An Investion of Instructional Approaches for Deliberate Decision Making During Student's Leisure Time

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Capstone Project Proposal

Introduction:

    A growing body of research is exploring the ways that leisure in childhood influences development (Munchua et al., 2003; Sharp et al., 2006). Developmental theory has long examined the influence of experience on human growth. In Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, he posited that the kinds of independent activities and social forums individuals engage in are central to the evolution of their character (Berger, 2003). With growing concern over the influence of media on our youth, researchers are probing deeper into how the ways that young people spend their free time influence their growth. Findings have suggested that free time activities provide key opportunities for positive development and growth experiences, but only if those activities allow sustained engagement in freely chosen, meaningful, and interesting experiences (Sharp et al., 2006). Free time spent in the absence of meaningful experience is correlated to negative development with consequences including depression, poor social skills, delinquency, drinking, and drug use (Munchua et al., 2003; Sharp et al., 2006).

    My personal observations working with young people have alerted me to a growing difficulty in our youth culture when it comes to creating meaningful experiences in freely chosen leisure time. I have found it quite common when I ask children with social and emotional challenges what they like to do for fun for them to list a very small repertoire of activities; with video games, television, and using the computer the most common. One particular group of boys I conducted a small friendship group with inspired me to explore what research has been done on these trends. The boys shared common challenges including poor social skills, low-self esteem, and depression. When asked

what things they were good at, these boys struggled to come up with ideas. Like the many other students I had observed, electronic media was at the top of their short list joined by playing with Legos and fantasy collector cards. They did not attend any after school activities and rarely socialized with friends outside of school. As I talked with this group, I reflected on the similarities and differences of my leisure experiences growing up compared to theirs.

Like the boys I work with at school, I too, am a child of the electronic age. Television had been a societal influence well before my birth, but my generation was the first to see video games and personal computers, in addition to the television, becoming central household fixtures. Countless hours of my youth were spent in front of a television set or computer screen and I developed patterns of excessive usage that I still grapple with today. Unlike these boys, I did have the benefit of parents who encouraged me to diversify my leisure time with other activities and provided me many opportunities to do so. I spent many hours with my mother talking, playing games, gardening, and reading. My father and I rode our horses together and he introduced me to sports, outdoor skills, and woodcraft. I always had large forested areas in which I was encouraged to play and experience the natural world. My parents pushed me to expand my comfort zone to include team sports, music lessons, travel, theater, and church groups. Despite all these extra activities and opportunities, when a lull in my day appeared, television and video games frequently drew me in, even when good books were available. As an adult, I observe that excessive media use for me is correlated to feeling unwell and unmotivated. My greatest happiness in leisure is in creative, challenging, social pursuits.

As an adult who understands the draw of electronic media and the value of diverse leisure pursuits, I hope to use my experience and research available on this topic to better counsel children like my boys group. I would like to investigate how to design a program for young students that encourages them to weigh the benefits and detriments of large amounts of mass media consumption. Such a program would encourage children to consider their long and short term goals for the future, their passions, and their current skills. I would like to encourage kids to consider alternative leisure activities that might help them boost their self-esteem, build their skills, and reach their goals.

Problem Statement:

With the knowledge that use of leisure time has a significant impact on the development of young individuals, it is essential to try to understand the implications of our exploding media technology and its influence on our youth. Teens are spending so much time with electronic media that the Kaiser Family Foundation has dubbed this generation "The Media Generation" (Rideout, 2005). According to their study published in 2005, children aged 8-18 were watching TV, playing video games, using their computers, and listening to music for a total average of 6 hours and 23 minutes every day. Much of this time was spent using more than one of these types of media at once. The electronic boom is happening so rapidly that research concerning its impact and how to address it is lagging behind, but attempting to understand the effects of this phenomenon now is crucial if we are to adapt our educational and parenting practices to best meet the needs of today's kids.

Child obesity is an epidemic often linked to heavy media usage, but not all researchers agree how the two are related. Some reports are surprising. The 2005 Kaiser

Family Foundation Report sited above cited data that children who were heavy media users also spent more time in physical activity than moderate or light media users (Rideout, 2005). However, a spokesperson for the Kaiser Family Foundation reported in the 2006 Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Childhood Society that a range of influences including time usage, snacking, promotion of high calorie foods, and depictions of nutrition make heavy media usage directly responsible for the rise in childhood obesity (DelCampo, 2006). Other societal factors may influence this epidemic, as one author in Taking Sides cites vending machines in schools for being the main cause. Regardless, common sense tells us that large amounts of sedentary time during which children are subject to countless promotions for unhealthy food will negatively impact the health of those viewers.

Another complex issue concerning the media generation is how media, particularly television and video games, influences violent behavior. Merrilyn O. Johnson argued in Taking Sides that television viewing unquestionably impacts the level of aggression in many young people citing, among other statistics, that by the end of adolescence the average young person will have witnessed 180,000 violent acts (DelCampo, 2006). Other reporters communicate concern over violent video games such as the popular Grand Theft Auto series that are rated M for Mature because of violent and sexual content (Rideout, 2005). One of the most apparent problems according to the 2005 Kaiser Report is the lack of parental involvement when it comes to mediating what kinds of shows and games kids are engaging with. Despite parental filters for television and rating systems for video games the Kaiser survey showed that most parents are not using them and the majority of children have free reign to choose the kind of media they watch

or play without regulation (Rideout). Obviously, this is an issue that needs to be addressed before this situation will improve.

A large body of evidence suggests that, academically, mass media is changing our society's children in negative ways. Classroom teachers across the country notice differences in students' ability to engage with academic material and attend to tasks. Perhaps the greatest academic problem with the greatest social implications is the decline of the written word. Fewer and fewer children demonstrate mastery of reading and writing each year. As problematic is the fact that those who do reach mastery read much less than populations in past decades. The result is a media-dependent younger generation, lacking the ability to explore topics methodically and thoughtfully through literature. Rather, they are dependent on brief news clips or headlines that tell only a very limited part of any one issue. We are seeing the development of a society that consumes small pieces of information in large quantities very rapidly with little time to pause and make connections and judgments (Healy, 1990).

It seems clear that the times are changing our kids and that, increasingly, young people are finding it harder to engage in activities that provide meaningful experiences in their free time. Data shows that media usage increases with feelings of discontentment in youth and that delinquency is correlated to a lack of contentment with leisure activities (Rideout, 2005; Munchua et. al, 2003). Given this information, I see a necessity for interventions that target youth who rely primarily on electronic media to occupy their free time and provide alternative strategies to these children and their parents that would allow for more meaningful, developmentally beneficial practices.

Research Questions:

- What elements help make organized recreation engaging and beneficial for students?

-What interventions have been created already to address leisure health? What can we learn from these interventions for further work?

-Will students show a change in leisure patterns after taking part in a six session Timewise lesson series coupled with mentor-led recreation? After taking part, will they demonstrate a change in self-regulation, leisure planning, and self-awareness in leisure?

Method

Introduction

The goal of my project will be to explore the effectiveness of a lesson-based program coupled with mentor-facilitated recreation. I will use the six lesson TimeWise curriculum reviewed by Caldwell et al. in the *Journal of Leisure Research.* Their research explored the positive effects of the six lesson series in a trial study using 634 middle school students in Pennsylvania. Their research demonstrated some positive changes in self-awareness and time management among students, but changes in leisure behavior were limited. A suggestion of the researchers was that combining the lesson series with an experiential component might yield a greater positive result.

Agreeing with the researchers thoughts, I am proposing a small group series that provides three components that I consider essential for creating positive, lasting change.

1. **Gaining knew knowledge and self-awareness-** which I hope to provide through the lesson series.
2. **Learning through positive experience-** in this case students will get to learn and participate in a new recreational activity after each lesson.

3. **Mentorship and role modeling from a trusted adult-** in this case I hope to have one Keene State College mentor for each student to play with them and teach each activity.

The third component, mentorship, is an element that I have observed to be very effective for nurturing growth. Since many youth who are in need of leisure therapy often lack parental guidance for setting limits and modeling self-regulatory behavior, this program seems to be an opportune time couple instruction with the positive role-modeling of programs such as Big Brothers/ Big Sisters. The mentors will be responsible for helping their mentee in the experiential part of the program and for leading on recreational activity for the group that they enjoy. It is my hope that this will be a fun time for the mentors and mentee's and that the fun in play will be a large asset to the learning application process.

Participants and Setting:

The location of the activity is still yet to be determined. I will be attempting to gain access to an after school facility that can accommodate six two hour after school sessions. Possible locations for the series include Fuller Elementary School, Keene Middle School, and the Keene Housing Authority after school program. Participants will be between the ages of 10-14 and will be selected after the location has been determined. I will be attempting to include students who have a limited range of leisure pursuits and display difficulties in planning or self-regulating. For the mentors, I will be inviting one college student from the Keene State Education program to be paired with each student in the program. There is a possibility of recruiting mentors from the high school as well if circumstances allow.

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Data Collection Tools

Data collection will draw from a range of qualitative and quantitative sources including:

Entrance Survey: Students will be asked to complete a brief survey to assess their feelings about their current leisure pursuits as well as assessing their perceptions of their own self-regulation.

Student Activity Log: In the first week, of the series, students will be asked to keep a four day diary that documents how they spent all of their free time for two school days and two weekend days. This will be used as a baseline for future changes.

Researcher's Journal: I will keep a log of reflections after each lesson series, documenting what occurred during the lesson, what I found worked well, and what I would like to improve on.

Mentor's Reflection Log: I will supply each mentor with a log sheet to record observations from each lesson.

Student Work Samples: In various lessons, students will be asked to used drawing or writing to reflect on what they are learning in each lesson. These will hopefully provide feedback for me about their perceptions of what we covered in the lesson.

Exit Surveys: At the end of the course, students and parents will be asked to describe what changes, if any, the program inspired in their recreation time.

Tentative Timeline

1. Set up site location- January 21.

2. Obtain IRB approval-January 28.

3. Determine group participants-Feb 6.

4. Run lesson series- Feb 17 to Mar 27.

5. Deliver pretests and assign logs- week of Feb17.

6. Collect end of series data- March 27.

7. Follow up surveys week of April 10.

Summary

In order to gain the most accurate assessment of this program series, multiple assessment techniques will be used to gain information from multiple perspectives. The surveys and diaries should provide quantitative data on student time usage that can be analyzed to assess changes in behavior. Journals, researcher diaries, mentor feedback, and student work samples will be used as qualitative data to assess student's changes in knowledge and perception and to assess the quality of interaction and engagement during the lesson/activity series. Analysis of this data will hopefully provide information to assess if this is a useful intervention strategy and if other improvements can be made to make it a more effective.

Literature Review

Optimal Youth Development According to Aristotle

As times change and society evolves, the human view of optimal experience evolves with it. Different cultures and subcultures conceptualize healthy youth development in different ways depending on their values and orientations toward what it means to be happy and live in a harmonious society. It becomes necessary then to establish a common definition of what it means to happy before our ensuing discussion of how to help children work toward this goal. In modern America, happiness is generally conceived as simply a positive psychological state. This is a substantial departure from the classical view of happiness as defined by Aristotle, who believed that happiness originated first in action (Widmer, 1996). In Aristotle's view, happiness focused on individual character, good relationships with others, and the habit of making right choices throughout life which resulted in feelings of gratification and satisfaction. The good life, in this perspective, was a consequence of actions based on reflection, moderation, prudence, wisdom, and justice. Leisure time, free from necessities of existence, was an essential, crowning part of optimally happy life. Aristotle conceived of leisure as those "activities by which human beings learn and grow and thereby acquire one or more intellectual virtues...of art, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.... Leisuring is learning in all the ways that human beings can learn and perfect themselves intellectually" (Widmer, p.398).

The ideals of Aristotle have found a solid rooting in modern adolescent psychology with the advent of self-determination theory, a theory of motivation that focuses on the development of personality within social contexts (Watts, 2008). The

theory suggests that "optimal human functioning is dependent on the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Social-contextual variations account for differences in achievement of these needs, which in turn determines motivation" (Watts, p.162). We will talk more about the relationship between leisure and motivation in the coming sections. The idea of ultimate human experience through action is a core belief of my project and one that has found a following in many modern psychologists including researchers of the phenomenon of "flow", a state in which a person experiences complete immersion in peak performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008).

According to this view, leisure time for the youth developing toward optimal experience cannot be passive. Happiness is not a state that begins in the absence of effort, but rather is synonymous with the pride one gets from feeling that one is living well. If we adopt this view as our common goal for our youth, it becomes our task to analyze how these values optimally intersect with modern life in America and create a vision for daily living that we can strive toward. Once that vision has been established, we must seek to understand the facets of our culture that impede us from reaching this goal and develop strategies for navigating these challenges as we work to help our children live optimally fulfilling lives.

Motivation and Development

In order to have productive discourse about behavior we must begin with a discussion of motivation. Every action has causation and only by striving to understand

why young people choose one activity over another can we effectively attempt to influence the decision making process. There is a wealth of published motivation theory research in circulation analyzing extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in a variety of contexts. Here I have focused on the ones I consider to be most useful in determining behavior in the leisure context.

Self-Determination Theory

As we have briefly discussed already, self-determination theory (SDT) examines intrinsic motivation to achieve that which is most desirable. The theory integrates two perspectives on human motivation: (a) Humans are motivated to maintain an optimal level of stimulation, and (b) humans have basic needs for competence and personal causation or self-determination (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Eccles and Wigfield cite research that the most intrinsically motivating activities provide maximum stimulation and feelings of competence. Evidence in this research showed that interest in an intrinsically motivating activity can be reduced by exerting external control and by giving negative competence feedback to the participant (2002).

Self-Determination Theory examines motivation on a six point scale from amotivation to intrinsic motivation (Sharp et al., 2006). Amotivation is "the state of lacking the intention to act...because there is no value in doing the activity- there are no extrinsic or intrinsic rewards" (Watts and Caldwell, 2008, p162). On the opposite end, intrinsic motivation is the highest form of motivation and also referred to as intrinsic regulation. Intrinsically motivated behavior represents "high degrees of relatedness, competence and autonomy present in the context where behaviors occur. Behaviors that

are intrinsically motivated are inherently enjoyable and interesting. Intrinsic motivation fulfills natural inclinations for perceived freedom and control, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration...all sparks for the development of initiative" (p. 162-163)

Organismic Integration Theory, a sub-theory of SDT, examines how one's motivation to act may be influenced by extrinsic motivation from one's environment (Balwin and Caldwell, 2003). The influence of extrinsic motivators on the self in organismic integration theory explores the several levels of motivation in SDT including "*external* (regulation coming from outside the individual); *introjected* [internal regulation based on the utility of that behavior (e.g., studying hard to get good grades to get into college)]; and *integrated* (regulation based on what the individual thinks is valuable and important to the self" (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002, p.113). Integrated behavior, though mostly intrinsic in nature, is still motivation based in a feeling of duty, not pleasure and satisfaction.

If helping students achieve intrinsic motivation with developmentally rewarding activities is our goal, we will have to look carefully at motivational situations to identify the source and nature of the motivation. Answering questions of "what" and "why" will be essential to effectively understanding behavior when it comes to motivation.

