experiences. Nate recognized how he gained more self-confidence as a result of BLAST, "BLAST changed me by like bringing me more confidence in everything I do, whether it's leading or just like voicing my opinion or et

cetera.” One specific activity mentioned was the Take a Stand activity where he gained confidence in what he believed and expressed them more openly. This increased confidence was an explicit aspect of personal change he noted in his BLAST experience. Lynn also developed self-confidence through the BLAST activities led by the lead clinician. She described the change she experienced through the exercises as learning to be more authentic, or as she said, “...it showed me not to be afraid to just be myself, not to just doubt who I am as a person...” She added how the distance from her family also added to an increase in her sense of independence as an individual. For these two cases, an increase of self-confidence in terms of opinion and self-conception was one way they saw their development at BLAST.

Kate and Lynn also pointed out explicit changes they experienced as a result of working with others. Kate described how her usual sense of competitiveness was overtaken by feeling pride for someone else who received the recognition of being named to the BLAST Honor Council instead of her. She pointed out that this sentiment was a new feeling for her, “...There was like a new sense of pride.” Developing a more team-oriented spirit was something she mentioned as a new development, and this quote was one way to describe what that change felt like. A change, as a result of working with other participants, was something Lynn also reported when adapting her values and beliefs around her family group, “I compromised a bit of mine, of my most comfortable zone, in order to be flexible and maybe be more social with them in order to reach out to different types of people.” In this comment, she described how she was able to become less rigid in her opinions and usual behavior to be more open to different ideas from others. This change was a major one from her previous mindset she described having prior to BLAST. So, as these examples showed, these two cases described one of the changes they experienced at BLAST at re-defining how they worked with others.

Quintain

This study's quintain was the adolescent identity development that occurred at BLAST. The quintain could be described in terms of this study by reviewing the findings of the individual cases and the collective case study. Of the most significant aspects of the findings, the adolescent identity development at BLAST could be described as a collective experience that leads to personal identity development. This identity development also included growth and change that was the result of self-reflection and self-challenge that ended in a positive direction towards identity formation. The summary of the description of the quintain is shown below in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Findings to Describe Quintain

Case	Evidence for Quintain
Kate	Collaborative atmosphere encouraged more exploration
Nate	Commitment to ideologies as a result of Take a Stand
Kate	Collective experience added to the individual's experience
Lynn	Personal struggles in BLAST activities lead to development
Multiple	Feeling transformed as a result of BLAST experience

The aspects of BLAST that made it the identity development experience a collaborative one was two-fold. The first part was how the participants were able to gain new perspectives from engagement with others. The team spirit of the family group existed in each of the four individual cases. The fact that many of the activities were a group activity yet yielded a different personal identity development aspect for each participant was significant. The documents of life

presented in the cases showed how the collaborative aspect of these cases was important to their experience and their personal identity development in abstract manners such as Kate who described her photos with her family group as, "...these were actually like people that we still talk to and, um, actually like really made an impact on my life and others' lives." The impact she described was an impact on her personal development. The connections made helped her become more open as an individual, which in turn made her identity development more possible. By being more open to others, she was also more open to the new experiences and ideas described in the data that could be the new exploration or re-examinations of prior commitments. Thus, she would be encouraged by these relationships to move into the Moratorium stage of her identity development, which was a strong indicator of positive development.

In a different case, Nate gained understanding of confidence by watching the actions of a peer during the Take a Stand activity. Theoretically, he saw what it looked like to have a commitment to ideology and how such a commitment without fear of ridicule was possible. Knowing this idea would help him progress into an Identity Achieved status after further exploration. With the ideas of working with and engaging with others in their family group or during BLAST activities, the adolescent identity development at BLAST was impacted by the individual participants engaging with their peers.

The second aspect of the quintain being a collaborative experience was how observing others' behavior can be an impact on another's personal experience. These observations, as reported, were a part of the participant's identity development by forcing the participant to recognize and reflect on what he or she had witnessed. As previously discussed, it could be seen that these observations were an effective way to explore new ideologies and occupations in a supportive environment where the subsequent group discussion and reflection would make it a

part of one's personal experience by proxy. In the study, Kate described how this observation could occur during the Chaos activity. She did not understand the activity fully until she was able to discuss what occurred with her family group later. During these discussions, Kate and the other participants were able to reflect on their and others' actions to understand the choices made. What helps possibly in understanding these actions was how each participant started on the equal footing of little to no understanding of what was happening during the activity. This commonality allowed participants to have an experience by proxy to what others do. This experience by proxy through observation added to the variety of new experience the participant undertook at BLAST that enhanced the breadth of their exploration during what would be the moratorium stage. This exploration then made an impact on each individual's experience at BLAST through the vehicle of observation.

The other major idea of the quintain was how the adolescent identity development experience at BLAST had been a collection of challenges that, when reviewed introspectively, ended with positive identity development. The challenges could be the specific activities like the Bunker Activity or Family Olympics where the participants were quite literally challenged to overcome a problem. In other cases, like with Lynn, the challenges were the internal struggles she faced at BLAST that resulted in identity development. During BLAST, she identified one of her key struggles, "I think at that time, one of my biggest struggles was kind of accepting who I was as a person." After BLAST, she noted how she was more accepting of herself. Nate had an interesting moment at BLAST when he was one of the participants who were caught violating the required curfew on the final night. His challenge in this situation was taking what happened and learn from it, which he stated he did, "...Like no matter how great things might be, like things can go wrong." His internal challenge was to take that lesson away from that experience

rather than make it a negative memory lacking any impact on his development. The challenges the BLAST participants faced, whether external or internal, would be a large part of the identity development experience.

Lastly, the participants of BLAST described the process of their identity development as a transformation and a journey. In a simple observation, Clara described how BLAST changed her in a “positive way.” Likewise, Lynn replied to a question about what her BLAST experience was like by stating how it was “life-changing” as a person. Nate used the experience of the Bunker activity to describe how it affected him as a person, “It's makes me like go into every like problem with a more open view.” Being more “open” was a transformation that Kate mentioned as well when she described how she “stepped out of her shell” to try new experiences like the Dance Line activity or the Rap Battle. These transformations described in the four cases were all positive for the cases and have been described in terms of moving beyond the identities the participants presumed to have prior to BLAST.

These transformations were the result of a journey described by the participants in terms of their identity development. In Lynn’s case, the idea of a journey was evident throughout her case. For her identity development, she referred to multiple episodes of challenges in which she participated, having to take leaps like she did with her choices during Bafa Bafa or personal struggles she faced such as working towards self-acceptance. All of these pieces of her identity development were the result of a process she began at BLAST that was continuing to do so after the camp. Kate described how she entered BLAST thinking it would not be a momentous experience for her, but she later used the experience and created a workshop for other students to experience after BLAST. Her journey went from not expecting much from the BLAST camp experience to knowing how the experience could lead to larger impacts for others like it did for

her. The journey of the BLAST participants in terms of their identity development did not necessarily start nor end at BLAST. The camp did however, play a role in giving that development a direction for the journey of the participants.

CHAPTER X

DISCUSSION

In this closing chapter, the discussion begins with an overview of the study itself. Then, the findings of the cross-case analysis of the collective case study are used to answer the two research questions. The limitations of the study are discussed next and how they have potentially affected the study. Recommendations follow in identifying ways that the results can be applied to a K-12 curriculum for leadership education. Lastly, implications for further research on this topic are presented before the conclusion.

Study Overview

This collective case study centered on the adolescent participants of a youth leadership development camp sponsored by the Georgia Association of Student Councils. In the state of Georgia, the state Department of Education does not offer much in terms of a course in leadership development outside of ROTC programs, which are understandably focused on military leadership or other heavily focused programs (Georgia Department of Education, 2018). Therefore, the general belief could be suggested that leadership development for adolescents has largely been deemed an unnecessary curriculum piece in most high schools. Thus, for many adolescents in Georgia, experiences like Bringing Leadership And Students Together (BLAST) is one of a few opportunities they can have as students to develop leadership skills prior to entering the workforce or matriculating to a university. Perhaps, if leadership development experiences like BLAST are shown as effective tools to helping adolescents in their personal identity development, then maybe an argument could be made to include it in the general curriculum due to its potential array of positive effects. The benefits of identity development in adolescents have been researched to an extent, and researchers have found that there are positive

correlations between the progression of identity development and pro-social behavior in adolescents (Sandhu et al., 2012). This study, hopefully, can add to the evidence that leadership development for adolescents has positive effects on overall adolescent development.