Flow

Flow theory is more limited in its scope of applicability to motivation since it is only relevant to intrinsically motivated behavior. However, flow theory is a useful window into examining peak human experience. Csikszentmihalyi labeled "flow" as " an emotional state characterized by (a) a holistic feeling of being immersed in, and carried

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by, an activity; (b) a merging of action and awareness; (c) focus of attention on a limited stimulus field; (d) lack of self-consciousness; and (e) feeling in control of one's actions and the environment" (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002, p. 113). It is important to note that flow theory also states that flow is only possible when a person feels that the opportunities for action in a given situation match his or her ability to master the challenge. However, the challenge must be relatively high for flow to be possible. Consequently, flow inherently lends itself to continuous growth in the quest for increased mastery (2002).

Self-Worth Theory

Though not generally associated with theories of peak performance, self-worth theory may be an important theory to examine in contrast to flow if we are to understand why young people display behaviors we may not consider desirable. Originally applied to academic behaviors, self-worth theory defined the motive for action as the tendency to establish and maintain a positive self-image, or sense of self-worth. In an academic setting, a student who believes that a task is too hard may refuse to try, setting up the causal attribution of lack of effort to failure rather than lack of ability, since lack of ability would be most detrimental to the child's sense of self-worth (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Similar to flow occurring when opportunities for action match ability, self-worth theory states that students will go to great lengths to avoid activities that threaten their self-worth and will seek out activities that give a sense of competence. This will be particularly relevant in our discussion of the attractive lure of video games.

Traditional Extracurricular Activities and Development

What We Know Already

Much work has been conducted and continues to be done on how participation in extra-curricular activities impacts youth development (Hanson et al, 2003; Mahoney, 2003); Pittman et al, 2005; Sharp et al, 2006). Researchers like Joseph L. Mahoney in his 2003 article "Promoting Interpersonal Competence and Educational Success Through Extracurricular Activity Participation" take a rather simplistic approach to the topic by finding positive correlations between extracurricular participation of some form and positive academic outcomes like high school graduation and college attendance. In his paper, Mahoney references basic qualities of flow activities in Csikszentmihalyi's work to demonstrate the value of typical school-based extra curricular activities that include voluntary participation, structure, and challenge. His work demonstrates positive outcomes as a result of participation, but I find it important to note that his work focuses only on students whose needs and interests were adequately matched by the activities offered to them by the school.

A more probing examination of the value of youth participation in extracurricular activities was also published in 2003 entitled "What Adolescents Learn in Organized Youth Activities: A Survey of Self-Reported Developmental Experiences" (Hanson et al.). In this work, David Hanson attempted to analyze adolescents' perceptions of the value of activities in which they participated using an assessment tool called the Youth Experiences Survey (YES). The YES was designed to measure positive and negative outcomes of various voluntary activities in comparison to their experiences in the classroom and unstructured time hanging out with friends. Hanson sought to test

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assumptions that he identified in prevailing literature that extracurricular activities

fostered developmental growth in one or more of six domains. These domains included:

a. Identity development as a result of personal exploration, gaining self-knowledge, and developing a stronger sense of who they are.

b. Development of initiative as a result of long-term challenges and skill development in the quest for reaching goals.

c. Development of emotional, cognitive, and physical skills as adolescents grapple with feelings of anger and anxiety in activities that demand high cognitive or physical performance such as sports and music.

d. Development of teamwork and social skills in activities that require teens to work together, foster social competencies, and develop leadership skills.

e. Promoting interpersonal relationships and extending peer networks by providing a context for developing relationships with peers from diverse groups as well as reinforcing "prosocial" norms of behavior.

f. Development of connections to adults and acquiring social capital that comes with those connections. By connecting to adults in the wider community, adolescents can access assistance and information in areas such as jobs and colleges (Hanson, 2003).

Hanson's survey attempted to quantify these kinds of positive developmental experiences, as well as negative experiences, that teens in a diverse high school experienced in a range of extracurricular activities. The results showed that teens did perceive themselves as having a wide array of developmental experiences in youth activities- at rates higher than the classroom and unstructured social time and Hanson suggested this was because this was a context in which youth my be particularly active in

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shaping their own development (Self-Determination Theory). Hanson concluded is paper

by stressing the need for the field "to develop knowledge of how specific, controllable

experiences in youth activities- experiences that leaders can influence-are related to

positive developmental change" (p.52).

Where Extracurriculars Often Fall Short

A report entitled "Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging

Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals?" written by Karen Johnson

Pittman et al through The Forum For Youth Investment, was a piece of work I found very

useful for gaining an increased perspective of why the activities offered to youth in most

communities fall so short when it comes to engaging a maximum number of youth and

offering the most developmentally appropriate experiences possible. The paper began by

explaining the shift in philosophy and policy in the last 15 to 20 years from prevention to

development when it comes to youth activity design. With the growing understanding

that youth need active engagement and a sense of control in order to feel engaged,

program designs are shifting but the article states that

> many youth programs nonetheless are not responding as fully as they might to the needs
> and wants of young adolescents and are thus failing to attract young people after the age
> of twelve or thirteen- even to such potentially attractive offerings as sports. In particular,
> youth programs are failing to reach out to young people in low-income environments; to
> solicit their views, listen to them and act on their suggestions (Pittman, 2005, p7).

Pittman offers a greatly expanded view of goals we must strive toward if youth will have

developmental opportunities and supports in our communities that match our highest

ideals for development. She outlines some notable qualities of adolescent development

that are often overlooked at great expense. The report explains that development is

- **ongoing-** development happens every moment from childhood to adulthood and does not take breaks after school or when students enter the workforce.
- **uneven-** children of the same age can be at very different points in physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.
- **complex-** when basic needs are not met, development is influenced. Intellectual growth occurs best when young people supported physically and emotionally by their environment.
- **influenced by environment-** development is profoundly shaped by the places in which young people live, learn, work, play, and contribute.
- **mediated through relationships-** significant people in a young person's life-peers, families, teachers, community members and others-influence bothe the direction and pace of development.
- **triggered by participation-**development occurs when young people are actively engaged in interesting problems, relevant to both themselves and their communities (Pittman, p18).

Pittman's list of reframed goals in response to these needs highlight the need to go

beyond basic services and quick fixes. She stresses the need to include the whole

community in finding supports and opportunities for youth. Enlisting people who want to

be involved with youth because they care, the chances for establishing meaningful

connections and inspiring youth to contribute in return will be greatly increased. The

ultimate goal is a supportive community in the vein of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological

System's Model that provides continuous opportunities for service, skill development,

feelings of competency, and interrelatedness (2005).

Experience on Demand: Trends in Media and Leisure

Media Technology Filling the Gap

Rapidly developing technology is changing, and will continue to change, the way

we live our lives. Media consumption is becoming an integral part of American culture.

New homes come complete with special nooks for entertainment centers, new cars come

equipped with TV screens in the back of the seat, and cell phones come included with

game platforms, email devices, digital cameras, and internet connections (Rideout, 2005).

Most casual observers note the worrisome amount of time that the average American,

particularly the average American youth, spends with some form of electronic media in a

given week. It is my belief that current literature on motivation, adolescent development, and media usage indicates that electronic media are increasingly becoming the avenue by which American youth are meeting their needs for self-determination, flow, and self-worth. We will explore the extent of this phenomenon and its implications in the following section.

The Consumption Statistics

As media evolves, the ways in which youth consume it evolve as well, but the enormous prevalence of its use remains. Ninety-nine percent of American households contain at least one television set and two-thirds contain two or more (DelCampo, 2006). The typical 8- to 18- year old lives in a home with an average of 3.5 TVs, 3.3 radios, 2.9 VCR/DVD players, 2.1 video game consoles, and 1.5 computers. Cable or satellite TV service is widely available American children and adolescents with more than eighty percent having one or the other, and more than half of youth get premium channels such as HBO at home. Youth spend more time watching television than they do in school and more time with one or more types of media than working a full time job (44.5 hours a week) (Rideout, 2005; DelCampo, 2006).

The Kaiser Family Foundation published results of a 2005, nationally representative survey of 2,032 3rd to 12th grade students ages 8-18 designed to analyze media usage trends in young Americans. Their survey was a follow-up to a similar survey conducted in 1999 (Rideout, 2005). The two studies serve as a valuable window into understanding the magnitude of media usage, but also evolving trends. What follows are

some highlights of these statistics and trends that I consider most poignant to the discussion leisure and development.

The study indicated that, in many homes, television is a central part of the home environment. Two-thirds of young people live in homes where the TV is on during meals and half live in homes where the TV is left on most of the time whether anyone is watching it or not. Two-thirds of 8-18 year olds have a TV in their bedroom, 54% have a VCR/DVD player, 49% have a video game player, and almost one third have a computer in their room. The 2005 study showed a trend of increasing media use in the bedroom, important to note since that signals a decline in parental guidance when it comes to media usage (Rideout, 2005).

Another important trend in media usage among young people is media multitasking. While total time with media did not increase significantly in the six years between studies, the way that students engaged with media did. Increasingly, students are engaged with more than one form of media at a time (i.e. listening to music while playing video games). One in four students reported that they "often" or "sometimes" go online while watching TV to do something related to the show they are watching. This phenomenon has potential to increase as 60% of students with computers said that they were located where they can watch TV while using the computer (Rideout, p.30).

Why Students Gravitate to Electronic Media

There is a growing body of literature that presents some interesting explanations as to why electronic media are so powerfully attractive. There was a time when books were the primary vehicle for accessing factual information and fictional entertainment.

Television, movies, and the internet have now all exceeded reading in average engagement time per day (Rideout, 2005). Increasing knowledge of how the brain works, has allowed us to better understand why television, in particular, can have such a powerful appeal the brain. Our brains are capable of fully processing about eight frames of information a minute, while television programs are designed to run at 30 frames per minute. These quick cuts are intentional, as the over-stimulation causes a physical response in the same sector of our brain that processes the need for food and sex (www.the-family-place.org, 2008). This powerful feedback causes a habit forming stimulus/response sequence in many that leads to habitual behavior.

Video games give the same feedback response with additional psychological attractors. Aside from offering intricately detailed simulated experiences and captivating interactive storylines, videogames artificially supply reinforcing social and emotional experiences. As we recall, self-worth theory states that people seek out opportunities where action matches ability to provide an experience of maximum performance (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). For children of the television age, whose brains have developed a rapid stimulus/response feedback orientation, video games provide an alluring and gratifying simulation of flow experiences where they can become virtual experts in hundreds of skills in an array of fantastic scenarios. For children who do not experience feelings of competency in other scenarios, this seems to have particular allure. One article from Newsweek discussing the many challenges of boys in schools had this to say about the lure of video games when it comes to middle school boys and feelings of self-efficacy:

> Boys will do almost anything to avoid admitting that they're overwhelmed. Boys
> measure everything they do by a single yardstick: does this make me look weak... And if
> it does, he isn't going to do it. That's part of the reason that videogames have such a

powerful hold on boys: the action is constant, they can calibrate just how hard the challenges will be and, when they lose, the defeat is private (Tyre et al., 2006).

An analysis of computer usage also suggests that, for many young people, the computer is a way of achieving feelings of interconnectedness. The Kaiser Family Foundation's survey found that, of the sixty-two minutes of leisure time a day the average youth spends on the computer, about half the time was spent instant messaging, emailing, or chatting online. Of the various leisure activities on the computer, instant messaging was second only to playing games in quantity of time spent per day (Rideout, p.31).

Despite the many allures of digital entertainment, there are many reasons that we need to help students limit their media usage. One source claims that while television can be entertaining, stimulating, and a source of stress reduction, viewing more than 30 minutes at a time becomes harmful (www.the-family-place.org., 2008). These limits are rarely observed and it is important to note that deficient self-regulation may occur to all media consumers, even among those whose consumption patterns are generally considered normal. In cases where self-regulation has become so poor as to be problematic with symptoms of poor mood, withdrawal, performance deterioration and suffering relationships, the problem has been convincingly compared to an addiction model of usage (LaRose et al. 2003). Another worry of excessive use is simply the time that it takes away from other activities with physical, cognitive, and social benefits (Rideout et. al, 2005). A third and very powerfully convincing argument for heavily structuring media usage in the formative years is its impact on brain development. In Endangered Minds, Jane Healy examines the various debilitating implications of a brain that has developed with sustained exposure to digital media. The brain physically develops to process information and monitor itself differently. Not only do attention and

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self-regulation suffer, potentially causing symptoms of ADHD, but the brain's very capacity to think and regulate may become dependent on outside input (Healy, p.175). I believe that as more research becomes available, we will be able to directly link excessive media usage to many of the cognitive and emotional challenges that face our youth today.

Strategies for our Schools and Communities

With an evident need for guidance among youth when it comes to use of leisure time, it seems apparent that school counselors should ensure that opportunities for leisure education are available to students in their school. The question then becomes when, how, and what to offer to try to encourage a maximum level of self-determined, healthy choices in leisure activities. With many alluring activities in the media entertainment industry that can lead to problematic behavior, an education component seems necessary to instill a level of consequence awareness and self-monitoring skills during leisure activity. Secondly, opportunities for activity exposure and skill-building under the guidance of a caring adult should complement the education component. Together, an ideal program should enable students to make informed leisure choices, find developmentally beneficial activities in which to participate, achieve feelings of self-determined growth, and, optimally, develop greater ties to their community in the process.

TimeWise and 4H: Organizations with Complimentary Components

The *TimeWise*: Learning Lifelong Leisure Skills curriculum is a relatively new guidance program for students, born out of an awareness of the youth leisure

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mismanagement crisis of the 21st century. The *TimeWise* orientation toward developmental processes states that healthy human functioning is characterized by an individual's active orientation in self-constructing how they operate in their environments (Caldwell, 2004). Originally designed as a substance abuse prevention program, the six lesson curriculum was created as a way to instill seventh graders with higher levels of self-awareness and greater self-regulatory skills. The program's theory of action is illustrated below.

TimeWise Theory of Action

Increasing personal interest and competence, and learning to take control of one's leisure leads to intrinsic motivation.

Increasing initiative and being involved over a sustained period of time with more complexity is developmentally productive.

Positive Experience

Positive experiences, control of free time, sustained engagement, and learning how to overcome boredom and do fun and healthy things in one's free time will lead to less experimentation with alcohol and other drugs.

http://www.etr.org/traininginstit/timeWise.htm

The *TimeWise* lesson sequence is as follows. Each lesson is designed to last about 50 minutes each.

- *Lesson 1: Time use and benefits of leisure.* Students reflect on their own patterns of leisure activity and the benefits (e.g., physical, mental, and spiritual) they received from activity participation. Students reflect on possible healthy and unhealthy consequences. Students are asked to complete a four-day time diary for homework which is used as reference in the following lessons.
- *Lesson 2: Reasons for participating in free time activities.* Students are introduced to reasons associated with amotivated, externally, and internally motivated styles of leisure activity engagement. Students are taught that more benefits accrue if they engage because of a real interest in the activity (intrinsic motivation) or because the activity serves a future purpose, such as learning to play an instrument (identified motivation).
- *Lesson 3: Developing interests and managing boredom.* The lesson directly addresses understanding and overcoming boredom and helps students begin to identify current and future interests as an antidote for boredom. Also discussed is

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the ability to restructure a boring situation into something that is at least somewhat interesting.