Marcia's original study in 1964 led to claims that there are four potential statuses of identity development in adolescents: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, moratorium, and identity formation. The factors that indicate the different statuses are the measurement of how much exploration of ideologies the adolescent is pursuing and how much that adolescent commits to those ideologies. Research into this area is considered one that still needs further investigation (Kroger, 2000). This study hopefully provides some ideas about this research field.

To recall, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, this study's purpose was to provide an idea of what adolescent leadership development looked like through the eyes of the adolescent participants themselves. This particular goal would hopefully yield some ideas that could be useful in developing more effective curriculum and programs in the area of adolescent leadership development. Secondly, the study's purpose was to find a glimpse into the process of adolescent identity development from the adolescent perspective. Using the collective case study method, the study could positively show insight into how adolescents understand their own development process as it related to Marcia's (1964) findings.

The multiple case study method was adopted from Stake's (2006) proposed procedure. The study included four individual cases with each case including one of the BLAST participants, his or her family group leader, and any documents of life (Stanley, 2013) he or she had kept. Each participant was interviewed two times that included a discussion about the documents presented. The family group leader was interviewed one time to add description and breadth to the participants' interview data. The interview data was analyzed using In Vivo and

Values coding while the documents were analyzed with process coding as suggested by Saldaña (2016) to be effective for these types of data. All the codes were then re-analyzed using axial coding, developed into categories, and eventually became themes for each case. The cross-case analysis was completed by following Stake's (2006) methods to complete the study's findings.

Relationship between the Findings and Research Questions

This section discusses the research questions for this study. Using support from the data and assertions from the collective case study, answers to the research questions are presented and discussed. Ideas and examples from the data are used to illustrate ideas presented.

Research Question One

The first research question was, "How do adolescent participants describe their personal leadership development experience at BLAST?" This question includes the way the participants, or also referred to as cases, in this study described their experiences at BLAST as it pertained to leadership development. Each case added a new perspective that added depth to the overall data for this study.

First, each case described their leadership development at BLAST as a shared experience in various fashions. For the collective case study, working with the family groups made an impact on each of their leadership development experiences specifically because the groups allowed each participant to have a fun and encouraging environment with peers and group leaders. One distinct example was how Kate mentioned performing with her group during the Talent Show helped her overcome the nervousness. Her experiences of preparing for the skit as a way to rely on fellow group members helped her, "I'm kinda like sitting there, like, uh, being able to like learn the dance like kind of like being there for everybody." In these groups, the participants were also encouraged and challenged to stretch what they considered to be their pre-

conceived notions of leadership, personal leadership, or even what they thought would be the result of their BLAST experience. Both Clara and Kate made a point of discussing how their family groups were full of diverse personalities, and Kate mentioned how the different personalities helped her learn about different methods of leadership. Clara described her group's cohesion, "It was a good mix of variety, uh, in personality, but we all, we all worked pretty well together."

The family groups were a key factor in their experiences to develop ideas and abilities about leadership. Nate had a significant moment during Take a Stand with his family. He discussed seeing one of his peers standing alone on one side of an issue and not faltering to pressure from others. He made observations about how someone could handle this kind of potentially tense situation, "She stayed confident, stated her case." Other times, the development was via observations and reflections on the actions taken by others during activities such as the Chaos activity or Bunker activity. Kate admitted to having difficulty understanding the purpose of the Chaos activity until when she discussed it with her family group a few hours later and found personal meaning in the activity:

I think a couple hours later, like I understood what he was trying to like get us at because I think initially, I was like, what was the point of that? Like, I don't get it, but then three or four hours later, I was like, 'Oh, like, that makes sense.'

Having that opportunity to reflect and discuss with a group was instrumental to her leadership development. Lynn described her group's decision-making process during the Bunker activity as very irrational by the end of the activity. Using what could be an ineffective process to making the group's decision correlated to the end result as they discovered making the wrong decision of who should survive. This exercise helped her learn about behavior and habits when

communicating in a group, arguably an important leadership development step. Whether through direct work with their family groups or through observation, the group experience was an integral aspect of the leadership development of the BLAST participants in this study.

The act of discussing and reflecting on what had transpired during these various activities allowed, as supported in the data, increased in the participants' self-awareness. Increases in self-awareness is also an integral aspect of leadership development as stated in the research of Hinde et al. (2008) and Albert and Vadla (2009). Hinde et al. (2008) also found that leadership development could increase the interpersonal skills of participants in short-term leadership programs like BLAST (Hinde et al., 2008). In fact, these researchers concluded through quantitative methods that leadership development training for adolescents led to beneficial results (Hinde et al., 2008). This qualitative study supported their conclusion by providing data from the participants themselves in their own words.

The second largest description of the BLAST leadership development experience for the adolescent participants would be the dynamic activities completed during BLAST. While important to note that while the activities were each unique, the structure of the camp experience was a constant that the participants pointed out in their description. Each day followed a typical schedule involving lectures, application activities, meals, group time, and evening activities that were less centered on leadership development such as the Bonfire or Dance Party. Each participant used phrases such as interactive, intense, and high spirits in one fashion or another in describing BLAST. Nate also highlighted the idea of competition within the different activities such as the Family Olympics. Most activities were cooperative in nature and completed with other BLAST participants and/or family group members. Lynn described Take a Stand as one of the most impactful activities, "I think it showed how the importance of being able to have like a

very civil conversation about present day issues.” Also, significant to point out were some activities not notably impactful. These activities included those that were the lecture-type activities such as the Leadership Practices Inventory. In the data, not much discussion from any of the cases indicated this was a highly impactful activity in terms of leadership or identity development. The study participants described various personal outcomes of the activities as to what they learned about their own leadership styles, beliefs, and behaviors. Arguably, the activity that made the most impact on their personal leadership style development was the Leadership Quadrant activity like Kate who said it was, “...one of the highlights...” of the program. The reason behind this argument could be, according to the data, that the participants find a specific name of their perceived leadership style to understand along with observable, discernable actions to differentiate their styles from others. Nate detailed how the blindfold made him really think about his own behavior and not what others were doing.

Of the other activities, the suggestion can be made from the data that the participants experienced events that led to new ideas about leadership such as described in the cases. These experiences cover general ideas such as Nate describing leadership as “...very much in the moment,” to more complex personal lessons such as Kate describing the importance of understanding when to stay or to leave a team as seen in her Bafa Bafa experience. Clara stated point blank that BLAST, “...helped me develop my communication skills...” She even noticed throughout the BLAST experience, the activities, experiences, and lessons of personal leadership development ended in a range of personal effects for the participants.

Another major descriptor used for activities by the study participants was the predominance of certain activities helpful in developing their communication skills such as the Bunker Activity and the Take a Stand Activity. The communication skills developed include

improving interpersonal and presentational communication. Clara stated that BLAST helped her develop better communication skills. During the Communication Module, Clara stated that she became more aware of her body language when listening to others. Participants also shared evidence of becoming better public speakers through their BLAST experience. Clara also witnessed how others practiced their communication skills in a similar fashion to how she tried to practice herself:

I answered a question. I stood up and everyone looked at me and I think I gave a pretty okay answer, but it did happen a couple of times to some other people, and you could see it on their faces. Like they didn't know how to respond, but they were trying.

Clara used her time at BLAST to practice and develop those communication skills, and she was able to see that others tried in a comparable manner. Lynn became less shy at BLAST, a trait helpful in presentational communication developed at BLAST. Lynn's experience during the Rap Battle helped her confront nervousness of speaking in front of others. Developing better communication skills was one way the BLAST participants in this study described their leadership development experience.

The first significant data-supported portion of the adolescent leadership development experience at BLAST centered on the quality of the overall experience the participants had. This idea confirms Cansoy's (2017) research where it found effective leadership development programs must emphasize knowledge, behavior, and action. The Leadership Quadrant Activity was a confirmed activity that gave the participants knowledge about themselves and others. The Communication Module, Take a Stand, and Bunker activities were exercises where the participants practiced behaviors to improve their communication skills. Competitive events such as the Family Olympics, Talent Show, and Bafa Bafa were action oriented.