- *Lesson 4: Planning and decision making skills.* Students are guided through a brainstorming and planning process to determine what activities they would like to participate in. Youth are guided through exercises that increase their awareness of things to do in and around their communities. They also are guided through navigating the constraints that limit which activities they can engage in and are taught problem solving strategies to negotiate the constraints.
- *Lesson 5: Managing free time for balance and variety.* Students learn to manage unplanned or unexpected events and explore the importance of having a variety of activity types and friends in their repertoire.
- *Lesson 6: Integration.* The last lesson is a synthesis of concepts learned across lessons and students engage in a review session. Students then choose among a number of exercises to express what they learned in the program (Caldwell, 2004).

The study conducted by Caldwell's team explored the program's benefits for a sample of 634 middle school youth in nine schools in a rural area of the eastern United States. Results from self-report data indicated that there were positive effects on students motivation, decision-making, community awareness, and activity participation. However, the author noted some obvious limitations of the program and areas for improvement and expansion that might lead to greater effect. One area of improvement was expanding the program to more than six sessions for a more sustained period of time. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the author advocated for the integration of an experiential component to more effectively activate the classroom lessons. She said that, ideally, the six-session curriculum would be combined with an after school program to provide an opportunity for skill development and trying out possible interests (Caldwell, 2004).

Designing a complementary activity program to couple with the *TimeWise* program seems to be the next step for establishing a program to enable positive self-determined leisure trends in our youth. Organizations such as *4H*, which are well established, with a rich history of promoting healthy development, may provide a

framework to follow (Cress, 2008). The *4H* philosophy encourages learning through experience in an atmosphere that fosters caring relationships and community spirit. The following eight essential elements serve as guidelines for the organizations program design:

The 8 Elements

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- A safe environment
- An inclusive environment
- Engagement in learning
- Opportunity for Mastery
- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunity for self-determination
- Opportunity to value and practice service for others (Kress, 2008).

The obvious limitation of the *4H* program is its exclusive focus on rural, agriculturally-oriented activities. Such activities are engaging and relevant to a portion of the population, but not universally applicable to appealing to students across the nation. My goal in future work will be to design a framework of activity organization that engages enthusiastic adults across community contexts to serve as mentors and instructors in a variety of engaging leisure activities to serve as a complement to the instructional components of the *TimeWise* program.

Summary:

Trends of excessive electronic media consumption are reaching epidemic levels. Time spent in these activities robs students of time that might be spent in intrinsically motivated, prosocial activities. Time spent with television and video games may even degrade self-regulation skills and make it harder for children to develop the kinds of self-determined behaviors that lead to skill building and flow experiences. To counteract the powerful forces at work in our media culture, caring adults need to provide supervision

and guidance set boundaries and help children understand the consequences of their leisure choices. School counselors may be able to play an important role in this process by providing lessons in leisure awareness and providing opportunity to experience new recreational activities in a community atmosphere.

Results and Data Analysis

Introduction:

Information that I collected during my literature review indicated that the ways in which students choose to engage themselves during their leisure time may have considerable influence on their development. The literature supported my ideas that prosocial activity and activities that challenge students to develop new skills are associated with a host of protective factors, while antisocial activities such as excessive electronic media usage are associated with many negative risk factors. The literature suggested that skills and values around leisure planning may be taught using a curriculum to promote healthier choices during students' free time. During the action-research phase of my Capstone project, I chose to focus on my last research question:

> *Will students show a change in leisure patterns after taking part in a six session TimeWise lesson series coupled with mentor-led recreation? After taking part, will they demonstrate a change in self-regulation, leisure planning, and self-awareness in leisure?*

My research was intended to continue the research done by Caldwell and Baldwin on the TimeWise curriculum and, specifically, attempt to determine if adding an experiential component would make the curriculum more effective, as the authors suggested (Caldwell, 2004). As part of the experiential component, I was particularly interested in experimenting with the positive influences of adult mentorship that I had observed in students involved with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program and decided to recruit undergraduate volunteers to participate in the program to help model positive values for active leisure patterns. I hoped that adding positive socialization, activity, and mentorship to the curriculum lessons would create a program with greater positive

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influence than the lessons alone, as Caldwell and Baldwin theorized in their work on the TimeWise study.

Project Participants and Tools:

Recruiting participants for the study began with my efforts to secure a location for the TimeWise after school program. I had decided that running the program after school was the best way to secure participants for the two hours I believed would be necessary to deliver the lessons and adequately engage the students in recreational activities. I was referred by my advisor to the Keene Housing Authority (KHA), an organization that provides subsidized housing to low income families with recreational facilities on two of their properties. They already ran various programs for children on their properties after school and seemed like a good match for my program. I contacted the KHA's program coordinator and met with her to discuss my program and determine if we might form a good partnership for the project. She had time slots available at one of her after-school locations and had several middle school students in mind who she believed would be good candidates for the group. The site, nicknamed "The Clubhouse", had one large room with tables, chairs, and couches; another smaller room with computers; a fully equipped kitchen, bathrooms; a storage room with various sports equipment; a small backyard, and a parking lot with a basketball hoop. All in all, it was a very promising site for the activities I had planned. I wrote a formal proposal for the program to her supervisor, which was accepted. I then wrote up an article with the program coordinator to advertise the after school group in the monthly newsletter to parents associated with the KHA. The

program coordinator also put up flyers and tried to advertise by word of month to parents of children she thought might be interested in joining.

After securing the site, I began searching for volunteer mentors for the program. My goal was to have one mentor for each of the seven students I hoped to enroll in the program. I began by enquiring through the Keene State College volunteer services office about networking. I spoke with the volunteer coordinator and a student affiliated with campus volunteers for Big Brothers/ Big Sisters. This route quite possibly would have supplied me with the number of volunteers I needed, but shortly after, I had an opportunity to recruit teacher education undergraduates that proved fruitful. My advisor identified the opportunity to have students in her education class couple work in the course with my after school program and invited me to come present my program proposal in the hopes of recruiting volunteers. I visited her next class and gave a brief presentation summarizing my background research, intended program format, and desire to obtain volunteers who could share recreational interests with the students. I got a very positive response and, after email interviews enquiring about what hobbies and interests they might be willing to share and a follow-up meeting, got six volunteers to commit to the six week program. The class I recruited from happened to be comprised entirely of women and all of my volunteers were consequently female. I intended to have a coeducational group of students in the program and had some initial concerns about being the only male mentor of the seven, but several of the college students were excited about working with boys and I remained optimistic that we could make the program welcoming and engaging for both boys and girls.

After securing the site and the volunteers, the next challenge was getting students signed up for the program. In the time since my initial contact with the after school coordinator for the Keene Housing Authority, our efforts to recruit participants had only yielded one sign up; a seventh grade girl who had been active in other after school programs on the site and whose mother was enthusiastic about having her participate from the beginning. I felt that an incentive program of some kind would be a good idea, for not only for recruiting students, but also encouraging full engagement in the lesson materials, which entailed written homework assignments as integral parts of the coursework. I decided that offering students the opportunity to earn gift certificates to local retailers in the amount of five dollars per session attended and three dollars per completed homework assignment would be a reasonable incentive. I hoped that I could eventually get retailers to donate to this effort, but was prepared to supply the funds on my own if necessary.

The after school coordinator at KHA believed that on-site recruitment was the best way to get volunteers since the residences were all located around the Clubhouse. I coordinated a time to come to the Clubhouse after school with two volunteers and set up a table to try to attract parents and students. I decorated the outside of the Clubhouse with balloons and the volunteers made a big sign. After two hours, only two parents came, one of which was the mother who had already expressed interest. The other was the mother of an eighth grade boy. I talked to them about the program, answered questions, and gave them the research release forms I had created to sign. To me, this was a very disappointing result, since the tentative start date of our program was to be two weeks later and I believed I needed a bare minimum of four students to make the program

successful. Seven was the ideal number I was hoping for. I discussed this challenge with my advisor and we decided that expanding the age range of the program to include fifth grade students would potentially solve the problem by allowing me to recruit students from Fuller Elementary the nearby elementary school where I had interned a few months prior. I proposed this change to my contacts at the KHA and they were happy to welcome students from off-site if it allowed me to run the program for their students as well.

I contacted the guidance counselor at Fuller and sent her program materials to pass out to students who she felt might benefit from the program. In the meantime, I also got a call that one more seventh grade boy from KHA had signed up for the group. I visited Fuller a few days later and gave a short presentation to the fifth grade classrooms about the program and passed out permission forms, explaining that there were only a very limited number of places left and I would accept students on a first come, first serve basis. The next day when, I came back to school, there had been an overwhelming response. I filled up the rest of my places to make seven students total and sent home letters of regret and apology to the other ten or so students. This was a difficult moment in the program, since several of the teachers were passionate about having a few of their students included in the program and I simply did not feel that I had the resources to accommodate more. Despite the disappointment, I found that this was a very strong indicator that a similar program on a larger scale could easily be successful in this area.

In the end, I was quite happy with the diverse group of students enrolled for the group: three middle school students and four fifth grade students, two of which were girls and five of which were boys. The limited amount of background information I had about them suggested that their differing strengths and interests would make for a rich group.

My one 13 year old middle school girl had expressed great interest in crafts and group activities. The two middle school boys, ages 13 and 14, had been described as having challenges with groups in the past for lack of engagement and having challenges finding activities to do in leisure time at the KHA complex. The 13 year old boy also grappled with weight challenges that had historically limited his engagement in active hobbies. The one fifth grade girl, age 11, was described as a strong student and a group leader by her school counselor. Two of the other fifth grade boys were fraternal twin brothers, both age 11, who had not yet been part of a group program outside of school. The last boy was also a strong student who was involved with various hobbies, but his parents believed that he would benefit from the program because of excessive computer usage and lack of socialization.

After contacting all of the parents of the students signed up for the course and wrapping up some legal liability issues by arranging parental transportation to and from the clubhouse and creating an addition legal release form specifying the exact hours of the program, we were almost ready to begin. Our first day was scheduled for March 5th and the volunteers and I just needed to solidify our program plans. One factor to investigate was what we could acquire for additional resources from local businesses. I typed up a formal program summary and request for donations and one of the volunteers joined me to deliver them to local businesses. Our two main requests were support for snack foods and donations toward reward gift certificates for the kids. We visited the Toadstool Bookstore, Toy City, Walmart, Shaw's, Hannaford, Michael's Crafts, Joanne Fabrics and Dick's Sporting Goods. Of the first seven businesses we visited, Shaw's donated a 15 dollar gift card, Toadstool expressed interest but did not commit to a

donation, and Michael's offered a single purchase discount. The others took the letter and said that their manager would contact me. We were feeling a little disappointed by the time we arrived at Dick's, our last business of the day. We talked with the manager in person and she said that she believed they would be able to provide full funding of 335 dollars for my gift certificate program, which was a real morale boost for us. I followed up multiple times to the other stores and was able to acquire a 25 dollar gift card from Walmart and a 35 dollar gift card from Hannaford for snacks.

With resources acquired, I met one more time with the volunteers to map out our tentative schedule. We made a general outline of what we would offer at each of the program sessions and a tentative timeline for each day (see appendix). Given the limited amount of time in each session, I opted to reduce the amount of TimeWise curriculum lesson and activity time from the prescribed hour and a half to a condensed 30 minute lesson, supplementing activities from the curriculum with activities run by the volunteers, and assigning some of the workbook tasks intended for class time for homework instead. In this time, I felt that I was able to introduce the concepts of the lessons, do brief activities, and engage the group in discussion on the weekly topics. My intuition told me that students would be challenged to attend for longer than 30 minutes at the end of a school day and that this alteration would ultimately allow for richer experiences with the mentors in the remaining time, when they could continue discussing topics from the lessons if they desired.

I put together a variety of assessment tools before the first day of the program. I created two surveys, one for students and one for parents, to be completed on the first day. I created a brief observation log for mentor notes to be completed by each of the

college volunteers each week. I had a variety of homework assignments to assign, which I would keep as work samples. I would keep notes of my own to record the days' events. I also created exit surveys for the students and parents, to be completed on the last day. I hoped that this collection of resources would provide enough data to discern what benefits, if any participants in the program derived from their involvement and what potential areas for improvement might exist.

Results: Organization and Data Analysis

Day 1, March 5th: Discussing time use and benefits of leisure.
Tools: Observations, Parent and Student Surveys, Mentor Notes, Work Samples.

Observations

Three of the mentors and I arrived at the clubhouse a few minutes before 3:30 when the students were due to arrive. We prepared snacks of goldfish, pretzels, and juice and laid them out on the table for the kids when they arrived. The middle school students who came by school bus were the first to arrive and were soon followed by the 5th graders, driven by their parents. I gave parent surveys to the parents who brought their children to the door, missing the three who did not. We had some quick introductions, made name tags, and took a short tour of the clubhouse. Then I invited them to have snack while they worked on the student entrance surveys. By that time, the other mentors had arrived and we helped some of the students who were having difficulty answering the questions. The students worked at very different rates; the eighth grade boy finishing first. Some of the younger students worked meticulously for another ten minutes or so. This waiting time was the first of our challenges at keeping activities coordinated. The

oldest boy went through a range of borderline inappropriate behavior from taking a baseball bat out of the storage room and swinging it around to racing around on the wheeled chairs in the next room with the other boys. I asked him to not do either of those activities and a couple of the volunteers did quite a good job engaging him in conversation despite his apparent agitation.

When the last survey was done, we grouped in a circle, I gave a brief summary of what our group purpose was and introduced some of things we would be doingover the coming weeks. I had us share our names again, our age, and something we liked to do for fun. Afterwards, a few of the college mentors led us in initiative games for about twenty minutes. The games went well and everyone was pretty loosened up at that point.

We regrouped in the large room for the first lesson: Discussing time use and benefits of leisure. We had a discussion about why it might matter what we do in our free time and the kids thought of things like physical health and friendships. I passed out the Leisure Time Benefits handout (*Appendix A*) and we discussed different activities that might have each of those benefits. We also talked about potential consequences of not using free time well, like boredom, little growth, depression, activities that might get us in trouble, etc. Most students participated well except for the 8th grade boy who refused to participate and was pretty agitated some of the time. Having the attention of one of the mentors by his side seemed to help, though. I assigned them the Timewise Journal pages for homework (*Appendix B)* and explained the gift certificate reward points for completing homework on time and for just showing up. Since this journal required several days of work to do well, I made it worth double reward points. The journal would be a log of their free time activities for four days.

We wrapped up the day by doing more group games that allowed us to share a lot of information about ourselves in a short amount of time. Everyone seemed to be relaxed and enjoying themselves. One of the fifth grade students revealed during one game that this was the first group he had been part of out of school. The parents arrived while we were still playing and watched until we finished at 5:30. We let the kids know that next week we would be making tie dye tee shirts. Only two of the parents returned the parent survey to me.

After the students left, I met with the mentors to check in and get ourselves organized for the next week. Morale was generally good, though the confused behavior between clearly structured time reinforced that we needed to be pretty clear about our schedule for the next session and needed to always have activities going. I passed out a mentor feedback form for the session just before our final clean up and departure.