There was evidence in the data that supported participants experienced internal processes of leadership development. As discussed in the literature review, leadership was summarized as a mix of contrasting internal and external processes. The internal process included values and ideas about leadership as argued by Redmond and Dolan (2016). There was one activity specifically devoted to choosing values at BLAST, but only one of the study participants remembered it enough to describe in the data. Lynn did mention how attending BLAST affected her values, but not due to one particular activity. One study also showed how leadership development was conducted through developing the self (Fincher & Shalka, 2009). There were several instances in the data where the participants mentioned how they had to think about what happened during BLAST events and how they had acted. More often than not, this reflection occurred during family group times as mentioned by Kate when discussing how the Chaos activity was confusing to her until reflecting upon and discussing it with her family group later. Nate picked out a specific “life lesson” he learned in the aftermath of his curfew-breaking episode. In this study, with experiences and ideas shared from the participants, there was evidence to support the notion of adolescent leadership development being an internal process.

On the other hand, several instances in the data demonstrated how BLASTS developed the external process of leadership. The participants cited multiple instances and exercises in the study that illustrated how they described their personal leadership development as the result of learning leadership skills and practices. These external processes included interpersonal, problem-solving, and collaboration skills (Cansoy, 2017; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Most, if not all, of the study participants mentioned creating bonds and profound relationships with their family groups. Clara cited her interpersonal relationships with her fellow family group members

as one of the key parts of her BLAST experience. She mentioned the connection formed with her family group even after only the first day:

Oh, my group made me feel pretty welcome and everybody, uh, everybody talked to me, which is a good start. You know, sometimes you get into groups of people and certain people just kind of stay away from you for reasons that you aren't aware of. But yeah, everybody made me feel, uh, made me feel pretty good. I would say because, um, I had never made friends with a random group of people so fast. Like we only had what four, five days to really get to know each other. And we were basically comfortably acquainted by the end of the first day.

This unique experience of making so many new connections in a short amount of time was a significant experience for Clara who, previously in the first interview, mentioned how she never had the chance to attend social occasions like BLAST. Lynn also mentioned these bonds and how it helped her to see how groups work together effectively. Nate described what he learned about problem solving during the Bunker Activity, “And no matter how much you think like there’s going to be a completely right thing, there’s always like, you never know exactly how things will play out...” Kate reflected on her family group’s collaboration during the Talent Show and how to “go with the flow” even when the group’s plan did not go as they had hoped.

A sizable portion of what each study participant mentioned in multiple fashions throughout the data collection was the role and impact of conversations that occurred within the family groups. Priest and Clegorne (2015) emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer conversations as a part of leadership development. Clara and Nate highlighted the significance of the bonds they made with their family groups. Nate shared a description of how these conversations helped his leadership development, “...it's just like conversations sparks out of the

little things that came from the games and those little sparks build into more and more things.” In this example, the leadership development was reinforced or aided by the conversations that took place after the activity. The different personalities and points of view that Kate witnessed in her family group helped understand the diverse perspectives possible for leadership. This observation was likely most noticeable during the conversations with her family group.

From this evidence, describe the experiences of BLAST that influenced the participants’ leadership development and what characteristics of these activities resulted in this reported development was important. The largest common aspect of leadership development reported by each participant was the increase in communication skills. Each participant stated how they developed better skills and approaches to speaking with peers and/or in front of groups. From the data, this development was the result of explicit exercises like the communication module where they had to practice active listening like in Lynn’s experience or in situations where effective communication was reported to be a hurdle to success like in the Bunker Activity as Kate, Lynn, and Nate described. Having the opportunities to practice and reflect on these communication exercises resulted in leadership development because the participants were able to practice the essential leadership behavior and also discuss it in a reflection period with peers. Each of these parts of that development process are supported by findings of research discussed (Cansoy, 2017; Priest & Clegorne, 2015). In addition to the communication skills, the participants also highlighted activities completed with a group as being influential to their leadership development. The activities that made the most impact in this regard were the Family Olympics and the Talent Show. In these activities, there was a challenge or series of challenges that the group had to face together. One factor that made these activities influential was the fact that many of them were activities or experiences that the participants had never experienced

before, and therefore, more resonant to the participants. The novelty of these activities resulted in innovative ideas about leadership that would possibly stay with the participant on a long-term basis. The ideas were organic and developed by the participants themselves rather than absorbed through direct instruction or action.

Research Question Two

The other research question for this study was, “How do participants perceive the BLAST experience impacted their identity development?” This question relates to the theoretical perspective of the study and how much the experiences as described by the participants can be linked to Marcia’s (1964) findings and related studies.

One suggestion throughout all four cases when asked about their personal, or identity, development was the idea of becoming more extraverted. Kate used the phrase of “coming out of my shell” on multiple occasions during the two interviews. Likewise, the other cases all discussed the idea of metamorphizing from someone who was less outspoken to someone more confident in speaking in front of others. Nate described how he became more “confident” as a result of his BLAST experience. Much like the other Family Group leaders, Lynn’s group leader identified that she developed more confidence during her time at BLAST. Clara, in a description of an applied skill of confidence, described how she was able to maintain eye contact with others better as a result of her BLAST experience. This development of confidence and extraversion was similar to the findings of Crocetti et al.’s (2012) study where these attributes were correlated to the positive trajectory of identity development. So, in terms of their identity development, the participants of BLAST became more confident in who they were that could be indicative of what Marcia (1964) called the commitment component of the identity status.

In light of the fact that the data collection occurred approximately 15 months after the conclusion of their BLAST experience, each participant was able to describe some effects of the BLAST experience that were more long term and not just in terms of their leadership abilities. Each participant was asked about how ideas discovered at BLAST were used or apparent in their lives after BLAST. Each of them discussed experiences where the BLAST experiences mimicked or otherwise compared to an experience that occurred in their personal lives, not just as leaders. For example, Lynn discussed her experiences being a college student during the COVID-19 pandemic. She connected lessons learned about herself to help create a positive experience as a first-year college student. In another example, Kate drew connections to classroom experiences where she was in a different learning situation from her classmates and how she did not have a negative reaction to the experience being an outsider:

So I what the teacher does is she puts me on the zoom in front of everybody so they can see me, but I can't necessarily hear the conversations that are happening in class. So, and that situation particular, I also felt like an outsider because although I am good with all these people and I know all these people, I can hear their conversations and they could see me like, but they were like um, like I can like connect with them. So I felt kind of like, that is the same exact feeling that I had, um, as the simulation.

This description of being an outsider in her class as a student learning virtually rather than in-person was a direct comparison to how Kate felt during Bafa Bafa when she left her original group. This new ability of being comfortable as an outsider was developed at BLAST and could help her in uncomfortable stage of exploration during the moratorium identity status. These experiences after BLAST showed examples of how the participants' identities were impacted in addition to their leadership abilities.

Additionally, Nate and Clara also discussed what happened in terms of long-term effects of BLAST that could indicate progress to identity formation. Both of these participants discussed during the second interview the application of what they experienced at BLAST to their lives since the camp. Clara applied Take a Stand, “I’ve gotten older or as more time has passed, it’s been more and more necessary for me to be able to discuss serious or controversial topics without offending anybody.” The developed confidence each reported was a huge assistance in this endeavor. In this manner, Nate and Clara described how they experienced the exploration aspect of the Marcia (1964) identity status paradigm. Based on the study findings, these experiences described after BLAST showed how they were developing an identity in a positive manner. There was however, little evidence in the data to suggest if the development path was a straight trajectory of development or in a cyclical fashion as mentioned by Berzonsky and Adams (1999). So, the confidence part of their development at BLAST may have been a valuable tool to the participants to increase their personal exploration after BLAST in their pursuit to forming an achieved identity.