Parent Surveys

The parent survey I distributed to the parents on the first day consisted of 13 questions intended to give a baseline understanding of the parents' attitudes about their child's leisure practices. Four out of seven surveys distributed were returned and the responses were as follows:

1. How many hours does your child usually spend with TV, video games, or computers in a day?

	Week day?	*Weekend?*
Response 1	*10 hours*	*8 in winter, less in summer*
Response 2	*4-5 hours*	*most of the day*
Response 3	*2 hours*	*4 in winter, less in summer*
Response	*.5-1 hour*	*1.5-2 hours*

2. Is your child's free time adult supervised?

Response 1   Sometimes
Response 2   Most of the time
Response 3   Sometimes
Response 4   Most of the time

3. How often does an adult choose how your child spends his/her free time?

Response 1   Sometimes
Response 2   Sometimes
Response 3   Sometimes
Response 4   Sometimes

4. Does your child belong to clubs or organizations? If so, what?

Response 1   No
Response 2   No Response
Response 3   Chess Club
Response 4   Student Council in the elementary school

5. What other hobbies or activities does your child do regularly?

Response 1   basketball, snowboarding, swimming
Response 2   none
Response 3   play w/ Legos and toys, swimming
Response 4   plays violin, reading, computer (games), soccer (summer and fall), play with
                    brothers outside.

6. Do you feel like your child is challenged to grow and learn outside school?

Response 1   Most of the time
Response 2   Sometimes
Response 3   Sometimes
Response 4   Most of the time

7. Do you feel concerned about your child's leisure patterns?

Response 1   No Response
Response 2   Most of the Time
Response 3   Sometimes
Response 4   Sometimes

8. What activities does your child choose to do for fun that please you the most?

Response 1   swimming, learn Japanese, read, play outside
Response 2   Just at least going out and playing with the kids.
Response 3   draw, play outside, swimming, read
Response 4   Sports (soccer, etc.)

9. Do you wish your child had opportunities to do other activities? If so, what?
Response 1   No Response
Response 2   The YMCA, anything active
Response 3   soccer, volleyball in the summer, swimming
Response 4   basic sewing, outdoor activities

10. What are the biggest challenges that keep your child from doing healthy/fun activities that you would like them to do?

Response 1	*nothing*
Response 2	*his weight*
Response 3	*tired, by himself*
Response 4	*overly interested in computer games*

11. What are your child's best strengths?

Response 1	*sports*
Response 2	*willing to learn and very friendly*
Response 3	*Arts*
Response 4	*Focuses well on reading and practicing violin*

13. Is there any other information about your child that you think would help me during the program in the coming weeks?

No responses written.

<u>Student Surveys</u>
The student surveys given on the first day of the program were intended to give baseline information about the child's personal impressions about their own leisure time use.

1. Do you feel like there are fun things to do in your neighborhood?
> *5 answered "sometimes"*
> *1 answered "most of the time"*

2. How often do you wish there was something better to do for fun?
> *1 answered "hardly ever"*
> *2 answered "sometimes"*
> *2 answered "most of the time"*
> *1 answered "always"*

3. Do you plan what you will do for fun before you do it?
> *3 answered "hardly ever"*
> *1 answered "sometimes"*
> *2 answered "always"*

4. Do you do things outside school with people you like spending time with?
> *4 answered "sometimes"*
> *2 answered "always"*

5. Do you feel like other people don't like how you spend your free time?
> *1 answered "never"*
> *1 answered "hardly ever"*
> *3 answered "sometimes"*
> *1 answered "always"*

6. Do you do things in your free time because <u>someone else</u> wants you to?
> *3 answered "never"*
> *2 answered "sometimes"*
> *1 answered "most of the time"*

7. How often do you do things in your free time because you want to?

    1 answered "sometimes"
    2 answered "most of the time"
    3 answered "always"

8. How often do you feel proud about things you do in your free time?

    1 answered "sometimes"
    2 answered "most of the time"
    3 answered "always"

9. Do things you do for fun challenge you to learn or get better?

    1 answered "hardly ever"
    2 answered "sometimes"
    2 answered "most of the time"
    1 answered "always"

10. How does having free time make you feel? Why?

Response 1	*I feel good. Cus I hav fun.*
Response 2	*It makes me feel free and that we can do a thing I want to do.*
Response 3	*If there is something to do it can be fun. Yes.*
Response 4	*It make me feel good because usually it means that I have no school work left because I usually have a lot of school work.*
Response 5	*No Response*
Response 6	*Every Body plays with me that what made me happy*

11. Do you play sports? If so, what?

Response 1	*Yes, soccer.*
Response 2	*Yes, basketball, soccer, tennis, snowboarding*
Response 3	*Yes, basketball, dirt biking.*
Response 4	*Yes, horseback riding, soccer, hip-hop dance, cross-country skiing, long distance running*
Response 5	*Yes, football, Teach Deck*
Response 6	*Yes, football, basketball*

12. Do you belong to other clubs? If so, what?

Response 1	*No*
Response 2	*No*
Response 3	*Art Club, clubhouse, Big Brother/Big Sister Program*
Response 4	*Girls Incorporated of NH*
Response5	*No*
Response6	*No Response*

13. List any hobbies you have tried and like.

Response 1	*Making art. Clay. All art!!*
Response 2	*Running, board games, disk*
Response 3	*Knitting, Origami, friendship bracelets*
Response 4	*drawing, horseback riding, caring and taking care of my cats*
Response 5	*Lift Weights*
Response 6	*Collect Bouncy Balls. Collect Cars*

14. List hobbies or activities you'd like to do, but haven't gotten the chance.

Response 1   Camp activities, more sports, learn to take care of animals
Response 2   N/A
Response 3   Air plane
Response 4   Nothing I can think of.
Response 5   No Response
Response 6   Tennis, soccer

15. What things make it hard to do the activities you'd most like to do but can't.

Response 1   Not having art supplies at home, school takes up time
Response 2   Skills, others can do more than me. (My brother) is a better artist.
Response 3   I like Basketball, but my knee caps aren't lined right so I have issues trying to run around
              and play that.
Response 4   Nothing I can think of.
Response 5   No Response
Response 6   No

16. How many hours do you spend with TV, video games, or computers in a day?

Response 1   No response
Response 2   about 2 hours
Response 3   about 1 hour
Response 4   about 1.5 hours
Response 5   about 5 hours
Response 6   about 1 hour

17. What things are you best at?

Response 1   Art, soccer, games, swimming
Response 2   sports, videogames, board games
Response 3   Like math (but bad at it). Art, Basketball, and playing mafia
Response 4   math, spelling, soccer, dance, x-c skiing, running
Response 5   football
Response 6   soccer, football, basketball

Mentor Notes

At the end of the session, I passed out short prompts for the undergraduate volunteers to

use for note taking. This is a selection of the responses that illustrate the blend of

challenges and promise on the first day.

What were your general observations from today's group?

Response 1   I think the group games were very useful in making everyone feel more comfortable as a
              group. It allowed us to interact and break out of any shells. Overall thing went well, but it
              will take time to get to know the kids and their interests.

Response 2   *Short attention span. Some lack of confidence, they didn't know what they were "good" at.*

Response 3   *I think the first day went well. The kids didn't seem too shy which shows comfort. I also think the time was filled well with games, snack, getting to know each other and being introduced to the program.*

Response 4   *Some kids resisted and it was awkward for them, but it was the first day and I think they will have a 180 degree view of us and the program next week.*

Did you work closely with any students in particular?

Response 1   *I was sitting near two boys, one who was testing boundaries in this group.*

Other Respondents answered no.

Are there any specific group or individual needs that you would like to focus on?

Response 1   *I think that team building is an important group need. Also, for students to do/make smart choices on their own instead of copying ideas from others.*

Response 2   · *It is easy to see we will need to keep the kids busy and entertained, especially the boys. Some of the kids had a hard time listing hobbies, so it would be great if we could find things that really interest them.*

Student Work Samples- Leisure Journal

For their homework assignment during the first week, the students were asked to keep a four day journal of their leisure activities for two weekend days and two week days. The journal pages are shown in *Appendix B.*

The journal entries, in general, showed what I consider a reasonable balance of leisure pursuits including time with family, time outside, some traveling, and television and computer games. There were, however, large chunks of undocumented time on almost all the journals, which depletes their reliability as a measurement tool in my mind. I do believe that the assignment was valuable for its message that it is important to think about how one chooses to spend their leisure time.

Day 2, March 12th- Motivation for participating in free time activities.
Tools: Observations, Mentor Notes, Work Samples

<u>*Observations*</u>

We generally duplicated the schedule for this session that we used the previous week. Students arrived between 3:30pm and 3:45pm. Mentors arrived at 3:30pm or 4:00pm, depending on when they got out of class. We ate snack together for the first half hour and some of the kids played with cards and Legos.

Shortly after 4:00, I had us gather for the lesson. We brainstormed reasons that we choose to do certain leisure activities and came up with the five motivations from the curriculum: Have to, Want to, Nothing else to do, For a purpose, What others think. We tried to think of different scenarios where someone might have each motivation. I used motivational scenarios strips and we discussed which motivation was demonstrated in each scenario. Since each scenario did not have a definitive answer, it prompted rich discussion. At the end of the lesson, students partnered with a mentor to look back over their journal and identify which motivations were most common for them in their leisure time activities. For the homework assignment, the students were asked to interview an adult close to them about their leisure pursuits and motivations when they were the student's age. I did notice during the lesson section that remaining fully engaged with the lesson was a challenge for a few of the boys. Mentors tried to compensate by positively reengaging students in the conversations.

After the lesson, the mentors and I divided into three activity stations: tye dying tee-shirts, knitting, and playing four square outside. We bought a tee-shirt for each child so they had one to dye and take home. One of the mentors brought materials for knitting that the students could take home as well. Only the two girls participated in the knitting,

but all the students rotated through the other activity stations. All students seemed well engaged during this section of the afternoon.

Mentor Notes

I handed out a question sheet to the mentors at the end of the day with the same prompts as the prior week and these were some of the responses that they gave.

What were your general observations from today's group?

Response 1   The kids were more comfortable. They enjoyed being outside and playing games. They were good about playing by the rules and being fair.

Response 2   Thought the groups went really well! Tye dye got a tad messy but those who participated, including us adults had a lot of fun!!! The knitting seemed to go well too.

Response 3   I feel like breaking the group into three sub groups with different activities to do helped students feel more involved and they had the choice of how they would like to spend their time.

Are there any specific group or individual needs that you would like to focus on?

Response 1   I've noticed negative attitudes and some belittling in the group between individuals. I am not interested in trying to discipline students out of this behavior but increase acceptance...maybe through trust and risk taking?

Response 2   Trying everything (activities) for just a little while to open new doors of activities instead of just focusing on things they know they like and usually do.

Response 3   I would like to focus primarily on (two older boys) because I think they need that extra attention but they all need that special attention!

Work Samples

Student work samples from this week were the adult interview worksheets that they brought home for homework. (Appendix C). Samples demonstrated that the assignment did prompt a discussion with an adult close to them about leisure choices and values for most students.

Day 3, March 26th- Developing interests and managing boredom
Tools: Observations, Mentor Notes

<u>*Observations*</u>

One of the planned activities for this week had been to make pretzels and

macaroni and cheese as a group for snack. Since the college volunteers leading the

activity were not arriving until 4:00, we needed to have snack later than usual. I bought

three decks of new cards so I could teach them a new card game to play for the first half

hour, previously used for snack time. The game was called "Golf" and it was very well

received. The kids split into small groups with the mentors to play and seemed to have

quite a bit of fun.

Shortly after 4:00, as we were preparing for pretzel making, we realized that the

oven was malfunctioning and we would not be able to continue with that group activity,

which had been fairly central to our afternoon plans. We still had the macaroni and

cheese to make for food and the weather was nice outside, so a few of the students stayed

inside with a couple of the volunteers to cook while the others went outside and played a

group catch game with the football. Ironically, this activity ended up being one of the

activities that a couple of the boys listed as most enjoyable during the program.

When the macaroni and cheese was ready to eat, we called everyone inside and

ate while I began the lesson on beating boredom and developing new interests. We

discussed why we get bored and what separates an activity that is boring from one that is

interesting. I passed out the handouts "Avoiding Boredom" and "Becoming Interested"

(*Appendix D*). I had planned one more activity with the lesson, but time constraints and

the students' perceived lack of engagement in the lesson prompted me to cut the lesson

short and pass out the homework assignment. The homework was a new interest

inventory meant to prepare the students for the lesson next week- preparing a leisure action plan.

Afterward, we had a few minutes left that the students spent either outdoors playing more ball or inside doing scrapbooking with a few of the volunteers. This session felt like the least successful of the series to me because of the complications with the cooking activity and my feeling that the lesson did not actively engage the kids. As usual, however, the recreation interaction time with the mentors went well and people still had fun.

Mentor Notes
(Only one respondent this week)

What were your general observations from today's group?
Thought those who helped make mac n' cheese had a good time. The kids were really into playing card games. Making pretzels would have been fun but the stove wasn't working.

Describe some positive interactions you noticed today.
More interactions w/ (the two girls). They love being here, especially (the oldest girl).

Have you noticed any changes in students or group dynamics?
Not really- (oldest boy) is still very uninterested in everything we do! We need to talk to him and see if there's anything he is interested in doing.

Day 4, April 2nd- Planning and Decision Making Skills
Tools: Observations, Mentor Notes, Work Samples

Observations

The weather was beautiful today and so I decided it would be good to let the kids choose activities from our selection of resources for the beginning of the afternoon. One of the volunteers and I went out with the group, who chose to play basketball and color with sidewalk chalk with some of the younger children in the complex. Only the oldest girl stayed inside playing the card game, Golf, with one of the other volunteers. At 4:00

when the rest of the volunteers came, some of the kids came in to make the snack of the day- a chocolaty Chex mix nicknamed "Puppy Chow". While they made the snack, the rest of the kids continued to play outside. When it was ready, we called everyone in and I gave my presentation for our lesson.

The lesson was on planning and decision making- meant to orient kids to how they can overcome roadblocks to doing activities they would like to pursue and how to harness community resources to try new things. I decided not to use most of the activities in the curriculum and, instead gave a presentation about my childhood dream of going to the Alaskan wilderness and the steps I had to take over the years to get there. I brought in a caribou antler, photos, and copper ore that I had collected from my last three summers in Alaska and passed them around so the kids could look at them. I talked about camping with my family as a child, teaching myself to backpack, making friends in college who went on to live in Alaska, becoming a wilderness guide in college, saving money for my trips, and volunteering for the USGS in Alaska so I could get to the very remote sections on a limited budget. The students were very interested and attentive during that part of the lesson. Next, I did an activity from the curriculum and brought the group over to a table covered with little icons showing different recreational activities available to them. Each student had to pick one that they were interested in exploring and the group discussed challenges to pursuing that activity and community resources that would help them. We then assigned the students' homework, which was to make an action plan as to how they would pursue one new leisure activity of their choice.

After the lesson, two of the volunteers, one of which is a local dance instructor, were to run a brief workshop on stomp dancing. The boys were all pretty resistant and

requested that they participate for ten minutes to try it and then they could choose to play

outside again if they desired. The ten minutes really was not enough time to teach and

engage them and the activity did not feel very successful. When ten minutes was up, the

boys asked to go play outside and the activity stopped. Some more careful planning about

scheduling in the session and the way it was presented to the kids may have made it more

successful. The parents came to pick the students up shortly after. The volunteer

instructing was disappointed, as her following notes show.

Mentor Notes

Today's group was really nice. The kids were able to try new things, get some exercise outside, and showed that they really understand why they are in this program. It was great to have a day where students dictated which activities they did for a part of the session. I wish we had not told the students we were teaching them "dance". I would have told them that we were going to stomp, or make some beats. Already these kids have a negative perception of "Dance". It is clear that the kids love coming to TimeWise, they never want to leave.

Work Samples (Appendix E)

I believe that the Leisure Action Plan samples from the homework following today's

lesson show that the students were able to incorporate some of the goal setting and

resource gathering strategies that we talked about in class, as demonstrated by the fact

that each student was able to identify a new activity that they would like to pursue and

articulate the steps they would need to follow to reach their goal.

Day 5, April 9th- Putting it all together.

Tools: Observations, Student Survey, Parent Survey

Observations

For this week's session, I had to depart from the TimeWise curriculum because all

of the fifth graders had a field trip scheduled for the next week that conflicted with our

group. Despite still having the group next week for the older kids, I wanted to adjust to make this session the culminating day of the curriculum while all the students were together for the last time. Lesson 5 in the TimeWise curriculum is about having balance and variety in leisure time, but I believed that a short lesson reviewing topics we had talked about and spending the rest of the time with group activities would be best. As an additional way of giving closure to the program, we planned a celebration with the parents for the last half hour of the group.

I arrived at the clubhouse about twenty minutes before our scheduled time and began setting up for the session. One of the props I needed for the day's lesson activity was a beach ball covered with discussion prompts from the book. I was in the middle of preparing this when two of the fifth grade boys were dropped off about ten minutes early. I recruited them for finishing this task while I worked on another part of the lesson. The other students arrived within the next ten minutes, calmly entered, and found something to occupy themselves. While the two boys finish the beach ball, two students worked on the homework assignments that they had forgotten at home or not completed and the others played cards. The students needed practically no supervision or direction from me and I was very impressed with the realization that this group had finally reached the working stage and group expectations were met with such minimal energy from me. The mentors all ran late arriving and I was the only adult with the students for the first fifteen minutes of the group. At 3:45 one of the volunteers arrived and set out snack with the help of some of the kids. I set out group exit surveys and the kids all worked on those while they ate snack. The extremely positive and calm group dynamic of the first half hour was very notable for me, particularly in the absence of the high mentor to student

ratio. Prior to this week, I had felt that much of our cohesive group atmosphere had been achieved through the guidance of the adults, but this time showed that the students had internalized self-initiating and self-monitoring skills

The rest of the mentors arrived at 4:00 as the students were beginning to complete the surveys. The college student giving the day's featured hobby presentation on guitar and vocal performance brought her friend and his banjo to accompany her. He was a nice addition to the group, being another male role model and a very talented musician. The pair entertained the kids who finished their surveys early by introducing them to the banjo and guitar and playing a few songs together.

When the whole group was finished with the surveys, we gathered in the back yard in a circle for the lesson. I had everybody partner up in a mentor/student pair and we played a game designed to help generate discussion related to the themes of the program. The beach ball was covered with strips of paper containing prompts from the book. When each student caught the ball, they had to respond to the prompt closest to their right thumb. Prompts included:

> "Summer's here and you want to do more than just hang out all summer like last year. What are some other options?"
> "What benefits could you get from running in a race?"
> "You are going to the school dance tonight even though you hate to dance-why are you going?"

In response to the question about summer, the group generated lots of outdoor activity options, arts, travel, and camps among others. In response to the benefits of running a race, the kids recalled discussions from the first week and listed the physical, social, and psychological benefits of running a race and all the preparing that one would have to do for it. The third question prompted a rich discussion about why it might be a

good thing to be going to the dance and why it might not. Some said that going even though you thought you hated to dance was pushing yourself to do something that might help you make new friends. Others pointed out the different motivations for doing activities and that you might be doing something just because others wanted you to, which they believed was not a good reason. Both arguments demonstrated that the kids had absorbed concepts from the lessons and could apply them to the situations.

After the discussion, the musicians gave their short presentation about how they learned to play their instruments and the different groups they perform with. After their presentation, we had half an hour of choice time until the parents arrived. The students had the option of an introductory guitar lesson, making Sculpey figurines with a couple of the mentors, or playing with the recreation equipment outside. One of the fifth grade boys was very captivated by the guitar. The two girls and one of the boys crafted with the Sculpey, while the rest played Frisbee outside.

Shortly before 5:00, parents began arriving and I gave them the parent exit surveys to the best of my ability. Unlike the first survey, which parents were able to take home and return it to me later, this one was given on the spot. Because of this, I did not witness many of the reading and language barriers that the parents needed to overcome to complete surveys such as these. The first parent to arrive was the mother of my oldest student, who came with her three smallest children- all under the age of 5. She alluded to me that reading the survey was difficult and asked that I read the questions to her so she could respond verbally. I attempted to ask her the questions while she watched the children, but she was quite distracted and I got minimal feedback. Two other parents had language barriers that made completing the surveys difficult. The mother of the fifth

grade twin boys was of Swiss origin and, though she did complete the survey independently, her short answers were not representative of her typical tendency to communicate verbally in great detail. The mother of my other fifth grade male student spoke Japanese as her first language and asked that I read her the questions orally, which I did. I was able to get responses for all the questions from her, but I believe I would have gotten more information in a quieter environment with more time. All of the excitement of people arriving and the coming celebration made the setting unfortunately hectic and probably not conducive to the best data gathering. All of the other parents arrived and took the surveys during this time except for the father of the fifth grade girl, who did not arrive until the very end of the session.

At about 5:15, we gathered everyone together for our closing ceremony. The college volunteers had put together a folder for each of the students with photos of the group, instructions for many of the activities they learned, and recipes for snacks they made over the course of the program. I had made envelopes for each of the students with the gift certificates that they had earned over the course of the program. I asked each of the students to share their leisure action plan that they produced that week and then called them up to receive their folder and gift certificates. One of the fifth grade boys leaned over to me in the midst of the process and said, "This feels like graduation." I smiled and agreed that it was a type of graduation. I felt that reading the leisure action plans in front of peers, parents, and mentors before receiving applause and reward was a good way to solidify their pledge to try a new activity of interest and to reinforce the positive accomplishment of participating in the group.

After the students had all presented, the mentors passed out juice and cake that they had made and everyone ate and chatted for the last few minutes. The one father who had not arrived until the last few minutes talked with me for the remained of the time and thanked me sincerely for running the group. I did not ask him to fill out the parent survey, but he reported to me that the group had been a positive part of their weekly routine and had prompted him and his daughter to look into resuming gymnastics classes for her. He said that she had reported really enjoying the friends that she made in the group-both peer and mentor. He also expressed the hope that programs like this would continue in the area.

Before everyone left, we made arrangements for the mentors and the two middle school students who would attend the last session. The volunteers requested that we make a big pancake breakfast. When we brainstormed what activities to do, the middle school girl offered to bring in her origami supplies and teach us some basic projects. I offered to buy paper to bring in, but she insisted that she had plenty and would take care of it. I thought that was quite generous given the economic challenges she and her mother face. The volunteers helped me clean up after the students and parents finally left.

Student Surveys

1. What were the best parts of the TimeWise Program for you?

Student 1	*Playing football.*
Student 2	*Playing games and doing activities.*
Student 3	*I liked talking and playing with Mike and all of the volunteers and listening to Mike's group meetings.*
Student 4	*The activities and that I helped make puppy chow.*
Student 5	*When we played outside, played games, and did sports with friends.*
Student 6	*Played outside. Learned how to be a group.*
Student 7	*When we played 500* (a group football catch game).

2. What kinds of things did you learn over the past several weeks?

Student 1   *To go* (unfinished answer). ·
Student 2   *What to do in our free time.*
Student 3   *I learned how to play the best card game ever. (golf)*
Student 4   *How to manage my time.*
Student 5   *Not really anything, but I had a good time doing activities and games with the others*
Student 6   *Learned how to be a group. If you like something, stick to it and you will prevail.*
Student 7   *That I want to play guitar.*

3. Do you think that anything about you has changed since starting this program?

Student 1   *Maybe.*
Student 2   *I learned that instead of watching TV, I can go outside.*
Student 3   *Yes, I made new friends inside the program and at school.*
Student 4   *Yes, because I will probably choose different things in my spare time.*
Student 5   *No.*
Student 6   *I like doing more things like playing group basketball.*
Student 7   *I became better friends with* (another 5th grade boy in the group).

4. Would you do a club like this again? Why?

Student 1   *Yes.*
Student 2   *I will do this again because its fun.*
Student 3   *Yes, because it was fun.*
Student 4   *Maybe, because I might want to focus on sports and other stuff at the middle school.*
Student 5   *Yes, because I think it's fun and that maybe I can learn more.*
Student 6   *No, I liked this club but I don't like clubs in general.*
Student 7   *I did do a club like this before.*

5. Did this make you think about how you use your free time any differently? How?

Student 1   *No!*
Student 2   *I would go somewhere outside to play.*
Student 3   *Yes, because I ride my bike more than usual. By going to school and back on my bike it helps my mom to be saving gas money.*
Student 4   *A little bit more because now I have more ideas of what to do in my free time.*
Student 5   *Not really...*
Student 6   *Now I was to do more and work more on things.*
Student 7   *A little bit.*

6. What would you tell another kid about this program if they were thinking about   joining?

Student 1   *Yes.*
Student 2   *It's so fun. You get to do games. You will get a few homework-that's it.*
Student 3   *I would say that the program is very fun and play lots of fun games, and teaches you a lot about how to use your free time the right way.*
Student 4   *That they should join because it is pretty fun and worth it.*
Student 5   *That if your bored you can use your free time more wisely.*
Student 6   *Really fun experience and will help you do more in your free time.*
Student 7   *It was fun.*

1. How would you rate your child's experience with the program (to the best of your knowledge?)

Parent 1	Excited, but could have put it to better use. (Did not apply knowledge at home).
Parent 2	He has enjoyed it a lot and looked forward to the next meeting.
Parent 3	Interesting. A lot of different ways to play, and crafts.
Parent 4	My child seemed to enjoy her time with the "TimeWise" program. On a scale 1 to 10, I would rate it a 9.

2. Has the program inspired any conversations with your child relevant to leisure time?

Parent 1	Tried, but didn't help.
Parent 2	Yes, a lot. He has come up with some other things beside TV and video games.
Parent 3	Tie dye. The T-shirt. Explain how they did.
Parent 4	Not too much. We already had some leisure time activities. We are part of Big Brother/Big Sister program, the Clubhouse, and we work with MFS (therapy). Between all the programs and the new schedule at Junior High 6th grade, there isn't much time left for anything but homework, sleeping, and eating.

3. Have you observed any changes in your child (attitudes, activity patterns, etc.) since beginning the program?

Parent 1	Did not answer.
Parent 2	Seem to be more talkative and will do things that he may not like but give them a chance.
Parent 3	Did not answer.
Parent 4	Yes, but nothing pertaining to the "TimeWise" program. The attitude has changed some but I believe its teenage growth and puberty.

4. How likely would you be to encourage this kind of program to continue in the future?

Parent 1	Did not answer.
Parent 2	Highly. Think it would be great for a lot of other children.
Parent 3	Did not answer.
Parent 4	Yes

5. What other feedback can you give that would be valuable in the evaluation process?

Parent 1	Did not answer.
Parent 2	Think that the program need to be a little longer.
Parent 3	Did not answer.
Parent 4	If you can get kids before they enter middle school it might be more beneficial to the child?

Day 6 April 16th - Final Day

Tools: Observations, Mentor Feedback

Observations

The final day of the program was much more informal than the previous days, since only two of the students were able to attend. The oldest boy and the four fifth graders all had school field trips that day that were continuing until the late evening. The students still arrived at the normal 3:30 time and two mentors arrived at the same time. The middle school girl brought her origami materials and some sample projects she knew how to make from memory- a ball, a crane, and a bench. The five of us started learning how to make a paper crane until the other mentors arrived.

When the rest of the mentors arrived just before 4:00, I unpacked all the groceries I had made for an afternoon pancake breakfast and everyone took turns doing parts of the preparation while others continued doing the origami. By 4:30, we had made an impressive feast of blueberry, banana and chocolate chip pancakes with scrambled eggs and bacon. While we ate, I offered to teach the group a party mystery game that I learned in college. One of the students and a couple of the mentors were already familiar with it and the others were interested in learning. The game was a leader facilitated game called "werewolf" that requires at least seven people to play. The game is rather intricate, requiring role-playing and deception to be played well. Those of us who knew the game explained it to the others.

After we finished the meal and cleaned up, we went outside and gathered in a circle in the back yard. I facilitated and we played one round through. In the game, everyone is secretly assigned the role of werewolf or villager. During the game, players gradually figure out others' roles as they vote to eliminate players. In the end, one group eventually eliminates all of the players in the other group. Since it is a fairly complicated game, the one round was just enough to teach the new players the rules and give them a

sense of the strategy involved. It would have been fun to play one more round, but it was time to leave.

We had waited to give the last two students their gift certificates until the last day since they earned extra credits for more days attended. They both gave very sincere thanks to myself and the other volunteers before leaving. The mother of my middle school female student also thanked us all very kindly and talked with us for several minutes. Before they left, we made arrangements for her and her daughter to join us at my class presentation for the project a couple weeks later.

Saying goodbye to my volunteers at the end of the last day was a little sad for me. I gave them certificates of appreciation for the time that they devoted volunteering for the program, hoping that they would be able to use them as documentation in the future. It was a very small token of appreciation and I wished that I had been able to think of more to give. Several of them volunteered to come to my class presentation and speak about their experience. We cleaned up the clubhouse for the last time, said our goodbyes, and parted ways.

Mentor Feedback

Several days after the program's last day, I emailed all of the college volunteers to gain data by inquiring about their experience in the program. I asked them four prompting questions, to which three responded directly. Two wrote me paragraphs with general reflections and one gave me a paper describing her experience in the program for one of her undergraduate education classes.

Mentor 1:

What were the elements of this project that felt most important to you and the students?

I think most important was the students having time to spend with peers and young adults to simply do things they may or may not have had the opportunity to do otherwise. I think that it was most beneficial for them to interact with people and make connections instead of sitting at home by themselves or with their families.

What kinds of things do you think you and the kids learned during the course of the project?

I think that the kids learned about how to create opportunities for themselves to do things that they may have thought out of their reach. I feel that the students also had a chance to realize that having fun doesn't have to be anything more than a group of kids getting together to do something they enjoy. I hope that they made connections that will last and will continue to meet to play sports and talk.

Did working in the group change your thoughts and feelings about working with children in any way?

I realized that activities don't need to be super strict or organized. Kids don't need a lot of materials to have fun.

If this kind of group were to be run again in the future, what would you change about it? (any kinds of answers welcome)

I would change the length of the meetings. It seemed like we didn't have a lot of time to do activities, and the kids were reluctant to leave. I would also like to make the discussions about how students spend their time more engaging and active...similar to the ball exercise on the last day

Mentor 2:

What were the elements of this project that felt most important to you and the students?

Being able to become a mentor to the students, so they might have someone to relate to and just hang with.

What kinds of things do you think you and the kids learned during the course of the project?