The data also contained support the idea of identity development progression. Negru-Subtirica et al. (2017) found that a part of adolescent identity development was discovering and evaluating self-relevant information. Nate’s experience provided a strong example of this process when he discussed his consequences of breaking curfew. He learned an important life lesson about accountability from this episode. Through examining what had happened and what it taught him showed some evidence of identity development. Lynn’s novel experiences at BLAST led to her discovery of “a different version of myself.” The experiences at BLAST helped her try something new which was a clear indicator of the exploration aspect of Marcia’s (1964) identity statuses. Lynn and Clara both found self-relevant information in the form of

enhanced communication skills at BLAST. Clara even stated that these improved communication skills, "...really better me overall as a person." She connected this particular aspect of leadership development to how she could change how to approach communication with all people, which again illustrated a form of exploring new ideas and making new commitments.

Connection between BLAST and Leadership Development

This section is an overview of the connection between the reportedly significant BLAST's leadership development activities and findings from the literature. Some of these topics include practical skills indicated as an integral part of leadership (see Redmond & Dolan, 2016) and internal processes (see Sorenson et al., 2016). There are four areas of discussion that associate BLAST leadership activities with leadership development.

Communication Skills

Effective communication skills are necessary for any leader. As stated previously, all four cases of the collective study indicated that communication skills development was a significant aspect of their leadership development experience. Redmond and Dolan (2016) summarized why communication skills were important for leaders, "The leader must be able to develop a convincing argument, which encourages others to support their ideas" (p. 265). To do so, the effective leader should be able to present his or her idea concisely and convincingly. This skill also typically includes the need to speak publicly in front of groups. During the Bunker Activity, the study's data illustrated how the participants had to convince their teams who should survive in the simulation. Lynn learned how to communicate with others concisely during this activity because she had to convince her group of her ideas with only a limited amount of time in which to convey her message. In her first interview, Clara spoke of specific times where she had to confront her fear of public speaking. In her interviews, she talked about volunteering to

answer a question in front of everyone which she said was hard for her to do. She mentioned how she watched others stand up and speak during various sessions with the lead clinician. So, seeing others go through the experience also helped her become ready to try publicly speaking herself. In doing so, she was able to practice her oral communication skills and to confront that fear. These activities show how the communication skills required of leadership were developed through practice and finding the personal motivation to try.

Collaboration Skills

Collaboration, or teamwork, skills include the communication skills, but it focuses more on the abilities to work together to solve problems. Redmond and Dolan (2016) mentioned that a leader should ensure that each member of the group felt like a part of the group process. The group process can mean understanding how to compromise, to follow others' ideas, and to support one another. These skills are important for individual team members and for team leaders because they are needed for each member of the team if the team wants to overcome the given challenge or problem. At BLAST, most of the activities emphasized this group process including the idea that no one team member was the absolute leader which means that the group had to learn to apply these three parts of the group process with little guidance. During the Family Olympics, the groups had to work together to solve the various challenges. Nate mentioned specifically how his group would collaborate to come up with the best solutions to the different challenges. Through the act of conflict resolution and the processes the group used to do so, Nate was able to see which strategies worked and those that did not yield positive results, which helped him learn about the collaborative process. Fincher and Shalka (2009) mentioned part of leadership development process was developing one's values and ideas as a leader. Activities like the Rap Battle and Talent Show were competitive events that required the groups

to work as a team to win. The use of competition could be considered a strong source of motivation to make the groups work together that results in their learning about leadership from the experience. The value of team spirit at BLAST was made apparent in the creation of the team's name, the team color in clothing, and in the different competitive challenges. Team spirit was very apparent during the Family Olympics as recounted by Lynn and Kate. An aspect of collaboration could also arguably include understanding team loyalty and pride. Overt displays of team spirit could increase each member's feeling of being a part of the group process as seen in the study data. Feeling like a member of the team could make one feel more encouraged to participate in the teamwork activities which means more participation in developing the skills of the group process. So, leadership development experiences that make an impact such as the experiences at BLAST include the opportunities to feel like a part of a team and to be engaged in the group process to overcome challenges and problems.

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is an internal process of leadership development. Redmond and Dolan (2016) mentioned that confidence was one essential parts of the social and emotional intelligence because understanding one's own ideas, values, and attitudes was important recognize the best course of action when leading. Confidence is also pertinent to decision-making as a leader meaning that effective leaders must be resolute and decisive. This level of decision-making must mean the leader must have the confidence that he or she has made the right decision for the team and is willing to see that decision through its fruition. Self-confidence can also resemble courage. In common aphorisms, courage is not defined as the absence of fear but the knowledge that there is something greater to achieve over fear's influence on the leader. In this study, each case reported an increase in the participant's self-confidence. During Take a Stand, the

participants had to literally step forward to state their beliefs and ideas rather than hide behind someone else or as a group. Nate mentioned that this activity helped him fortify his opinions about the topics discussed that resulted in him feeling more resolute about those potentially controversial opinions or ideas. The Dance Line was also an activity that reportedly led to the participants feeling more confident. Kate described this activity as being something she was not able to do prior to BLAST. However, after seeing others complete the activity, she felt brave enough to do so herself. This activity removed her shell meaning that she likely felt confident enough to try something new even if she was not sure how to do it which made her anxious or scared. Lynn also spoke of the Dance Line stating it gave her a new spike of energy that could be construed as a new wave of self-confidence because she also put herself in the uncomfortable situation and succeeded. These choices to stand out from others with personal opinions or to participate in a dancing activity led to more self-confidence. Participants felt they were in a place where they would be supported in these choices as indicated in the data where the case participants described BLAST as a positive environment. This positive environment was the result of the intimate relationships created at BLAST and generally positive experiences of the camp. Therefore, the positive environment of BLAST helped the participants leadership development by supporting them in developing resolution in their decisions and ideas while supporting them in overcoming their fears.

Self-Reflection

This final portion also relates to the leadership development that occurs internally. Hinds et al. (2008) described how self-awareness should be a part of any effective leadership development program. Self-awareness in this context can be summarized as how well a leader uses self-reflection to improve his or her leadership abilities. It can also be how well the leader

understands the factors that affect his or her leadership behaviors both negatively or positively such as personal bias, prior experiences, or preferences. Without personal insights into one's behaviors, it would become more difficult to try to understand other team members' actions and behaviors. This value of self-awareness was also highlighted in Redmond and Dolan's (2016) research where self-awareness was identified as an additional aspect of the social and emotional intelligence needed for effective leadership. Understanding the self is important to being able to understand other people which is a part of the social and emotional components of being an effective leader. Opportunities to reflect are one way in which that self-understanding can occur, and it is a part of the BLAST curriculum. The part of BLAST that was associated with this development of self-reflection most likely occurred when participants could reflect and discuss the different activities with their respective groups. Kate did not understand the purpose of the Chaos activity until she was able to discuss it with the family group. Only then was she able to reflect on what she had done, what had happened, and what she learned from it. The Leadership Quadrant activity was also an activity where self-reflection occurred as the participants were blindfolded. This simple step ensured that the participants truly reflected on themselves and not what their peers might have thought. Only through this were they able to have a genuine experience in the activity and obtain the leadership development from the exercise. These moments of self-reflection allowed the participants to practice this skill. The mastery of effective self-reflection would increase their personal self-awareness as a part of their social and emotional intelligence. With that increased awareness, they would be better leaders for themselves as individuals and for a team because they would be able to understand the actions and behaviors of the group and could avoid better the negative influences that could impede on their effectiveness as leaders.

Limitations

First, the length of time between BLAST and the data collection period was somewhat long. BLAST 2019 occurred in late July of 2019, but the data collection period did not begin until the summer of 2020, almost a full calendar year after the experience. This duration was the result of required steps of the research process prior to data collection such as obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic made a definitive setback on the timetable for completing these steps faster. The year gap still revealed interesting data from the interviews such as participants sharing anecdotes of influential moments and experiences since BLAST that applied to their current situations. The gap did however, allowed for memory attrition to take place where the participants did not easily recall some details or experiences that were referred to in the interviews. The largest examples of memory attrition were evident in the interviews with the family group leaders even though the data collected from their interviews were mostly descriptive in nature.