I'm hoping the kids were able to learn new hobbies and interests. I learned a lot about the kids and how to deal with a range of students living in low-income families.

Did working in the group change your thoughts and feelings about working with children in any way?

Working with the group did not change my thoughts or feelings about working with kids. I've always enjoyed working with kids. This experience had a positive impact on me.

If this kind of group were to be run again in the future, what would you change about it? (any kinds of answers welcome)

I would extend the hours of the program. There was not enough time to make snacks, go over the lesson and review work, plus spend time with the kids doing different activities.
The lessons were very good, but it was hard to keep them all engaged, so possible finding other ways of engaging the kids and teaching the lessons would be better.

Mentor 3:

What were the elements of this project that felt most important to you and the students?

The elements of the project that felt most important was probably the relationships we established with the students. I think by doing this it allowed them to really engage in some of the activities we presented and may possibly leave more of an impact on them, thus creating more potential for them to continue doing some of the things we presented to them.

What kinds of things do you think you and the kids learned during the course of the project?

Over the course of the project I think the kids really focused in on their interests. By asking them questions like "what do you like?", we got them thinking about what they could do in their spare time. It got them thinking about what defines them and interests them, and what they want to do. I think a lot of the kids got a lot out of the experience even if it was simply more social interaction than they are used to. I know that certain kids took a strong interest in some of the activities we did such as the guitar lessons and the knitting.

Did working in the group change your thoughts and feelings about working with children in any way?

Yes, working with the group did change my thoughts and feelings about working with children. I hadn't had much experience before this project and was nervous going into it. I found that it was not as scary as I expected and I enjoyed it a lot.

If this kind of group were to be run again in the future, what would you change about it? (any kinds of answers welcome)

If this group were to run again it would be beneficial to have more supplies as well as more access to other areas in Keene. I know liability is always an issue, but maybe with more planning and prep more opportunities could come about. Also, maybe start the group later in the semester and/or run it longer. The kids love playing outside so it is better once the weather improves. Also, I felt that the group ended at the peak of our relationship progress. We were all getting comfortable with each other and really starting to get to know each other within the last two weeks or so, so it was unfortunate that it came to a close at that time.

Overall I think the project was a great success. The kids really enjoyed it and I think it really got some of them thinking about what they want and like to do. I also think new friendships arose within the group between volunteers and between the students. Everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves and it was a great experience for everyone. Great job Mike (: Glad I could be a part of it!

Mentor 4:

Throughout the six weeks working with the selected Keene Housing Authority children and the few Fuller Elementary School kids, lots of fun was shared. I enjoyed being a part of the TimeWise program because the kids enjoyed being there and I love working with kids. Almost everyone tried the activities we shared, which was fun. If I had the chance to do it again, I would. I learned lots about the way lower class children deal with boredom and what their lives are like at home: the obstacles they face and the ways they cope. Next time get more kids or less staff.

Mentor 5:

Volunteering for the six week TimeWise program was definitely a positive experience. Being able to share my hobbies to change the behaviors of less fortunate children is a wonderful feeling. It was also great to

see all the children trying each activity. In the future, I think more free time is going to help the children as they have rough lives to go home to. Also, less staff would be ideal, as the 1-1 ratio was too much. For many weeks, I felt it was unnecessary for me to be there. I'm glad that I was able to have an impact on the children that participated in the program and definitely could see that they enjoyed our time together.

Mentor 6:

This volunteer gave me a copy of the paper she wrote for her education class, "Social Contexts of Education", in which she described her experience with the group and her perceptions about how elements of the TimeWise program addressed social inequalities.

(Excerpt taken from the introduction, describing becoming involved with the program):

I was introduced to the TimeWise after-school program while we were discussing the history of education. Mike Stockwell is a graduate student who came to our class to give a talk about his work with young people and his research for his capstone project. The follow classes you, (professor for the course), spoke so highly of him and his mission to do something for the young people in our city the same way you were reiterating the issues of education throughout history in our class. The combination of your two passions moved me to volunteer to work for Mike along with the five other girls from the class. Once we volunteered, we were even more enthralled to help and get involved as we delved deeper in working with Mike to get ideas for each session. The biggest hurdle was getting people to sign up, but after talking to parents about what our mission was a both Fuller Elementary and Keene Housing Authority, we ended up having to make the hard decision of turning some people away. After meeting our group at our first session, I wished it was an everyday after-school program instead of just once a week. They are an amazing group of young people who were just as enthusiastic to learn and do as we were to teach them. Thinking of what we could do for them each week made me want to do more than what we had time for, planning for each week and thinking of their reaction was what drove me the most from beginning to end.

(This second excerpt gives her description of a particularly notable connection she made with the oldest boy near the beginning of the program. Her relationship with this student was, in my opinion, vital to his successful involvement with the group.)

(A) moment during the program that sticks out in my mind is when I had one on one time with one person who constantly wanted to break away from the group and wanted nothing to do with our program. I, unknowingly, chose a game to play with him that was his favorite and from then on we competed, very competitively, every session and got to learn a lot about each other. He had a lot of questions about college and life plans as we played Connect 4. It was amazing to see his eyes light up while we talked about how to apply for scholarships and when I told him that college is for everyone and what different types of schools there are. The time I spent with him is invaluable to me and I hope to one day find out that he graduated from high school and is going to attend college and continue his love of sports.

Interpretation of Day 1 Data:

This day was an opportunity to try to establish a baseline sense of the recreational patterns of the students and the feelings that they and their parents had about the way they used their recreational time prior to any influences from the program. Since a significant

part of my research prior to this phase of the project was on media usage, I was eager to note the reported number of hours each student was watching television and if electronic media usage was viewed as a concern by them or their family. In general, my group appeared to spend less time with electronic media than the roughly six and a half hour national average (Rideout 2005), though my questions only asked for total number of hours with television, not all electronic media. I identified one, possibly two students, with television consumption patterns that were over the national average and the other six reportedly watched less, at no more than two hours a day. According to one parent, however, hours of television her sons watched increased significantly in the winter to four and eight hours a day each, which could be seen as a concern.

The most notable piece of data for me from the initial surveys was a general sense of dissatisfaction from both students and parents about the students' leisure patterns. It appeared from the surveys that the students had a variety of other hobbies in their recreation repertoire including sports, clubs, arts, and other activities that should have represented a relatively satisfying set of recreation management skills. However, satisfaction-scale questions indicated the opposite. Three out of four of the parent surveys returned reported that parents felt concerned about their child's leisure patterns at least some of the time. This was also supported by the students, the majority of which reported that other people did not approve of how they spent their free time at least some of the time. Only one student reported hardly ever wishing there was something better to do for fun and the rest wished for something else more fun sometimes or most of the time. Of other relevance to establishing a baseline for the curriculum's impact was the fact that at least half of the students hardly ever planned what they did for fun in advance.

Regarding data collected about group dynamics, my observations and the mentors' feedback showed that a great deal of group norming and relationship building were necessary in order for the group to become a cohesive entity. Students were resistant to many of the activities and only some were actively engaged with the lesson. A lot of redirecting was necessary to maintain a reasonable amount of focus during the group activities. I attribute a lot of this to a yet unestablished set of expectations. One student even stated during the group game that this was the first after school group he had ever belonged to. Thanks to the ample availability of adult support, I think a lot of good rapport building and clear establishment of group expectations happened early in the program.

Interpretation of Exit Surveys:

The exit surveys that I gave the students and the parents were not designed to precisely measure the changes in students leisure time use after going through the program but rather to measure their impressions of the value of the group experience and whether or not they felt that their ability to influence the quality of their leisure time had changed. All of the students expressed an appreciation for the group experience, whether it was through the group games specifically or through the new friendships that were forged. Almost all of the students reported learning at least one new skill during the course of the program. Two reported learning skills about time management. Two reported learning new hobbies that they enjoyed. Only one student specifically reported learning how to be part of a group, but I believe that this was a valuable skill that was developed in all the students. All of the students except one reported positive changes in themselves as a result of the program including better friendship making skills and a

greater likelihood of seeking out new activities in the future. Every student who participated said that they would encourage another student to join a similar program in the future and most claimed that other students taking part in a similar program would learn positive leisure management skills if they participated.

The parent exit surveys were unfortunately flawed tools given the language and reading barriers and the chaotic setting in which they were given. The parents had mixed reports about how their child's leisure patterns may or may not have changed because of their experience with the group. One parent was enthusiastic about changes she observed in her child including becoming more talkative, more willing to try new activities, and more apt to find active outdoor activities to do instead of television and video games. Although all of the parents reported that their children were enthusiastic about coming to groups that that the program was a positive experience, the rest did not report significant changes in attitudes or observed behavior patterns in the survey. One repeated sentiment on the last question of the parent survey- that the program should have gone longer than the scheduled six weeks- echoed sentiments we had been hearing from the kids and feeling ourselves.

Interpretation of Mentor Feedback:

A strong repeated theme in the mentor feedback was the value of the relationships that were built during the course of the program. The mentors and I all observed notable positive changes in the group dynamics as relationships formed. The students became more adept at engaging meaningfully with each other and with the mentors as well as better at learning and playing together. From the mentor standpoint, the opportunity to engage in rewarding social activities with others was the primary benefit of the group.

The students' calm enthusiasm while arriving at the beginning of later sessions and reluctance to leave at the end were powerful indicators that we had built a positive community for them.

The secondary student benefit from the group that we noted was a change in attitude about the value of leisure time and its potential to be used for greater personal wellness. Mentors observed that students learned new leisure skills that they hoped the students would continue to pursue after the group. In general, the mentors thought that the program would positively influence the students, even if the effects could not be immediately observed.

An unplanned benefit of the heavy volunteer involvement was the programs capacity to have a positive effect on the college students who donated their time and energy to the program. Every mentor involved reported that participating in the program was a positive experience. Many reported feeling moved by the relationships that they developed with others during the course of the program. As college students interested in the field of education, this was an experience that they reported as helpful to them becoming more comfortable working with kids and valuable in helping them learn specific skills for working with different kinds of kids. Another value that some reported was a heightened appreciation for volunteerism and helping others in need.

Volunteers also gave some constructive negative feedback. Two believed that the volunteer to student ratio was too high, though others believed that the high ratio allowed for more personal interactions with students. Another suggestion was that future programs have more material resources and the ability to go to more alternative locations.

Also, like the students and parents, some mentors stated that the program should have gone longer since it ended right when the group was getting into the working stage.

All factors combined, the mentors communicated a sentiment that the program was a very valuable entity for the students, community, and us as volunteers. Their continued enthusiasm and dedication to coming and participating each week was a large part of what I believe made the group such a rich and successful experience for everyone. It would be hard to measure the value of the curriculum itself separate from the positive benefits of the human interactions since they were so interwoven. I believe I can safely say that the program would not have been nearly as rich without the addition of the college mentors.

Summary of Results:

Though initially intended to be a follow up to the TimeWise curriculum study done by Caldwell and Baldwin, the project did not end up becoming a study that could definitively show the impact of the curriculum on behavior. My data collection methods were not adequately constructed to evaluate small, specific behavioral changes and my samples were not constructed to gather data that measured change over a long period of time. The majority of my data was anecdotal and opinion-based, giving me a greater idea of participant's perceived rewards, rather than concrete statistics.

In the end, my project focused on adapting the program to the small group of people with which I was working and my data collection was geared to measure how well I managed to do so. As a result, my data did conclusively tell me was that the project served a community need that was not being completely met by other organizations. At

the beginning, the students identified significant feelings of dissatisfaction with much of the time they devoted to leisure and the after-school program provided a venue for meaningful activities and interactions that the students enjoyed and appreciated. In addition to their positive verbal and written feedback, the fact that all students attended every session except for the one conflicting with a school fieldtrip is a testament that they and their families considered the experience to be valuable.

It is hard to know all the ways that people involved with this group might be influenced that were not measured in the data. I felt fortunate to have one of the students and her mother come to my class presentation for the project and share their experience. The mother reiterated that the group had been a very positive and meaningful experience for her daughter, but she also described how the group had prompted them to spend more time together playing games and talking in the weeks following the program. She attributed this in part to trends started during the group, which was an unexpected and welcome outcome. It is my hope that other effects such as these have been occurring in other participants as well.

The positive effects of the program on the volunteers and myself are a final benefit of the program that should not be understated. We all enjoyed ourselves and felt that we were doing a good service to others. I have no doubt that the positive experiences that this program provided for us will do much to enhance our spirit of volunteerism in the future. For myself, personally, my work creating this program and navigating the many obstacles that arose has left me feeling much more ready and willing to initiate similar programs in the future.

Summary and Conclusion

Introduction

At the beginning of this project, I set out to discover if a leisure education curriculum paired with an adult mentor-facilitated activity component could be an effective approach to shaping the skills, values, and habits of young people in relation to managing free time. I explored this question by using a curriculum that had shown limited success in preliminary studies. This TimeWise curriculum appeared especially suited for my project due to researchers' stated belief that an experiential component could increase the curriculum's effectiveness. My cohort of seven students provided only a small sample with which to test this hypothesis, but the positive results of the data I collected suggested that the activity and mentorship components were extremely importance to the success of the program.

This research showed many positive indicators that this kind of approach to leisure education would be an effective method for presenting a curriculum to more students. The consistency of attendance, level of homework completion, enthusiasm of participants as they became acclimated to the group, and positive feedback from parents all indicated that this was an effective forum for positive change. Though the parameters of my data collection did not allow for information about effective change over the long term, my hope is that the values the children expressed about their leisure time use by the end of the group will at least influence their future choices in some regard. Whether or not the program influenced future behaviors, it is clear that the group provided a positive experience for both students and mentors that would be worth repeating in the future.

Discussion of Results

The overall goal of this project was to explore if the leisure management skills deficits that I have observed in my experiences with students are a nationally problematic issue and, if so, what resources exist or could be created to address the problem. Data from sources such as the Kaiser Family Foundation's report "Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds" indicated that the large scale of electronic media usage in the average American student demonstrates a general lack of self-regulation and initiative. If addressed, new habits could provide more opportunities for cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. Given this information, I set out to create be a repeatable intervention that would be a positive influence on the leisure habits and values of young people. To do this, I researched the strengths and shortcomings of prior interventions, located a population of students in need, inventoried resources available to me in my community, and created a program that gave the students access to those resources. The following is a discussion of the information I collected while trying to answer my research questions.

Research question one:

"What elements help make organized recreation engaging and beneficial for students?"

According to the information I acquired from the 2003 report "What Adolescents Learn in Organized Youth Activities: A Survey of Self-Reported Developmental Experiences" (Hanson et al.), there were six important criteria that an engaging and influential after school program should try to meet for maximum benefit to its participants. To review, those criteria were:

a. Identity development as a result of personal exploration, gaining self-knowledge, and developing a stronger sense of who they are.

b. Development of initiative as a result of long-term challenges and skill development in the quest for reaching goals.

c. Development of emotional, cognitive, and physical skills as adolescents grapple with feelings of anger and anxiety in activities that demand high cognitive or physical performance such as sports and music.

d. Development of teamwork and social skills in activities that require teens to work together, foster social competencies, and develop leadership skills.

e. Promoting interpersonal relationships and extending peer networks by providing a context for developing relationships with peers from diverse groups as well as reinforcing "prosocial" norms of behavior.

f. Development of connections to adults and acquiring social capital that comes with those connections. By connecting to adults in the wider community, adolescents can access assistance and information in areas such as jobs and colleges (Hanson, 2003).

My co-leaders and I attempted to address each of this criteria as we designed and implemented the activities of the course. To promote identity development, we encouraged the children to identify their strengths and interests at the beginning of the program and, during the course of the program, identify recreational goals that suited them. For development of initiative, students worked on a project to identify one major recreational goal and how they would achieve that goal using resources available to them. At the end of the course, each student shared their goals and action plan with the other students, mentors, and parents and received recognition for their positive initiative. Students had different experiences developing new emotional, cognitive and physical skills; but each student was challenged during the variety of new activities they were exposed to, whether it was participating in group sharing, cooking for the first time, sports outside, or learning to dance. Many students came a long way in six weeks developing teamwork and social skills. The difference between the ordered chaos of the first couple sessions and the smooth, cohesive group of the last sessions showed that all the students learned to function well as a group and interact in a positive manner. For developing peer networks, this group was particularly meaningful for the two fifth grade

brothers who had not belonged to an after school club prior to this program. All

participants built new friendships within the group on some level and one girl in

particular reported socializing more outside of group over the course of the six weeks as a

result of her experiences in the Timewise Program. The final criteria from the Hanson

survey- connection to adults- was perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the program.

The high mentor to student ratio guaranteed lots of personal interaction and many

meaningful connections where made over the course of the six weeks.

Research question two:

"What interventions have been created already to address leisure health? What can we
learn from these interventions for further work?"

For the purposes of this study, I focused on the strengths of two separate entities

that have been crafted to promote positive recreational habits in adolescents: the 4H

program and the TimeWise curriculum. I gravitated toward the 4H philosophy because of

its emphasis on learning through experience in an atmosphere that fosters caring

relationships (Cress, 2008). Their eight essential elements for program design lined up

well with the criteria from the Hanson survey and I did my best to include them in my

program.

The 8 Elements

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- A safe environment
- An inclusive environment
- Engagement in learning
- Opportunity for Mastery
- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future

- Opportunity for self-determination
- Opportunity to value and practice service for others (Kress, 2008).

In order to help give structure to the program, I located a curriculum that I felt best matched the needs I was trying to address. To the best of my knowledge, the TimeWise curriculum was the best published curriculum available for addressing the specific issue of leisure health and recreational mindfulness. The curriculum had shown some effectiveness in its prescribed form, was easily adaptable, and researchers hypothesized that adding elements like those in the 4H program might significantly enhance its positive effects.

Research question 3:

"Will students show a change in leisure patterns after taking part in a six session Timewise lesson series coupled with mentor-led recreation? After taking part, will they demonstrate a change in self-regulation, leisure planning, and self-awareness in leisure?"

The data that I collected from my observations, surveys, mentor notes, student work and verbal feedback illustrated a sizeable list of benefits that participants gained from their involvement with the program. Benefits observed or reported in one or more participants included the following:

-Awareness that leisure awareness is a topic of value.
-Learning the value of community activity.
-Demonstrated ability to analyze one's own leisure patterns.
-Increased awareness of community recreational resources.
-Introductions to multiple new hobbies.
-Demonstrated ability to set leisure goals for the future.
-Development of group social skills.
-Relationships with recreationally active adults.
-Increased appreciation for outdoor activity.
-Increase in recreational activity with a parent.

Though the scope and magnitude of these effects was not carefully measured in this study, it was clear that the program had a wide variety of positive benefits to offer. The devotion of the students and parents to participation in the program was a testament to their investment in the group and their belief that it was a beneficial experience. This project served to demonstrate that the format for the program worked and resulted in an overall positive experience. It is my hope that further studies may be able to determine exactly what the short and long term effects on behavior are and how similar programs might hone their technique to achieve more enhanced results.

Considerations for Strengthening the Study

There were a couple very obvious limitations to my study that could be improved in future studies. The first was the small size of my group. Seven students was a very limited sample and not enough to gain enough data to make definitive conclusions about the influence of the curriculum. A larger sample would allow for data that would factor out more of the individual characteristics of students. The second was the short duration of the study. Follow up data collection six months and a year after the program might shed more light on the program's long term influence on behavior.

I was able to collect data from a variety of perspectives. My weekly log provided an account of the events from my perspective. These were useful for cataloging events, but were inevitably influenced by my own biases including my desire for the program to have a positive impact, my expectations about how a session would run, my emotions about whether or not the session met my expectations, and my limited

ability to observe all events in a session. This bias was offset by the presence of data from other perspectives including mentor logs, parent feedback, student surveys, student work, and anecdotes.

The research tools themselves had various significant limitations. The first was uniformity of purpose. My first parent and child surveys were geared to gather data about recreational behavior and satisfaction in leisure time. These provided some insight into the behavior patterns of the students prior to the program. The final surveys, however, focused on the students' and parents' satisfaction with the program experience rather than following up on the initial surveys, so a measurement of behavior change could not be accurately measured. The final surveys provided some valuable data about experiential satisfaction, but I missed the opportunity to quantify any changes that may have taken place in the students. If I were to repeat the experiment, 1 would try to use two pre and post surveys with more similar content. A second set of limitations was the difficulty of obtaining good parent feedback due to multiple factors. Not all surveys were returned, which limited my sample. Language and reading barriers sometimes limited parents' ability to comprehend the questions and articulate their answers. Verbally-given surveys were collected amidst a busy environment that allowed for significant distraction. In a future study, allowing time for individual interviews in a quiet location would provide much richer data.

Mentor logs were a valuable source of information, but also were limited in value by multiple factors. First was the consistency of weekly data, which dwindled in quantity as the weeks progressed. This was a significant amount of extra work to ask from the volunteers, but finding a way to obtain this data in future studies might allow

for a more vibrant catalog of the events in each session that would offset the bias's of the coordinator's weekly log. The prompts for the mentor log could also be more specifically targeted to gather data for specific trends over the course of the six weeks. The mentor feedback I gathered asked for general observations and impressions and did not target specific research questions.

As a first experience coordinating this kind of activity, my ability to gather concrete data was limited by my preoccupation with the weekly details of making it happen. Figuring out the logistics of acquiring a location, volunteers, financial resources, and participants was a large element of this first program. The question I asked myself frequently, "Can I make this work and will it be a good experience for everyone?" was thankfully answered with a definitive yes. With this framework in mind, I would attempt to do another study that included a larger sample, gathered data more consistently, and specifically targeted a small quantity of behaviors and attitudes that could be quantifiably measured to show the influence of the experience.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a study designed to follow up on the research done by Caldwell and Baldwin on the TimeWise curriculum, I wanted to capitalize on their recommendations for improving the program. Their recommendations were to expand the length of the curriculum to longer than six weeks and to combine the curriculum with an after school program that could combine the lesson-based instruction with a recreational component (Caldwell, 2004). I was not able to follow through on their first suggestion of expanding the length of the program due to my own limitations, but I

was able to achieve the second and provide the experiential element. The experiential element provided multiple new factors such as group dynamics, mentor/student relationships, and establishment of group norms. Unanimous input from everyone involved with the program suggested that this program should have been longer in duration and I agree. This group ended just as the participants entered a working stage when they understood group expectations and solid relationships had been formed. In future research studies, I would suggest that at least four weekly sessions take place before the TimeWise curriculum is implemented to allow for group norming. This would allow more time for initial data collection, and a more focused environment in which to deliver the group lessons. Added sessions after the delivery of the curriculum would allow researchers to observe the students at play and allow for more time to collect data from parents about how the curriculum influenced behaviors at home.

My second recommendation for future study would be to increase the size of the sample by increasing the number of groups, while not significantly increasing the size of each group. This could be a point for research in the future, but it is my belief that groups of no more than ten students provide the best group dynamics for this kind of program. The intimacy of small group work promotes maximum child engagement in activities and relationship building with other group participants. Increasing the number of groups would help to sort out many of the factors that bias the outcome of a group, such as the differences of the volunteers, the program facilities, and the various differences of the participants including socioeconomic status, race, gender, residential area, and family background.

Finally, follow up data collected six months and a year after the program's end that specifically targets behavioral statistics gathered at the beginning of a program would shed greater light on the actual influence of the experience. This was an important element of the first research study conducted by Caldwell and Baldwin and not a part of the data that I was able to collect for this study (Caldwell, 2004). Follow-up questions that target specific behaviors would be able to confirm or disprove whether or not the added component of mentor-led recreational experience enhanced the effectiveness of the curriculum as a means of changing leisure habits.

Final Summary and Conclusions

This project had strengths and weaknesses but I believe that, despite its weaknesses, it was a valuable experience for all involved. This project provided many learning opportunities for me including lessons on how to access community resources, how to organize a large group of people, and how I can improve my research methods in the future. Most importantly this experience provided me with a strengthened confidence in my ability to bring a vision to fruition in spite of multiple challenges. What I was not able to accomplish with definitive data collection was eclipsed by the many skills I gained as a community organizer and by the positive experiences I observed in the program's participants.

This project was initially implemented to test the effectiveness of a teaching tool. This required an ample set of carefully constructed data and this part of the project ultimately fell short of its goal of providing definitive information. There was much anecdotal evidence, however, to suggest that the experiences provided in this program have influenced and will continue to influence the ideas and values that the student

participants have about leisure time. Their work during the program demonstrated that they learned recreational planning skills and our group conversations showed that they gained an increased awareness of the importance of purposeful leisure activity in healthy development.

The outcome of this program of which I am most proud is the way in which this program helped to bring separate parts of the Keene community together in such a positive way. The successful completion of this program required the participation and cooperation of Keene State College undergraduates, the Keene Housing Authority, the Keene public school system, Keene businesses, and the students and parents who enrolled. The process of creating the group identified an acute community need for this kind of programming that exceeded the scope of what I was able to provide in this session. However, the positive experiences of this program did confirm the value of the group, regardless of specific behavioral changes that may or may not result from students' participation. The Keene Housing Authority is very interested in continuing this kind of group in the future and was given the template of the program to help implement groups in the future. Likewise, I have learned the immense value of initiating this kind of community-integrating volunteer work and will look for future opportunities to do similar work in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Leisure Time Benefits

Leisure Time Benefits

Some benefits of healthy leisure activities:

Physical: Good for your body, healthy.

Social: Time spent with friends, family or meeting new people.

Mental: Challenging intellectually, learning something for fun.

Future: Working toward goals—school and career.

Psychological: Feeling good about yourself; coping with life's challenges and stressors.

Spiritual: Being in touch with your beliefs or other things that give life meaning and provide hope or a sense of purpose.

Natural: Appreciating nature, animals and the environment.

Creative: Building, drawing, writing or creating something.

Community: Helping people, animals, the community or the environment.

Appendix B

Leisure Journal

Directions: Complete one journal page each day for 4 days. Record everything you do all day long beginning Friday morning and ending Monday night. You don't have to write on every line. If an activity takes longer than 15 minutes, block off how much time it took. (See the Sample below.)

In the "Why" column write the letter that best matches why you did each activity.

H *(Had to)*—Someone expected you to do the activity.

W *(Wanted to)*—You did the activity because you wanted to.

N *(Nothing else to do)*—You were only doing this activity because you had nothing else to do.

P *(For a purpose)*—You wanted to do the activity to benefit your future or help meet a goal.

O *(What others think)*—You wanted to do the activity for what others would think of you.

In the "I felt" column, write the letter that best matches how you were feeling while you did the activity.

B *(Bored)*—You were bored with the activity.

I *(Interested)*—You were interested in what you were doing.

O *(Other)*—You experienced a different feeling than bored or interested.

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TimeWise Journal Page

Why?
(H) Had to (W) Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do (P) For a purpose
(O) What others think

How did you feel?
(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Morning

Time	Activity	Why	I felt
7:00			
7:15			
7:30	showered/dressed	HO	O
7:45	ate breakfast	W	O
8:00	walked to school	H	O
8:15	"		
8:30	school	HP	I
8:45	"		
9:00	"		
9:15	"		
9:30	"		
9:45	"		
10:00	"		
10:15	"		
10:30	"		
10:45	"		
11:00	"		
11:15	"		
11:30	"		
11:45	"		
12:00	ate lunch with friends	WO	I

Afternoon

Time	Activity	Why	I felt
12:15	"		
12:30	school	HP	I
12:45	"		
1:00	"		
1:15	"		
1:30	"		
1:45	"		
2:00	"		
2:15	"		
2:30	"		
2:45	"		
3:00	walked home	H	O
3:15	"		
3:30	practiced guitar	WP	I
3:45	"		
4:00	"		
4:15	"		
4:30	walked the dog	HW	I
4:45	"		
5:00	"		

Evening

Time	Activity	Why	I felt
5:15	read magazine	W	I
5:30	"		
5:45	"		
6:00	ate dinner	W	O
6:15	"		
6:30	washed dishes	H	B
6:45	other chores	H	O
7:00	talked on phone	W	I
7:15	"		
7:30	homework	HP	BI
7:45	"		
8:00	"		
8:15	"		
8:30	"		
8:45	"		
9:00	watched TV	N	B
9:15	"		
9:30	"		
9:45	"		
10:00	"		

Day of Week Monday

Sample Page

TimeWise Student Book 7

TimeWise Journal Page

Why?
(H) Had to (W) Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do (P) For a purpose
(O) What others think

How did you feel?
(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Morning

Time		Why?	I felt...
7:00			
7:15			
7:30			
7:45			
8:00			
8:15	School		
8:30		HP	I
8:45			
9:00			
9:15			
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			
10:15			
10:30			
10:45			
11:00			
11:15			
11:30		NHD	W
11:45			O
12:00			

Afternoon

Time		Why?	I felt...
12:15			
12:30			
12:45	END of NHD)	W	O
1:00			
1:15			
1:30			
1:45			
2:00			
2:15			
2:30			
2:45			
3:00	End of School HP		I
3:15			
3:30	Made B-day card	W	I
3:45	Went to do crafts (w/mom)		O
4:00		TV w F	W I
4:15			W I
4:30			W I
4:45			
5:00			

Evening

Time		Why?	I felt...
5:15	Watched TV		W I
5:30			
5:45			
6:00			
6:15	Had dinner		H O
6:30	Watched TV		W I
6:45			
7:00			
7:15			
7:30	Played cards		W I
7:45	TV w/ family		W I
8:00	TV w f		W I
8:15	TV w f		W I
8:30	TV w F		W I
8:45	TV w F		W I
9:00	TV w F		W I
9:15	Went to bed		H O
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			

Day of Week ___Friday___

TimeWise Journal Page

Why?

(H) Had to **(W)** Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do **(P)** For a purpose
(O) What others think

How did you feel?