Secondly, BLAST is generally designed to have a positive impact on the experience of the participants through careful planning of specific activities and focused efforts of the staff to encourage a positive environment for all participants. This purposeful design could have an influence on the participants. If the intention was to ensure all participants have a fruitful and positive experience in the camp, unlikely that any negative experiences would arise. Design for effectiveness meant that the data could be typically one-sided in this regard. If a participant in this collective case study experienced mostly negative interactions at BLAST, a significant impact on the overall study's findings could have led to an alternative conclusion requiring further examination.

Recommendations

In the introductory chapter, the problem statement included a description of the lack of in-school opportunities that Georgia public high school students have with regard to personal leadership development. This discussion included details of the perceived value of summer development programs mainly connected to their helpfulness in college acceptance (Reston, 2015). Based on the findings of this study, there are some recommendations that offer some guidance as to why and how schools and school systems could increase student success by including more leadership development opportunities for students.

At BLAST, the findings suggested that a leadership development program could also serve as an identity development program for adolescents. If true, then that would mean a leadership development program can result in higher leadership capacities and skills such as interpersonal communication as well as increased positive attributes such as occupation and ideology choices (Marcia, 1980), self-confidence (Meeus et al., 2010), and pro-social behaviors (Sandhu et al., 2012). This conclusion would mean that increasing leadership development education and experiences in schools and other programs would be beneficial to developing adolescents beyond developing only their leadership competencies. If a school system required students to receive some level of effective leadership education that emphasized leadership action, behavior, and knowledge like BLAST (Cansoy, 2017), then those same students could also possibly avoid negative aspects of adolescent delinquency associated with the lack of adolescent identity progression (Sandhu et al., 2012). So, leadership development activities such as some experiences at BLAST have additional benefits beyond leadership development.

Secondly, if a school district did choose to promote or to require some level of effective leadership education into their curriculum, it could do so either within its own program of studies or through an outside program such as BLAST. If internally, the system would need to establish

a set of curriculum standards. If this study serves as a basis, then the curriculum would need to include standards that address the need for collaboration with different peers, attempts of new and/or mysterious activities, and the opportunity to reflect on the self are included. First, having a group of peers to collaborate with during the leadership development process is part of an impactful program (Priest & Clegorne, 2015). The purpose of the peers is to purposely force the participants to confront differences among their peers (Priest & Clegorne, 2015) much like the BLAST participants did in Take a Stand and with their family groups. Cansoy's (2017) study would also add that having a mentor like the family group leader was an important part of a leadership development program. Second, these same programs should allow participants to fail at their endeavors to use them as a learning experience regardless of the outcome as suggested in the data. For those looking to create an effective adolescent leadership program, the curriculum should make use of the most remembered and discussed activities from this study. The Leadership Quadrant activity was one of the most significant activities because it included all of the aspects found in the data of this study and in the prominent research (Cansoy, 2017; Priest & Clegorne, 2015) on the subject like Kate who said about the activity, "It was a defining moment." The participants were blindfolded that promoted self-reflection without fear of being an outcast. The group task of creating a party poster all the while being observed for their particular quadrant's typical behaviors led to reflection of their genuine behavior. Lastly, the discussion held at the conclusion of the Leadership Quadrant event by the lead clinician, followed by continued discussion in the family group, allowed for further self-reflection and discussion with peers. Activities that utilize these aspects will, according to the findings of this study, yield positive results on the leadership development of the participant. The findings also suggest the activities improved their identity development.

If a school system did not want to have a specific program for leadership development, aspects of such a program could be embedded into the already existing program of studies. For example, in the secondary school setting, taking advantage of the scheduled class period sometimes called Homeroom, Advisement, or Study Skills which could be used as the equivalent of the students' family group and similar activities could be conducted in these family groups. Again, as stated in the research and in the study's findings, discussion within the group is one of the key components. Competitions among the school-based homeroom groups would promote bonding within each group much like it did in the BLAST family groups which led to positive relationships and positive personal development. Lastly, these homerooms could also have a certain list of tasks to complete as a group such as decorating their classroom door similar to creating a rap or making a YouTube video about what they learn in their homeroom group similar to creating a skit for a talent show. Fostering mentoring relationships between the student and their teacher for this group would also be beneficial as the study's findings and other research shows (Priest & Clegorne, 2015). The benefits of mimicking BLAST in the school in this manner could result with similar positive development results for the students.

Looking at the impact of BLAST on its participants, the findings of this study could be used to create support for parents and other stake holders in the form of presentations or pamphlets about the positive impact a leadership development experience like BLAST can have on its adolescent participants. Creating an online event where parents and other stakeholders could attend to hear about the connections between leadership development and positive identity development might be useful in helping parents and others to understand that attending BLAST and events like it is more than just positive additions to a college application. Teaching leadership to adolescents provides an opportunity of personal growth and development beyond

leadership practices according to the findings. Posner (2009) suggested that leadership was an internal process, and Marcia's (1964) status paradigm was similar as his explanation of exploration and commitment were very much internal processes. If teaching the external processes of leadership along with internal processes is a part of the leadership development program, then the internal process of identity development can be a complementary result of that development. Parents and stakeholders who actively support leadership development opportunities for adolescents could see the result of increased numbers of adolescents who have developed communication and collaboration skills along with stronger identity development.

Lastly, as suggested in the data, adolescents who attend a summer camp environment can have notable benefits to their leadership development. Coers et al. (2009) stated that leadership was not solely a domain that must be developed and learned in a classroom. Therefore, specialized programs that follow a philosophy and model of leadership development like found in current studies (Redmond & Dolan, 2016; Rehm, 2014; Seemiller, 2018) would likely have a positive impact on the adolescent participant. While these experiences can be taught in a traditional classroom setting, fostering new relationships with peers with different backgrounds and experiences are more integral to the leadership development process (Priest & Clegorne, 2015). This idea would mean that a part of the leadership development experience outside of the classroom where adolescents are away from known peers is important.

The BLAST experience was beneficial to each of the participants who reported how leaving home and cultivating peer groups was impactful on the experience. In the study, participants mentioned being able to meet peers from other parts of Georgia made an impact on their leadership such as Nate who reflected to a younger member of his family group who was a forceful leader in the group. As a recommendation for a school system, requiring every student

to attend a program like BLAST could yield positive results for the individual student as well as the schools where the pro-social behaviors (Cansoy, 2017) that are associated with the development would enrich the school climate. In order to make this requirement to be accessible to all students, the school system may need to assist with the financial and logistical requirements such as paying the fees for attending the camp or organizing transportation to the site when the students' home is located significantly far from the site. These recommendations show that leadership development programs outside the classroom could be beneficial for adolescents not just in terms of developing as leaders but benefitting from these experiences in terms of developing an identity.

Implications for Future Research

This study and its findings have certain degrees of merit and limitations that would mean further research is appropriate and meaningful. First, using the findings from this case study to create a closed-question survey to measure how commonplace the experiences of BLAST are among all participants could reveal how generalizable the study's findings potentially are. The findings of using a survey could be analyzed to find a more precise relationship among the factors of the study. While the four cases in this collective case study each reported an increase in leadership and identity development, the question remains of how much increase had occurred in either of these two areas and what relationship there was between them. A quantitative study could be useful in measuring of the type of correlation that existed between the perceived increase in leadership development in an adolescent and his or her perceived development in identity during a leadership development experience like BLAST. In one study, 1,300 adolescents participated in the research that included a Likert-scale questionnaire as its measurement tool (Klimstra et al., 2010). From the findings of this study, a similar questionnaire

about identity development experiences could be developed and used to determine if the identity development processes described in this study were unique or more generalizable. Conversely, using a narrative approach such as a qualitative narrative inquiry approach in this field may result with further developed ideas about identity construction. Negru-Subtirica et al. (2017) suggested this method of collecting data as opposed to a self-reported questionnaire to reveal more about the identity making process. Thus, in addition to quantitative approaches, narrative approaches to data collection would also be beneficial in learning more about the adolescent identity development process.

Secondly, this study focused on only one leadership development program. Re-creating this study using a different leadership development program and/or curriculum could be valuable in showing how the different time, place, and objectives of another leadership development program can have different or similar effects on the adolescent participants. In fact, re-creating the study with future BLAST participants could be feasible to show if the development suggested in this study are replicated even within BLAST itself. While BLAST is a smaller program, there are other adolescent leadership development programs like Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) that could provide a much larger sample as well as geographical diversity. Geography and culture were cited as potential factors in the findings of the Klimstra et al.'s (2010) study where the participating adolescents were from two different countries and cultures. Determining whether differences that are found in the leadership development and identity development experience of participants in a program like HOBY where the curriculum is similar in each different site can add to the research. The findings from each of these potential implications could add significant breadth and conclusions to this study.

Also, applying a longitudinal study to see how participants have developed an identity by late adolescence could show a broader spectrum of results. As discussed, adolescence ends approximately at the age of 22 years (Arnett, 2000). So, interviewing these same participants when they reached this age of emerging adulthood may be poignant in showing if they reached Marcia's (1964) definition of identity formation. This longitudinal approach could also be used potentially to support the findings of Klimstra et al. (2010), Berzonsky and Adams (1999), or Meeus et al. (2010) where they suggested that the steps of Marcia's identity progression were more complex or included further steps. Meeus et al.'s (2010) research specifically mentioned that more longitudinal research into the adolescent identity development process was needed to further confirm and understand Marcia's (1964) findings.

There is also a need to continue research into the correlations between psychological well-being and the identity development process. Olès' (2016) concluded that her hypothesis of a positive correlation between a high quality of life and identity achievement was not confirmed. However, the study did find that the study participants within the status of identity moratorium and identity diffusion were at the highest levels of subjective happiness. Oles proposed that a study should be conducted to examine the specific factors that may have led to these findings such as friendship, dating, and gender roles. This study did not examine the latter two and only examined the first topic of friendship as it applied to the relationships created at BLAST. In future research, asking participants about their experiences in these realms and how they have affected their personal identities could shed light into their identity development processes.

Conclusion

In this study, each case has been analyzed to illustrate how adolescents describe their own experiences with leadership and identity development at a leadership development camp

called BLAST. From the findings, the four cases in this study each experienced growth in both of these areas of leadership and identity development. In the introduction of this study, a question was raised about what it meant to be “life-changing” at an adolescent leadership development experience. For these participants, the aspect that changed was their own perceptions of what they were capable of accomplishing. Each found one or more new ideas about himself or herself as to what kind of leader he or she could be. Also, with these new ideas also came new concepts about themselves as individuals that promoted the self-concept of each case participant. If these types of findings can be generalized to any adolescent who attends a leadership development program like BLAST, then changing the life of the individual is possible that may later influence society overall.

REFERENCES

- Adolescence. (2018). In *APA dictionary of psychology*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.apa.org/adolescence>
- Albert, J. F., & Vadla, K. (2009). Authentic leadership development in the classroom: A narrative approach. *Journal of Leadership Education, 8*(1), 72-91.
- Alvarez-Hevia, D. M (2009, September). *Case study: Calling for a more open approach*. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Manchester. Retrieved from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/187838.pdf>
- Archard, N. (2013). Adolescent leadership: The female voice. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*, 336-351. doi:10.1177/1741143212474804
- Arnett, J. A. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469-480. doi:10.1037//0003-066x.55.5.469
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorenson, C. K., & Walker, D. A. (2014). *Introduction to research in education* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *Qualitative research methods: The life story interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412986205
- Atkinson, R. (2002). The life story interview. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 121-140). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 544-559.
- Berzonsky, M., & Adams, G. (1999). Reevaluating the identity status paradigm: Still useful after 35 years. *Developmental Review, 19*(4), 557-590. doi:10.1006/drev.1999.0495

- Blatter, J. (2008). Case study. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2014). *Doing interviews* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cansoy, R. (2017). The effectiveness of leadership skills development program for university students. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(3), 65-87.
doi:10.7596/taksad.v6i3.899
- Chan, D. W. (2000). Assessing leadership among Chinese secondary students in Hong Kong: The use of the Roets Rating Scale for Leadership. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 44(2), 115-122. doi:10.1177/001698620004400204
- Coers, N., Lorensen, M., & Anderson, J. C. (2009). Case study: Student perceptions of groups & teams in leadership education. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 8(1), 93-110.
- Côté, J. E., & Schwartz, S. J. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: Identity status, identity capital, and the individualization process. *Journal of Adolescence*, 25(6), 571-586. doi:10.1006/jado.2002.0511
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crocetti, E., Schwartz, S. J., Fermani, A., Klimstra, T., & Meeus, W. (2012). A cross-national study in identity status in Dutch and Italian adolescents: Status distributions and correlates. *European Psychologist*, 17(3), 171-181. doi:10.1027/1016-9040/a000076
- Curtis, A. C. (2015). Defining adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health*, 7(2), 1-39.
Retrieved from <https://scholar.utc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=jafh>

- De Jongh, J., Wegner, L., & Struthers, P. (2014). Developing capacity amongst adolescents attending a leadership camp. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 44(3), 6-10.
- Erikson, E. (1993). Eight ages of man. In *Childhood and society* (pp. 247-274). New York, NY: Norton & Company. Retrieved from http://local.psy.miami.edu/faculty/dmessaging/c_c/rsrscs/rdgs/attach/8agesofman.pdf
- Fertman, C. I., & van Linden, J. A. (1999). Character education for developing youth leadership. *The Education Digest*, 65(4), 11-16.
- Fincher, J., & Shalka, T. R. (2009). Co-curricular leadership education: Considering critical questions. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 8(1), 228-237.
- Garrin, J. M. (2014). The will to lead: The dynamic integration of intrinsic motivation and social change leadership. *Journal of Social Change*, 6(1), 86-108.
doi:10.5590/JOSC.2014.06.1.07
- Georgia Association of Student Councils. (2018). *Constitution of the Georgia Association of Student Councils*. Retrieved from http://www.gasconline.net/uploads/6/8/0/1/6801555/current_constitution_2.23.18.docx
- Georgia Department of Education. (2018). *2018-2019 State-funded list of K-8 subjects and 9-12 courses*. Retrieved from <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/State-Funded-List-of-Subjects-and-Courses-Supported-by-SBOE-Rule-160-4-2-20.pdf>
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). *Doing case study research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Hindes, Y. L., Thorne, K. J., Schwean, V. L., & McKeough, A. M. (2008). Promoting intrapersonal qualities in adolescents: Evaluation of Rapport's Teen Leadership Breakthrough program. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 23*, 206-222. doi:10.1177/0829573508327307
- Hluhaniuc, A. (2015). Adolescent identity statuses. *Romanian Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Hypnosis, 2*(3), 24-29.
- Houghton, J., & DiLiello, T. (2009). Leadership development: The key to unlocking individual creativity in organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 31*(3), 230-245. doi:10.1108/01437731011039343
- Hoyt, M. A., & Kennedy, C. L. (2008). Leadership and adolescent girls: A qualitative study of leadership development. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 42*, 203-219. doi:10.1007/s10464-008-9206-8
- Karagianni, D., & Montgomery, A. J. (2018) Developing leadership skills among adolescents and young adults: A review of leadership programmes. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 23*(1), 86-98. doi:10.1080/02673843.2017.1292928
- Keegan, S. (2008). Photographs in qualitative research. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Klimstra, T. A., Hale, W. W., Raaijmakers, Q. A. W., Branje, S. J. T., & Meeus, W. H. J. (2010). Identity formation in adolescence: Change or stability? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 39*(2), 150-162. doi:10.1007/s10964-009-9401-4
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. (2013). The five practices of exemplary leadership: How ordinary people make extraordinary things happen. In E. H. Kessler (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of management theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- Kroger, J. K. (2000). Ego identity status research in the new millennium. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 24*(2), 145-148. doi:10.1080/016502500383250
- Kroger, J. K. (2017). Identity development in adolescence and adulthood. *Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology*. doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.54
- Kroger, J., & Marcia, J. E. (2011). The identity statuses: Origins, meanings, and interpretations. In S. J. Schwartz et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 31- 53). doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_2
- Kumru, A., & Thompson, R. A. (2003). Ego identity status and self-monitoring behavior in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 18*, 481-495. doi:10.1177/0743558403255066
- Marcia, J. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 159-187). New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Marcia, J. E. (1964). *Determination and construct validity of ego identity status* (Doctoral dissertation). OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center. (655606) Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=osu148656595510406&disposition=inline
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3*(5), 551-558.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013) *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McEachin, A., Augustine, C. H., & McCombs, J. (2018). Effective summer programming: What educators and policymakers should know. *American Educator, 42*(1), 10-11.

- Meeus, W., van de Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., Schwartz, S., & Branje, S. J. (2010). On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: A five-wave longitudinal student in early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescence. *Child Development, 81*(5), 1565-1581. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01492.x
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Morgan, D. L., & Guevara, H. (2008). Interview guide. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 469-470). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Murphy, S. E., & Johnson, S. K. (2011). The benefits of long-lens approach to leader development: Understanding the seeds of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(2011), 459-470. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.04.004
- Negru-Subtirica, O., Pop, E. I., & Crocetti, E. (2017). A longitudinal integration of identity styles and educational identity processes in adolescence. *Developmental Psychology, 53*(11), 2127-2138. doi:10.1037/dev0000325
- Norozpour, N., Gharraree, B., Ashouri, A., & Habibi, M. (2015). A study on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Adolescent scores based on Marcia identity statuses in adolescents. *Fundamentals of Mental Health, 17*(6), 292-299.
- Oles, M. (2016). Dimensions of identity and subjective quality of life in adolescents. *Social Indicators Research, 126*(3), 1401-1419. doi:10.1007/s11205-015-0942-5
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Posner, B. Z. (2009). From inside out: Beyond teaching about leadership. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 8(1), 1-10.
- Priest, K. L., & Clegorne, N. A. (2015). Connecting to experience: High-impact practices for leadership development. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 145, 71-83.
doi:10.1002/yd.20125
- Priest, K. L., & Middleton, E. (2016). Exploring leader identity and development. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 149, 37-47. doi:10.1002/yd.20160
- Redmond, S., & Dolan, P. (2016). Towards a conceptual model of youth leadership development. *Child & Family Social Work*, 21, 261-271. doi:10.1111/cfs.12146
- Rehm, C. (2014). An evidence-based practitioner's model for adolescent leadership development. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 83-97. doi:10.12806/V13/I3/T1
- Reston, L. (2015, July 1). College summer programs for high schoolers: Are they worth it? Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurareston/2015/07/01/college-summer-programs-for-high-schoolers-are-they-worth-it/#7f6a06234b57>
- Rinn, A. N. (2006). Effects of a summer program on the social self-concepts of gifted adolescents. *The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 17(2), 65-75. doi:10.4219/jsge-2006-682
- Rosch, D. M., & Imoukhuede, P. I. (2016). Improving bioengineering student leadership via training and practice within the core-course. *Annals of Biomedical Engineering*, 44, 3606-3618. doi:10.1007/s10439-016-1684-5
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Sandhu, D., Singh, B., Tung, S., & Kundra, N. (2012). Adolescent identity formation, psychological well-being, and parental attitudes. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research, 27*(1), 89-105.
- Scholz, R. W., & Tietje, O. (2002). Types of case studies. In R. W. Scholz & O. Tietje (Eds.), *Embedded case study methods* (pp. 9-15). doi:10.4135/9781412984027.n2
- Schwartz, S. J., Mullis, R. L., Waterman, A. S., & Dunham, R. M. (2000). Ego identity status, identity style, and personal expressiveness: An empirical investigation of three convergent constructs. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 15*, 504-521.
doi:10.1177/0743558400154005
- Seemiller, C. (2018). A competency-base model for youth leadership development. *Journal of Leadership Education, 17*(1), 56-72.
- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education & the social sciences* (4th ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shih, H. (2018). GASC BLAST camp. Retrieved from
<https://sites.google.com/view/gascblastcamp/home?authuser=0>
- Sorenson, T. J., McKim, A. J., & Velez, J. J. (2016). Leadership identity development through an interdisciplinary leadership minor. *Journal of Leadership Education, 15*(1), 31-43.
doi:1012806/V15/I1/R3
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Stanley, L. (2013). *Documents of life revisited: Narrative and biographical methodology for a 21st century critical humanism*. London: Routledge.

Tomkins, L., & Nicholds, A. (2017). Make me authentic, but not here: Reflexive struggles with academic identity and authentic leadership. *Management Learning*, 48, 253-270.

doi:10.1177/1350507616684267

What is HOBY? (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.hoby.org/about/what-is-hoby>

Whitehead, G. (2009). Adolescent leadership development: Building a case for an authenticity framework. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(6), 847-872.

doi:10.1177/1741143209345441

Wong, M. C. S., Lau, T. C. M., & Lee, A. (2012). The impact of leadership programme on self-esteem and self-efficacy in school: A randomized controlled trial. *PLoS ONE*, 7(12), 1-6.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0052023

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed., Vol. 5). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Zacharatos, A., Barling, J., & Kelloway, E. K. (2000). Development and effects of transformational leadership in adolescents. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(2), 211-226.

doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(00)00041-2

APPENDIX A

Email Invitation for Potential Study Participants

Greetings!

You are receiving this email because you attended the 2019 BLAST. My name is Dan Kamykowski, and you may remember me as the assistant to the Holly Shih, the BLAST camp director. I am inviting you to participate in a study I am conducting as part of the Doctorate in Education program through Valdosta State University. I need campers like yourself to be a volunteer to be a part of this study, and I hope you will consider being a part of this study.

The research I am conducting is to understand the experiences you had at BLAST 2019 and what kind of impact it made on your identity and leadership development. As a participant in the study, I would potentially interview you two times about your BLAST experience. Each interview would last 90 minutes and would be audio recorded for transcription. I may ask you about any pictures, social media posts, or items you wrote in your BLAST journal. Your identity will be kept secret so anything you share during these interviews will not be traced back to you.

Your participation is strictly voluntary, and there is no fee or payment for your participation. If you are willing to participate, please complete the following BLAST Study Participant Application and return it to me as soon as you for processing. If you have any questions, please contact me at the email address below. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Dan Kamykowski

dkamykowski@valdosta.edu

BLAST Study Participant Application

Thank you for being willing to participant in this study. Your information below will be used to determine participants for this study so your full honesty in your responses is highly appreciated. This information will be kept confidential and destroyed upon the completion of the study. Please complete each item #1-13 and return to the researcher.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to **Dan Kamykowski** at **dkamykowski@valdosta.edu**. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Contact Information

- 1. First Name*: _____
*If you are chosen for the study, you will be allowed to choose a pseudonym.
- 2. Last Name: _____
- 3. City of Residence: _____
- 3. Email Address: _____
- 4. Phone Number: _____

Personal Information

- 5. Gender: M / F
- 6. Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____
- 7. School Name: _____
- 8. BLAST Family Group: _____
- 9. Which option below best describes your race (please choose one)?
 White Hispanic/Latin Asian Black/African American Pacific Islander
 American Indian/Alaska Other (please indicate): _____

- 10. Which below best describes your household (please check one)?
 _____ I live with both parents.
 _____ I live with one parent and a stepparent
 _____ I live with my mother primarily.
 _____ I live with my father primarily.
 _____ I live with my grandparents or other adults who are related to me who are not my parents.
 _____ I live with someone and/or people to whom I am not related directly.

- 11. Which, if any, of these social media platforms did you share photos, videos, or memories from BLAST? (check all that apply)
 _____ Facebook
 _____ Instagram
 _____ Snapchat

12. Are you willing to share your social media accounts for any of the above social medias that you checked? For the purpose of this study, an account will be created strictly to view these posts and will be deleted at the conclusion of the study.

Yes
 No

13. How often did you write in your BLAST journal, whether it was BLAST related or not?
(please choose the one that is most appropriate)

- I never wrote in it.
 I wrote in it rarely.
 I wrote in it sometimes.
 I wrote in it often.
 I wrote in it very frequently.

APPENDIX B
IRB Protocol Exemption Report



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number:

Responsible Researcher(s): Dan Kamykowski

Supervising Faculty: Taralynn Hartsell

Project Title: Adolescent Identity Development and Leadership Development: A Collective Case Study Approach

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2**. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of this research study all collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*
- *Research consent statement must be read aloud to each participant at the start of each interview session. Confirming participant understanding before the interview begins. Participants must be provided with a copy of the statement.*
- *Exempt protocol guidelines permit the recording of interviews for the sole purpose of creating an accurate transcript. Once an accurate transcript has been created, the recordings must be permanently deleted from all recording devices. Exempt protocol guidelines prohibit the collects and/or sharing of recordings.*

If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.

Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator
229-253-2947.

Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide 1

Prior to the interview process starting, the following assent will be read to the study participant:

Hi. My name is Dan Kamykowski. I'm a student at Valdosta State University. Right now, I'm doing a research study about what adolescents like yourself experience at BLAST in terms of their identity and leadership development. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me. I will ask you to answer questions during one or two interviews that would each last 90 minutes. During the first interview, I will ask you about your BLAST experience. During the second, I would ask you questions about what those experiences were like and we will look at any social media posts and/or BLAST journal writings you made during BLAST. There are no right or wrong answers to any question during these two interviews, and if I don't ask you for a second interview, it does not mean you have done anything wrong. The interviews will be audio taped in order to accurately capture your experiences, opinions, and ideas. Once the recordings have been transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. By being in the study, you will help me understand what changes occur to adolescents who participate in leadership development camps like BLAST. Your parent will not know what you have said during the course of these two interviews. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I'm talking about. Your parent/legal guardian has said that it is okay for you to be in my study. However, if you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be. What you decide won't make any difference about how people think about you or the meaningfulness of your personal BLAST experience. I won't be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don't want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you. You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask your parent to call me or send me an email. Do you have any questions for me now? Would you like to be in my study and participate in these two interviews? Assuming the participant indicates affirmatively, the interview will begin.

Note: Interview Guides 1 and 2 are only for the participants. Questions for the Introduction and Final thoughts will be asked to all participants. Questions written in italics are meant to serve as example questions based on Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) exemplar questions. Other questions and listed follow-up questions are provided are drawn from sources on qualitative interview guides and interview questions (Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Patton, 2002; Atkinson, 1998)

Introduction

What is your name?
How did you happen to hear about BLAST?
Why did you decide to attend BLAST?
Tell me about the structure of a typical day at BLAST.
What did you see when you arrived at BLAST?

Day 1

Quadrant activity

*Can you tell me about the Quadrant activity?
What would I have seen you doing?
Did it help you develop as a leader? Explain your answer.
Was this activity impactful? How so or how not so?
Can you give me an example of what you mean?*

Family time

*What was it like with your family?
Did this experience teach you something about leadership? What was it?
How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?
Tell me about a typical conversation within your family group?*

Day 2

Leadership types module- skits

What do you remember about the leadership types skits?

What would I have seen you doing?

Was there anything about this experience that helped you develop as a leader?

Explain.

Was this activity impactful? How so or how not so?

Can you give me an example of what you mean?

Leadership type module- rap battle

Can you describe the rap battle you did?

What would I have seen you doing?

Did it help you develop as a leader? Explain your answer.

How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?

Can you give me an example of what you mean?

Leadership type module- exemplary practices

What do you remember about the exemplary practices activity?

Did this experience teach you anything about leadership? What was it?

Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?

Can you give me an example of what you mean?

Take a stand

Can you tell me about the take a stand activity in the cabins?

What would I have seen you doing?

Did it help you develop as a leader? Explain your answer.?

What was impactful about this activity?

How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?

Two lines

Describe the two lines activity we did.

What would I have seen you doing?

Did this experience teach you anything about leadership? What was it?

Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?

How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?

Family Olympics

What do you remember about the family Olympics?

What would I have seen you doing?

Did this experience teach you anything about leadership? What was it?

Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?

How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?

Can you give me an example of what you mean?

Day 3

Bunker

Tell me about the Bunker activity.

What would I have seen you doing?

Did it help you develop as a leader? Explain your answer.?

Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?

How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?

Chaos

*What do you remember about the Chaos activity?
What would I have seen you doing?
Did this experience influence you as a leader? How so or how not??
Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?
How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?*

Legacy

*Can you describe to me what the Legacy activity was like?
Did this impact your personal leadership development? How or how not?
Was this activity impactful? How so or how not?
How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?*

Talent Show

*Tell me about the Talent Show.
What would I have seen you doing?
Did this impact your personal leadership development? How or how not?
How did you feel at the conclusion of this activity?*

Final Thoughts

Are there any other experiences at BLAST that made an impact on your leadership development that we haven't talked about yet?
How do you describe your experiences at BLAST?
Did BLAST cause you to develop as a leader? How so or how not?
Do you feel you're a better leader after attending BLAST? Why? How did this happen?
What stands out to you when you think about your BLAST experience?
What was the best/worst part of BLAST? What about that made it the best/worst?
Do you have any questions for me?

Example Follow-up questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Patton, 2002;)

*Can you give a more detailed description of what happened?
You mentioned [topic], can you tell me more about that?
Could you say something more about that?
Do you have further examples of this?
What did you actually do when you.....?
How did you react?
What did you specifically like/dislike about that experience?*

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide 2

Note: Questions written in italics are meant to serve as example questions based on Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) exemplar questions. Part of this second interview is to review documents of life from the experience. Other questions and listed follow-up questions are provided are drawn from sources on qualitative interview guides and interview questions (Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Patton, 2002; Atkinson, 1998)

Review of First Interview

Review

Let's review what we talked about during our first interview...

Comments and Elaborations

Is there anything you want to add to these reflections or what to comment on?

Documents of Life

Notebook

What is the meaning of this document for you at BLAST?

Why did you keep it?

Social Media Posts

Tell me what this post is about?

Why did you share it?

Identity Development

Let's go back over the events from BLAST and I want you to tell me which, if any, of the activities changed you or has affected you as a person in addition to helping you develop as a leader.

Day 1

Quadrants activity

Family time

Day 2

Leadership types module- skits

Leadership type module- rap battle

Leadership type module- exemplary practices

Take a stand

Two lines

Family Olympics

Day 3

Bunker

Chaos

Legacy

Talent Show

Final Thoughts

What does BLAST mean to you?

What did you learn from BLAST?

How did BLAST change you?

Do you have any questions for me?

What do you think about BLAST?

What happened at BLAST?

What is your opinion of BLAST's development of your leadership abilities?

Which experiences at BLAST do you feel were the most impactful for you?

What is your opinion of BLAST?

Is there anything we've left out that you want to talk about?

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide 3

Note: Questions for the Introduction and Final thoughts will be asked to all participants. Interview Guide 3 is for the BLAST family leader for each participant. Questions written in italics are meant to serve as example questions based on Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) exemplar questions. Other questions and listed follow-up questions are provided are drawn from sources on qualitative interview guides and interview questions (Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Patton, 2002; Atkinson, 1998)

Prior to the interview beginning, the following will be read to the interviewee:

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled “Adolescent Identity Development and Leadership Development: A Collective Case Study Approach.” This research study is being conducted by Dan Kamykowski, a student in Curriculum and Instruction at Valdosta State University. The purpose of this research is to explore adolescent participants’ experiences of the BLAST camp as it connects to their identity and leadership development. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about help us understand more about how adolescents such as your family group member experience identity and leadership development. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 90 minutes. The interviews will be audio taped in order to accurately capture your concerns, opinions, and ideas. Once the recordings have been transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. By agreeing to participate, you are also agreeing to not speak of your participation in this study as it pertains to the identity of any of the participants of BLAST or this study.. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview will serve as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older. Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Dan Kamykowski at dkamykowski@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Introduction

What is your name?

Why did you choose to be a family group leader at BLAST?

Participant

What can you tell me about [participant’s name]?

How would you describe [participant’s name]?

Activities

What can you tell me about how [participant’s name] acted during [BLAST activity from list below]?

Describe to me how you saw [participant’s name] change over the course of BLAST?

What do you remember most about [participant’s name] during this activity?

Family Group

What was [participant’s name] behavior like with the rest of the group?

List below is a reminder of the activities that are discussed in the first participant’s interview. The list will be reviewed to stimulate the family leader’s memories about the study participant.

Day 1

Quadrants activity

Day 2

Leadership types module- skits
Leadership type module- rap battle
Leadership type module- exemplary practices
Take a stand
Two lines
Family Olympics

Day 3

Bunker
Chaos
Legacy
Talent Show