(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Morning

Time		Why?	I felt...
7:00	Woke up	W	O
7:15	Watched TV	W	I
7:30	—		
7:45			
8:00	Had Breakfest	W	I
8:15			
8:30	Wont on computer	W	I
8:45	—		
9:00	—		
9:15	—		
9:30	Went shopping	W	O
9:45	—		
10:00	—		
10:15	—		
10:30	—		
10:45	—		
11:00	—		
11:15	—		
11:30	Studied for	PN	IO
11:45	Test	PW	IO
12:00	—	PW	IO

Afternoon

Time		Why?	I felt...
12:15	—		
12:30	—		
12:45	/		
1:00			
1:15	had lunch		
1:30		PW	IO
1:45		PN	IO
2:00		PW	IO
2:15			
2:30			
2:45	Went to mom's	HW	O
3:00	house		
3:15			
3:30			
3:45			
4:00			
4:15			
4:30			
4:45			
5:00			

Evening

Time		Why?	I felt...
5:15			
5:30			
5:45			
6:00			
6:15			
6:30			
6:45	Ate dinner		
7:00		W	IO
7:15			
7:30	took a shower	OW	B
7:45			
8:00	Watched shows		
8:15			
8:30	—		
8:45	—		
9:00	Went to bed	W	O
9:15	—		
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			

Day of Week Saturday

TimeWise Journal Page

Morning

Time		Why?	I felt...
7:00	Woke up	W	O
7:15	Watched TV		
7:30	—		
7:45			
8:00	—		
8:15			
8:30			
8:45			
9:00	Ate breakfast	W	I
9:15			
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			
10:15			
10:30			
10:45	Went to Church	P	I
11:00			
11:15			
11:30			
11:45			
12:00			

Afternoon

Time		Why?	I felt...
12:15			
12:30			
12:45			
1:00			
1:15			
1:30			
1:45			
2:00			
2:15			
2:30			
2:45			
3:00	Went to Step sisters house	W	O
3:15			
3:30			
3:45			
4:00			
4:15			
4:30			
4:45			
5:00			

Why?

(H) Had to (W) Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do (P) For a purpose
(O) What others think
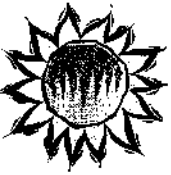
How did you feel?

(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Evening

Time		Why?	I felt...
5:15	got back home	H	O
5:30			
5:45			
6:00			
6:15			
6:30	ATE DINNER	W	I
6:45			
7:00			
7:15			
7:30			
7:45			
8:00	Watched TV	W	O
8:15			
8:30			
8:45			
9:00	Went to bed	H	O
9:15			
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			

Day of Week Sunday

TimeWise Journal Page

Why?

(H) Had to **(W)** Wanted to
(N) Nothing else to do **(P)** For a purpose
(O) What others think

How did you feel?

(B) Bored
(I) Interested
(O) Other

Morning

Time		Why?	I felt...
7:00	had breakfast	W	O
7:15			
7:30			
7:45			
8:00			
8:15	Went to school	PH	I
8:30			
8:45			
9:00			
9:15			
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			
10:15			
10:30			
10:45			
11:00			
11:15			
11:30			
11:45			
12:00			

Afternoon

Time		Why?	I felt...
12:15			
12:30			
12:45			
1:00			
1:15			
1:30			
1:45			
2:00			
2:15			
2:30			
2:45			
3:00			
3:15			
3:30			
3:45	got home	H	O
4:00			
4:15	did homework	H	I
4:30			
4:45			
5:00			

Evening

Time		Why?	I felt...
5:15	played w/ cats	W	I
5:30			
5:45			
6:00			
6:15			
6:30			
6:45			
7:00			
7:15			
7:30	ATE DINNER	W	O
7:45			
8:00	Went to bed	W	O
8:15			
8:30			
8:45			
9:00			
9:15			
9:30			
9:45			
10:00			

Day of Week Monday

TimeWise Journal Analysis

How many times did I do things because I **had to?** _9_

How did I **feel** about those activities?

Mostly Interested &
Other

How many times did I do things because I **wanted to** do them? _25_

How did I **feel** about those activities?

Interested & Other

How many times did I do things because I had **nothing else to do?** _0_

How did I **feel** about those activities?

_____

How many times did I do things **for a purpose** (to achieve a goal)? _3_

How did I **feel** about those activities?

Interested

How many times did I do things because of **what others might think?** _0_

How did I **feel** about those activities?

Bored

My Motivation Pattern

Create a pie chart inside the stop watch that shows how much time you spend doing things for each reason (had to, wanted to, had nothing else to do, for a purpose or because of what others might think).

The biggest piece of the pie should go to the reason that has the highest number, the next biggest piece of the pie goes to the next highest number, and so on.
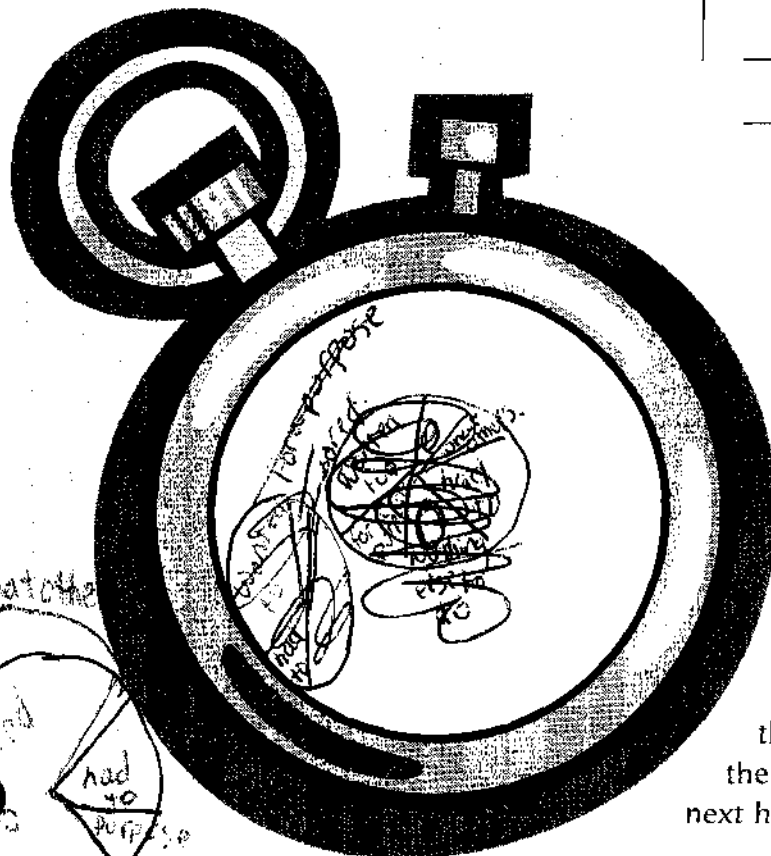
Appendix C

Adult Interview

Interview with an Adult

Directions: Conduct an interview with an important adult in your life. Ask about how this person spent his or her free time as a teen. Be sure to explain the types of benefits and motivations to the person you interview.

Name of person you are interviewing: _Mom_

1. When you were my age, what were your favorite leisure activities?

bike riding, walking, playing with pets, swimming

2. What benefits did you get from these activities? (Circle the benefits mentioned.)

(Physical)   (Social)   (Mental)   Future   Psychological

Spiritual   (Natural)   Creative   Community

3. People have different reasons for participating in their leisure activities. For each type of motivation, name an activity that you did because of that motivation.

Have to: _doing dishes_   **Want to:** _walking, bike riding_
Nothing Else to Do: _TV_   **For a Purpose:** _School_
What Others Think: _take a shower_

4. When you were my age, was there a leisure activity you participated in that contributed to who you are today? What was it and how did it make a difference?

" Play with pets because, taught me about being still and deeply listening."

5. Do you have any advice or tips for making the things you have to do more fun or interesting?

" Music going during dishes, and having pets sit beside me."
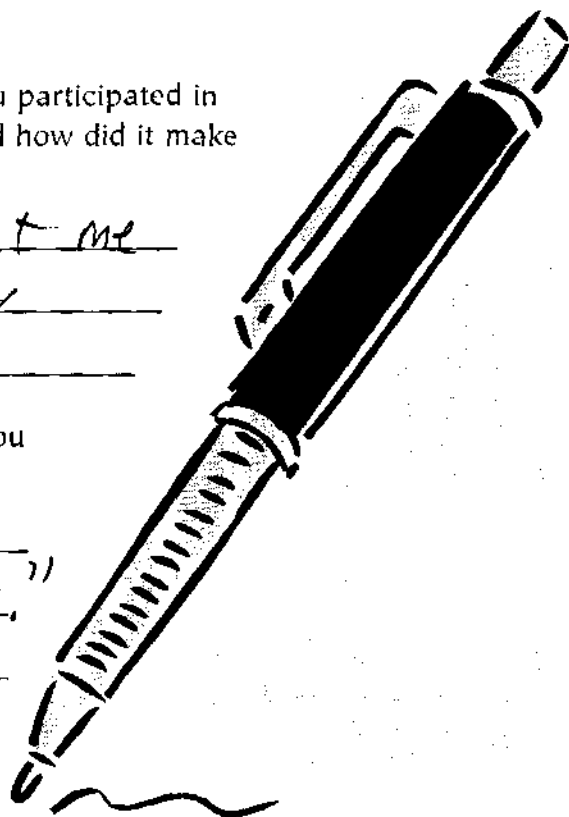
Interview with an Adult

Directions: Conduct an interview with an important adult in your life. Ask about how this person spent his or her free time as a teen. Be sure to explain the types of benefits and motivations to the person you interview.

Name of person you are interviewing: _Big Brother_

1. When you were my age, what were your favorite leisure activities?

Outside all the time! School dances, Cross-country running + Skiing for the school teams

2. What benefits did you get from these activities? (Circle the benefits mentioned.)

(Physical) (Social) (Mental) (Future) (Psychological)

Spiritual   Natural   Creative   Community

3. People have different reasons for participating in their leisure activities. For each type of motivation, name an activity that you did because of that motivation.

Have to: _Homework_   **Want to:** _Video games_

Nothing Else to Do: _Internet_   **For a Purpose:** _Running_

What Others Think: _Misbehaved_

4. When you were my age, was there a leisure activity you participated in that contributed to who you are today? What was it and how did it make a difference?

I started cross-country skiing in 6th grade and ended up skiing division 1 college and received a scholarship for most of my tuition for skiing.

5. Do you have any advice or tips for making the things you have to do more fun or interesting?

Pick something you want to do and tell yourself that after you are done what you have to do you can do the fun things
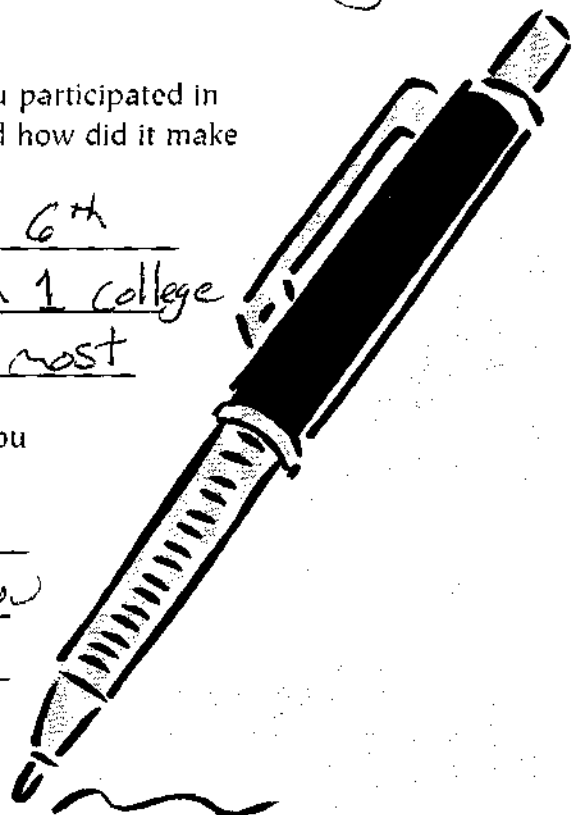
Appendix D

Avoiding Boredom and Becoming Interested Handout

Avoiding Boredom

To avoid **boredom:**

* Don't do the same things over and over.

* Don't just do things out of habit or routine.

* Change the activity, its location, or the people you do it with.

* Do something to help someone else.

* Think about the benefits you'll get. Change your attitude.

* Explore ways to make it more challenging.

Zz

Becoming Interested

To become interested in things:

* Try something new.

* Plan for positive experiences.

* Keep working to improve at things you're already good at.

* Learn a new skill.

* Practice to get better.

* Remind yourself of the benefits of your activities.

* Increase your knowledge:
  • Find someone who can teach you more.
  • Read about your activity in a magazine or on the Internet.

* Join a group of people with similar interests.

* Stick with it.

Appendix E

Leisure Action Plan

My Leisure Action Plan

Directions: Decide which leisure activity you'd like to pursue, set a goal for how often you'd like to participate (for example, once a week), and for how long (for example, 1 year). Develop your action plan by answering the questions.

Step 1: The leisure activity that interests me is
gymnastics

Step 2: What roadblocks exist?
① not enough money, ② can't get a ride, ③ can't do gymnastics

What are the solutions?
① I could have a yardsale or get an allowance
② I could bike, I could have a friend drive me.
③ I could start on a low level where you get special training.

Step 3: Will my parents let me?   (Yes)   **No**

Step 4: When can I do the activity? (Dates and times)
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30

Step 5: Where can I do the activity?
At the YMCH

Continued

My Leisure Action Plan

Continued

Step 6: How will I get there?

My mom or dad will drive me.

Step 7: How much does it cost?

$500.00

Step 8: With whom will I do this activity?

MICHELE BEAN

Step 9: What do I have to learn in order to do this activity?
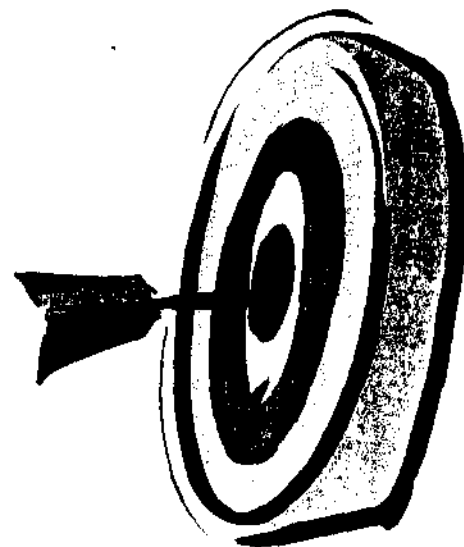
How to be safe and control
my body.

Step 10: What materials or supplies do I need?

A leotard (gymastics suit), wraps (a t...

Step 11: The first time I will do this activity will be:

Date: June

Time: ?

My Leisure Action Plan

Directions: Decide which leisure activity you'd like to pursue, set a goal for how often you'd like to participate (for example, once a week), and for how long (for example, 1 year). Develop your action plan by answering the questions.

Step 1: The leisure activity that interests me is

Tennis

Step 2: What roadblocks exist?

I don't have much time to do it or the weather prevents me from doing tennis.

What are the solutions?

On Saturdays I could go there with mother/Dad if they don't have plans.

Step 3: Will my parents let me? (Yes) No

anywhere

Step 4: When can I do the activity? (Dates and times)

In the summer from 1:00 to 4:30.

Step 5: Where can I do the activity?

Continued

TimeWise: Taking Charge of Leisure Time

Step 6: How will I get there?

I could _ _ _ w/ _ _ _
them.

Step 7: How much does it cost?

Step 8: With whom will I do this activity?

Step 9: What do I have to learn in order to do this activity?

Step 10: What materials or supplies do I need?

Step 11: The first time I will do this activity will be:

Date: May 1-30

Time: