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Value and Contribution of the Participation in Intercollegiate Athletics on the Personal Development of Community College-Aged Students

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INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ON THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF

COMMUNITY COLLEGE-AGED STUDENTS

by

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VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPATION IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ON THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE-AGED STUDENTS

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The purpose of this study is to better understand the value of the extracurricular experience for college students. Gaining insight into the variety of opportunities for student personal development as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics and extracurricular activities during college is explored by this study. Quality student engagement activities and understanding the reasons for engagement contributing to personal development continues to be valuable information in development of student on campus programming at colleges and universities. This qualitative study takes a phenomenological approach to describe the experiences of students involved in intercollegiate athletics competition at a small rural serving community college in the Midwest. Through a series of semi-structured interviews of at least (n = 14), students tell their stories of personal development and the contributions that intercollegiate athletics made to their out-of-class experiences. Findings of this study indicate that the participants valued their experiences in participating in intercollegiate athletics, reporting the development of personal pride and a greater sense of self-identity. For the

participants in this study, intercollegiate athletics provided an opportunity for increased

student engagement and thus contributed to the overall campus environment.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) commented that the community college impact

on a student's experience is underrepresented in the body of research available today. A

growing number of students are choosing to attend community colleges to begin their

post-secondary educations. Students attending public two-year community colleges have

increased in numbers from 4.9 million in 1990 to 7.1 million in 2011 (College Board,

2013). Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) call for further study on the community college

experience and how it affects student development is emphasized with the realization that

represented in the tremendous enrollment growth is a 5% increase in the number of

full-time students and a 60% increase in the number of part-time students attending

community colleges (College Board, 2013). The call for additional research on the

experience of community college students is not new. Astin (1999) pointed to the need

for the study of community college students, arguing that the two year college experience

tends to invite minimal involvement by students.

This research study is intended to expand the knowledge base on the impact of the

extracurricular college experience, specifically athletic participation, for community

college students. Kuh (1995) described the importance of the out-of-class experience on

personal growth and maturity to be one that "for about 40% of students, is the 'do-it-

yourself' side of college or 'what takes place outside of the classroom' as the most

significant educational experience during their college years" (p. 124). The popularity of

participation in athletics (Castaneda, 2004) reports that 6.3% of the enrolled full-time

2003 community college population of the colleges fielding teams participated in

athletics. The numbers of students participating in athletics has continued to grow to 53,375 males and females participating in 2013, an 18.4% increase from the 43,510 student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics in 2003 in all three divisions of the National Junior College Athletic Association (U.S. Department of Education Office, 2013). This rise in the numbers of participants suggests that further study of this student population is needed to understand the contribution that participation in intercollegiate athletics provides to a student's collegiate experience.

Although there are a variety of extracurricular experiences offered at rural community colleges, the athletic extracurricular experience is an important one that helps build community, college spirit, and provides publicity opportunities for the campus (Castaneda 2004). Castaneda (2004) reported that in 2001 59% of a reported 860 community colleges fielded intercollegiate athletic teams. Of those community colleges fielding athletic teams, 61% were identified as rural serving institutions as categorized by the Katsinas (2003) classification scheme typology. Astin (1999) cited the need for continued study of the community college student as the two-year college experience tends to invite minimal involvement by students. Today, a large number of commuter campuses are seeing a growing number of part-time students and faculty. This growing part-time environment on campuses, as Astin (1984, 1999) reminds, may be a challenge to a student's ability to find their fit with the institution and inhibit development of their self-identity, which may negatively affect the student's personal development and growth in differing ways from that experienced by students attending a four-year college.

For the purpose of this study the term extracurricular activity will also be referred to as an out-of-class experience. For the purpose of this study the term extracurricular

and out-of-class experience will be used interchangeably. In addition, Harper's (2011) definition of the extracurricular out-of-class experience will be defined as those experiences and learning that students participate in occurring outside of the classroom (Harper, 2011). Throughout the document, life skills and/or soft skills will be commonly used interchangeably.

Castaneda (2004) identified a growing number of full-time community college students participating in athletics a trend that continues today. The intent of this study is to gain a better understanding of the contribution of participation in athletics to the overall experience of this sub-population of community college students. Although there are a variety of extracurricular experiences offered at rural community colleges, the athletic extracurricular experience seems to be an important one that helps to build community, college spirit, and provides publicity opportunities (Castaneda, 2004).

College student affairs professionals are heavily invested in student programming that through out-of-class experiences assist students with development of life skills. Astin (1984, 1999) believed that regardless of the curriculum provided to students that to achieve the intended learning and development a student has to participate in the learning and his/her learning is affected by effort and involvement. Tieu et al. (2010) found that learning is enriched by both inside and outside activities and contributes to life-long impacts for a student. Berger and Milem's (1999) work supported the role that student involvement and faculty interactions have in creating positive collegiate experiences for students helping them persist in college and complete their degrees. The emphasis on the role of faculty interactions outside of the classroom cannot be underscored. A campus environment that is supportive and a fit for students allows for engagement and learning.

In my role as a student affairs professional for the past 25 years, the value and observed positive outcomes of the out-of-class experience have been an important programming initiative that formed the foundation of my practice. Varieties of observed out-of-class experiences for students by the researcher have helped to develop leadership abilities, gains in personal confidence, increased social networking skills, enhanced personal communication capabilities, and positive personal self-esteem for students persisting in getting their college educations. We know that students experience change during college. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) proposed their Causal Model of assessing the effect of a student's environment on learning and cognitive development as a means to explain this effect. In their model student growth is seen as a direct effect from the variables of the student's background, pre-college characteristics, college environment, socialization, and student effort (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In comparing the I-E-O (Inputs-Experiences-Outputs) model (Astin, 1970a, 1970b) and the Causal Model of student development (Pascarella, 1985) as a means to explain student changes in maturation and personal growth during college, there are associations that can be made between the two models. However, while there are differences in the models, the central theme of both models focuses on the effort and energy students put into the experience to grow and mature.

Changes occurring in students have been explored in previous studies; however, there still remains an opportunity to learn more about students' needs, personal changes in student behaviors, engagement strategies that work, individual personal development outcomes as a result of the student experience, and how students mature as a result of their experience. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) affirmed that there continues to be a

need to study the "net effect" of the college experience as previous studies have not

addressed the magnitude of the effects of each outcome on the student experience

(p. 579). This research aimed to describe the student's experience in the extracurricular

experience of intercollegiate athletics. The resulting personal development changes that

occur will help the researcher better understand the phenomenon of the lived student

experience.

Purpose Statement

This study of the influences on personal development and development of soft

and life skills that occur as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics as an

out-of-classroom experience for college students will take place at a small Midwestern

Community College. By understanding the various individual athletic experiences

through the eyes of first-time full-time community college students, more insightful

knowledge of the contribution of that athletic experience to their personal development as

a result of the experience will be learned and better understood. This study will

concentrate on those students who have attended at least one year of college, lived in on-

campus residence facilities, and participated in at least one or more extracurricular

activities.

Conceptual Framework

Alexander Astin devoted much of his professional life to understanding student

involvement theory, what contributes to the quality of that experience, and what the

student gains as a result of the process. Astin (1984, 1999) described his theory of

student development in simple terms where "student involvement refers to the amount of

physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience"

(p. 518). The amount of energy a student spends in various out-of-class experiences, such as: living on campus, participating in student clubs or organizations, volunteering on campus, participating in intramural sporting events, or competing in intercollegiate athletics are all important to the development of the student's individual identity and learned life skills. Astin (1984, 1999) explained that "uninvolved students, those who are not involved tend to be less successful in academic studies, limit their contact with faculty, and, spend little if no extra time on campus, limiting their total educational experience" (p. 518).

In either a four-year university experience or a two-year college experience, the typical residential or commuter students are exposed to many opportunities for student engagement. However, the student who resides on campus in college-supported housing tends to be more involved in their personal college experience than students who commute and live off campus. Commonly, the more students are exposed to situations and opportunities to be involved on campus the more likely they are to engage and enjoy their experience.

The quality of the student's extracurricular experience as Strange and Banning (2001c) reported provides for three critical conditions that must be present: "student involvement, high expectations, and assessment by students of their experience" (p. 138). Strange and Banning (2001c) also mentioned that belonging to a community and acceptance by that community was equally important to the student's development. The out-of-class experience as Kuh (1995) mentioned has the potential to contribute to the values of the college itself through the sustained effort needed to complete tasks and understand what makes a community work (p. 145). He further surmised that life outside

the classroom might be viewed as an incubator, one where knowledge is obtained in the classroom, lab, studio, and other arenas, including the athletic fields which are then tested, tried, and reworked to be utilized by students in meaningful ways (p. 145).

It is important for colleges to find ways to engage their students as this involvement and engagement can have significant impact on increased retention and persistence. If students are comfortable and feel that their campus has a place for them they feel accepted as though they belong. The other classroom or the out-of-the-class experience is what students do in their spare time between classes. This experience creates memories and friendships that may last a life time, and has potential for enormous impact on students during their college years.

The Student Affairs Division provides and designs the out-of-the-classroom experience for students in a variety of ways and always aims to plan the program as a high quality experience for students (Kuh, 2011). The Division of Student Affairs also must champion the student successes gained by the designed experience of athletics through annual reports, win-loss records, newsletters, and events that highlight the accomplishment of the students' success (Kuh, 2011). In the classroom, the student becomes engaged and immersed into a community of learning. Faculty that are approachable and connect on a personal level with their students make their students feel comfort, which enhances learning. As a result students are then motivated to learn and eagerly participate in their own collegiate experience, developing their own identity while finding a niche to explore, create, and question learning. According to Chickering (2006) "motivation is the key to persistence, to moving through successfully, and to learning that lasts" (p. 13) which are conditions necessary for personal growth. The curriculum of the

classroom then provides direction for learning and engages students, helping them take responsibility for their own learning by developing independence and autonomy. Chickering (2006) commented that a challenge for educators is to "help each person clarify important purposes and then create a combination of studies that is pertinent to the desired outcomes" (p. 13). Building community in and out of the classroom can be guided by 1) designing activities based on different learning styles, 2) combining group activities, 3) maximizing interactions during classes, and 4) encouraging interactions between classes (Chickering, 2000, pp. 29-30).

When the division of Student Affairs designs programs that provide for both intentional interactions and unintentional interactions of students, then "education of the whole student" becomes meaningful (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010a, p. 71). Per Garfield and David (1986) "students who get significantly involved in student services programs, show gains in critical thinking skills as well as interpersonal competence and cognitive complexity" (p. 490).

Conceptually all experiences a student encounters during their college going years affects the eventual outcomes of person, place, and time. It is important to remember that the total exposure to new ideas and finding a place to learn or grow affect a student's development. To better understand and describe the out-of-class experience for first-time, full-time community college students, there exists a need to understand what the experience itself means for each student. By providing thoughtful research, study, and meaning of the value and contributions that participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) give students, a better understanding of developed personal and life skills that can be acquired and learned will result. To gain additional knowledge of students'

personal development as a result of their participation in extracurricular activities,

additional research is needed to contribute to the body of knowledge currently available

in the field. New intentionally designed programs for student learning and experiences in

extracurricular activities may result from information learned through this study. A

description of the student's experiences from the student's perspective will assist student

affairs programmers with options to enhance the experience for students.

Today's employers desire employees that have developed soft skills. Soft skills

as Rao (2012) commented, are required in the workplace and often reported as skills and

abilities of communicating, managing time, negotiating, writing, listening, reading,

presenting, problem solving, and decision making (p. 50). Under-developed soft skills

(Rao, 2012) mentioned are often associated with failure to progress with employment or

job loss. Soft skills are best acquired through observation and training. The new

knowledge gained by this study will help provide more purposeful and thoughtful

experiences designed for students to help them explore and utilize while learning in the

first person.

Methodology

This study as Creswell (2003) suggested will explore the what, how, and why of

participating in organized activity outside of class attendance to gain perspective into

student experiences. The central question, also referred to as the grand tour question, *is

how do first-time full-time community college students that are participating or who

participated in intercollegiate athletics describe the contribution of that participation to

their overall personal development during their college-going year*s. Because this study

seeks to explore a deep meaning, a phenomenological approach will be utilized.

Phenomenology allows the researcher to dig into the meaning of the experience for the participants by allowing them to tell their lived experiences (Creswell, 2003).

Using the phenomenological approach to qualitative research, the researcher is allowed a gainful understanding of the meaning from multiple subjects that have experienced the phenomenon of the experience as shared by the participants (Creswell, 2003). Additional or sub-questions that will help to describe the meaning and essence of the experience that first-time full-time students have in personal development traits include:

- What specific developmental life skills/soft skills can be documented as a result of the experience in extracurricular activities?

- What is unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of life skills?

- Does the student-athlete's coaches' role and leadership style enhance or inhibit development of desired life skills within and outside of the experience?

- Does a positive or negative athletic participation experience contribute to the development of life skills?

- Is there a peer effect of personal development with participation in group or team extracurricular activities that is common?

Through purposively designed sub-questions this research will aim to increase knowledge and education into the meaning of the extracurricular and out-of-class experiences for community college students. The opportunity for a better understanding of the phenomenon experienced by student-athletes will enhance my scope of practice as a student affairs practitioner and contribute to programming that will help design student

experiences that will have meaning for college students attending small rural community colleges. Due to my background in student affairs/student life programming I will bracket out to the extent possible my beliefs and judgments. As Creswell (2013) reminded us, not allowing the researcher's own experiences to guide or influence the results make the research valid and richer contributing to the field.

Definition of Terms

Extracurricular Activities (ECA)—a "range of social, cultural, and intellectual activities that enhance the college experience, including internships, off-campus study, community service, clubs, and organizations" (Stuber, 2009, p. 878).

Intercollegiate Athletics—defined as sports played at the collegiate level for which eligibility requirements for participation by a student-athlete are established by a national association for the promotion or regulation of collegiate athletics (OregonLaws.org, 2013).

Life Skills/Soft Skills—are

> psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They are loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others. (Life Skills Definition of Terms, 2003).

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)—governing body for athletic competition, and eligibility, and sport guidelines for college students competing in intercollegiate athletics at junior and community colleges. Competition is offered in three divisions, each with varying rules for games played, contact with students, and scholarship assistance provided to students (National Junior College Athletic Association, 2014).

National Collegiate Athletic Association—governing body for athletic competition, and eligibility and sport guidelines for college students participating in college and/or university settings. Competition is offered in three divisions each with varying rules for games played, contact with students, and scholarship assistance provided to students.

Student Engagement—defined as the attention, degree, and passion that students show when learning new knowledge. The intensity of student interest and motivation for learning is piqued by their own curiosity and willingness to participate (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

Out-of-Class Experience—the diverse experiences students have that include formal and informal interactions with peers and faculty occurring outside of the classroom (Krause, 2007).

Assumptions

In proposal of this study it was important to consider assumptions that the researcher brings to the study from 25 plus years working with college-aged students. As Bryant (2004) mentioned, assumptions are the beliefs that the researcher carries with them and assists with legitimacy of the research. There are studies completed that identify student involvement and various engagement strategies for college-aged students. However, there is limited research on the community college student that links student development as a result of participation in extracurricular activities. The research from this study will attempt to fill a void in the data and provide additional information insight to the experiences of the student-athletes interviewed. With the data gathering limited to a single site for collection there are assumptions made by the researcher of

similarity to the data when generalized to the data of the larger population of community college-aged students. All measures will be used to gather representative data to then assist with assumptions for the larger population. Bryant (2004) also reminded that to complete quality research regardless of the methods chosen there will be assumptions made to complete the study. During the personal interviews with student participants the collected data resulting from the descriptions of the experience lead to the eventual findings of the study.

Delimitations/Limitations

This proposed research will lend insight into the student experience of those individuals interviewed; however, it will be important that the researcher avoid grand generalizations for the entire population of first-time, full-time community college students. The data gathered will be a snapshot of the experience students at the particular institution of study experience and how they perceive their personal growth and development. Delimitations are factors that limit universal findings for all participants at all times (Bryant, 2004). An additional delimitation for this proposed study could be the student's attendance and participation intensity during a specific extracurricular activity. Choosing to interview students that are actively engaged in the intercollegiate athletic experience provides data on that specific population of the research site that may not be true for the entire student population of Midwest Community College. Findings, however, will be able to be applied to many of the traditional-aged students attending the college.

Possible limitations for the proposed research include the limited number of students that participate in extracurricular activities on campus due to a smaller available

sample. It is also common at the community college that many of the same students

participate in one or more of the offered student activity organizations. Research

replicated at a later time in the maturity of the institution may need to examine different

extracurricular activities as the community college population changes from year-to-year.

Additionally, activities are subject to changes due to participation and student interest.

Bryant (2004) advised that consistent methods to obtain and collect data need to remain

constant allowing others that may replicate this research opportunity to obtain the same

or similar results. The qualitative method of phenomenology does allow the researcher or

future researchers to repeat the basics of the intended research with the use of student

interviews and a standard interview protocol. Researcher experience in the field of

student affairs and as an intercollegiate coach for 19 years assists in developing rapport

and trust with student interviewees. Comfort and ability to interact with students is both

a limitation and delimitation. All attempts to remove biases as a result of the

researcher's career experience will be used during the interview process to allow the

interviewed students an opportunity to tell their stories as they have experienced them.

Significance of the Study

College student affairs staff and the college itself are always looking for

something that will assist with student persistence and retention. From the gathered

information of this research project, one strategy for retention would be to place more

time and energy into the out-of-class experience for students. Castaneda (2004)

suggested that validating the role of intercollegiate athletics could help college

administration decide to field athletic teams and be able to better understand the

contribution that athletics makes to their overall campus environments. Castaneda (2004)

also suggested that with the popularity of student activities on campuses, including athletics, attention needs to be given to the relationship of involvement and engagement on retention of students.

Seidman (2005) also spoke to the need for colleges to value the experiences that their students have but also noted the need for the institution to be concerned for the welfare of students during the college period of growth development. When students find those sub-groups of friends and support partners in college, the potential for persistence and commitment to goal completion increases (Siedman, 2005).

There are several theories of student development that study self-awareness, identity awareness, and the student's individual involvement in his/her journey as necessary conditions for growth. Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) found that the individual student experience "varies substantially from campus to campus" and that perhaps the "institutional effect on student experiences and learning gains – to the extent they exist— may be more a function of the background characteristics of students who enroll" (p. 259). For practitioners and this researcher a variety of student involvement opportunities make the individual student experience a successful venture and a student's individual fit with the institution does matter for each student.

Answering the student questions of "How do I know?", "Who am I?", and "How do I want to construct relationships with others?" as Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn, (2010b) asked, provides a student affairs' practitioner with several active student programming initiatives that help students begin to answer these questions (p. 184). These become staples of the out-of-class learning experiences that shape and mold the student leader abilities of students. Potential obstacles for student affairs divisions in

providing quality out-of-class experiences for students will be tightening fiscal resources as budgets get tight and more scrutinized. It is hoped the related ideas and themes from this research support what appears to be apparent in observation; that regardless of the cost, finding opportunities for experiences that are life changing for students allowing for personal development of the individual is a worthy goal for colleges despite budget funding challenges.

Seidman (2005) commented that institutions with growing numbers of commuter students need to find engagement strategies that allow for involvement that is convenient for the students. Students, as Siedman (2005) further reported, are hurrying to and from classes, work while attending college and need to spend their time efficiently as they have limited time to get involved. Competition for students' free-time that is available to get involved in campus activities and out-of-class experiences is limited. A better understanding of what importance of the experience is for students will be explored, explained, and, studied in the research of this study. Institutions that know the characteristics of their students are able to help students persist (Siedman, 2005).

Colleges are looking to increase student retention and persistence towards degree attainment. A goal of President Obama (2011) is to support education for Americans and he has suggested that community colleges are primary paths for many Americans in meeting those educational needs. If every American is encouraged to earn a minimum of an Associate's degree, allowing President Obama's challenge to be answered, students need to be supported to complete what they begin. Beach (2009) reported that "the value of the Associate's degree might be more of a reflection of the personal characteristics of the learner" (p. 30) given the number of challenges for students to persist. Beach (2009)

additionally said that "it is clear that community colleges can 'under the right conditions' provide students with substantial benefits" (p. 31).

If community colleges are to be in a position to assist students then it is important to know the value of the out-of-class experiences in preparing students for the working world and encourage them to complete and persist. In looking for ways to engage students, a number of extracurricular activities are offered to students with a substantial investment of dollars by colleges. Astin (1984, 1999) also noted that a consistent finding reported in most all longitudinal studies is that dropout rates for community college students is still greater than their four-year counterparts. Considering the pressure to produce graduates and the need to engage students to help them attain and complete degrees, finding those strategies to engage and involve the community college student justifies the research conducted in this study.

A researched and proven best practice that guarantees student success, however, has yet to be discovered. Research by Kuh (1993) determined that experiences beyond the classroom do make substantial contributions to learning; knowledge and academic mastery are attained in the classroom, lab, and, studio. While there is research and literature available on various produced engagement programs and outcomes, there is limited research on what effectively works for the community college student who is a first-time, full-time student. Persistence, if defined as Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted is progressing and re-enrolling from term-to-term until degree attainment and underscores an institution's need to find strategies to engage and involve students.

Assisting the community college student to complete his/her degree many times involves the support of the student through services and programs. Pascarella and

Terenzini (2005) suggested that for many community college students the college experience at the two-year level is a "testing ground" (p. 380) where students figure out their career ambitions and educational choices. When students feel comfortable and supported, the testing or "warming effect" of a campus (p. 381) as Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) mentioned becomes an environment of success and persistence inspiring students to complete and finish their degree and/or career aspirations. The two-year college provides this avenue. This research is designed to shed additional information and potential strategies that will assist administrators and student affairs professionals with engagement strategies, persistence programs, and identified opportunities for student development of skills and personal abilities that help colleges produce market-ready students.

Summary

This study of the contribution and value of the extracurricular intercollegiate athletic experience as outlined in Chapter 1 is designed to gain a better understanding of this student phenomenon as experienced by those participating in the experience first-hand. There is limited research available on the experience of student-athletes as Castaneda (2004) an accomplished researcher remarked. She found only one study in her research that examined student interest in athletics compared to other student activities. The need to examine the affect and impact of athletic participation continues to grow as numbers of participants grows. A reported 73,926 students or 6.3% of all community college students at community colleges offering intercollegiate athletics chose to participate in athletics of reported full-time students in 2003 (Castaneda, 2004; U.S. Department of Education Office, 2013). A conceptual framework of student involvement

theory as researched by Astin (1984) details how an involved student with exposure to quality experiences attains identity and matures during the college going years. Additionally, three critical conditions of "student involvement, high expectations, and student assessment of the experience" (Strange & Banning, 2001c) need to be present in the campus environment to ensure a quality student experience for student maturity and development. Chapter 2 offers a review of the available literature offering insight into the student experience, athletic culture, and value of extracurricular experiences for students. Chapter 3 lays the framework for qualitative research design which uses phenomenology as the method for research data collection in the study. A description of the research site, research questions, interview protocol, research bias, and data collection process is offered. Chapter 4 of the study details the findings derived from interviewed student-athlete participants during their description of the experience itself. A modified data analysis process is used for development of themes, and the meaning of the experience for each study participant is included to understand the student experience through their lived experiences. Chapter 5 answers the proposed research questions from the gained knowledge of the participant experience with development of the essence of the phenomenon formed from the findings of the study. A discussion of the significance of the study, limitations of the study, future research opportunities, and reflections gained by the researcher during the study conclude the chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

An organized review of the literature is good for understanding what the out-of-class experience is for college students. Equally important is an understanding of the theories that help to offer a conceptual framework of student involvement as studied by Astin (1984), Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), Castaneda (2004), and Pascarella (1985). Their collective insights provide the researcher and readers knowledge as to the importance of student involvement toward personal development. The athletic experience is then examined followed by a discussion of the value of the extracurricular experience. The literature review will then address influences on student engagement by community, campus, and culture.

The more involved a student is in his or her educational experience, the more value in the experience and the richer the experience is for the student. This ideal experience that many in the field of student affairs or student life know is true anecdotally has been studied previously, but the research is somewhat limited. However, to better understand how the environment and the student experience shape a student's leadership abilities, communication strategies, campus involvement, and accidental learning that the out-of-class experiences provide, we need to further examine the experience itself.

The out-of-class experience, as Kuh (1995) mentioned, has the potential to contribute to the values of the college itself through the sustained effort needed by students to complete tasks and understand what makes a college community work (p. 145). He further surmised that life outside the classroom might be viewed as an

incubator of growth, where knowledge obtained in the classroom, lab, studio, and other arenas including the athletic fields are tested, tried, and reworked, then utilized by students in meaningful ways. Colleges are allocating huge dollar investments to student service programming including student activity programming, student leadership programming, residence hall programming, cultural diversity programming, and intercollegiate athletics. With this large investment of monies and resources, continued research is warranted and desired to quantify the return on investment. The need to tie reported learning outcomes and acquisition of skills to measurable metrics both positive and negative of student leader skill development, student learning, and identity development is necessary for continued program support by colleges and universities.

The Out-of-Class Experience Defined

Sometimes the out-of-class experience has been referred to as the other classroom or that learning which occurs after the student attends class with their instructors. In the student affairs field the out-of-class experience is what a majority of the discipline is built to serve, and it promotes increasing student retention and enriches the student experience. These experiences in a student's life help build character, teach students to survive on their own and gain independence, show students that they matter, and, contribute to the overall college experience. Some student decisions during participation in extracurricular activities lead to good and/or bad consequences that frame and guide the individual's personal development. For many students, the on-campus residence experience is the first time they have lived on their own, shared a bedroom with a stranger, learned to deal with conflict, resolved conflicts, set goals, as well as a host of other life lessons that define personal leadership style. Kuh (1995) described the out-of-class experience to be

one that "for about 40% of students, is the 'do-it-yourself' side of college or 'what took place outside of the classroom' was the most significant educational experience for them during their college years" (p. 124). He also reported that little is known about which out-of-the-classroom experiences are linked best to outcomes of "social competence, reflective thought, and knowledge application" (p. 124).

Further, the out-of-class experience gives students ample opportunity to apply knowledge learned through in-class teachings. Those learned lessons offer real life learning that classroom experiences just cannot provide by themselves. Working in peer groups is more comfortable and allows for more risk taking due to established roles that have been formed through friendships and new networking. Peer groups sometimes present challenges to learning and practical application of learning due to group dynamics. However, trying out leader roles and assuming leadership tasks, knowing that the college environment is a safe one, are still challenging. Trial and error or opportunities to make mistakes can be risky, similar to trying on clothing to see what fits the person and/or the situation. Situational experiences and the learning that occurs can, as Kuh (1995) remarked "demand sustained efforts to complete the task" that develop opportunities for complicated development and synthesis for integrated decision making skill development (p. 146). Important to any out-of-class experience is the lesson(s) from the experience and what the opportunity of the experience provides to the student. Kuh (1995) summarized that "colleges cannot force students to participate in organized campus activities or perform leadership roles. However, colleges can and should be held accountable for creating the conditions that promote such behavior" (p. 150).

Conditions that promote the out-of-class experience vary by institution, but what is similar is the opportunity to participate and get involved. A college environment that is welcome and open with ample gathering spaces contributes to a warm and inviting environment. Campus culture also sets the stage for quality opportunities for out-of-class opportunities. Being able to answer the student questions of "how do I know, who am I, and how do I do with," as Evans et al. (2010b) asked, provides a student affairs practitioner with several student programming initiatives that help students begin to answer these questions (p. 184). These intentionally-designed programs become staples of the out-of-class learning experiences and help to shape and mold desired mature student leader abilities.

Involvement Theory Explained

To understand the theory of involvement as explained and designed by Alexander Astin (1984), it is necessary to become familiar with an understanding of the traditional theories that helped form his ideas and concepts. To better explain how the theory works, an image of the "student as an empty box," waiting to be filled with experiences, policies, procedures, and rules for study at post-secondary education needs to be considered as Astin (1984) described. Astin (1984) explained that this empty box is symbolic of most college students at the beginning of their college attendance. Students have experiences they bring to college, but they are looking to put all of their new puzzle pieces into their empty boxes to fill that box. Then, upon graduation students present themselves to the world as filled boxes able to produce outcomes, achieve passing grades, and complete assignments on time, demonstrate learned competencies and interact in their new world. It could be surmised that all educational learning occurs within the confines of the

classroom, but this assumption did not explain to Astin (1984), how students gained competence and then were able to apply the knowledge taught to them via the classroom into real world opportunities and experiences.

Astin (1984) identified this individual growth and knowledge acquisition within the confines of three pedagogical theories of "subject-matter, the resource, and the individualized or eclectic theories" (p. 520). The subject-matter ideal assumes that motivated learners are thirsty for knowledge, read independently, and are active participants in their learning. The gifted instructor, however, believes that the instructor can "lecture" to those who are "ignorant learners – helping them acquire knowledge and gain skills" (Astin, 1984, p. 520), developing that knowledge in the subject-matter for competence. The resource theory supposes that colleges can provide a host of ingredients that are known to improve the learning environment through physical space, intentional design, and rich resources of support or large fiscal investments of money for provision of the best of the best programs. Through this host of resources that are available to students, student learning and development occurs (Astin, 1984). In the individualized or eclectic theory is an emerging idea that assumes no single approach to subject-matter learning is a catch-all for all students. This approach assumes that meeting the needs of the individual student is fluid and dynamic, allowing for independent growth and multiple opportunities for knowledge while allowing for learning from sources outside of the classroom. This three-part theory concept breakdown gives the basis for the involvement theory postulates.

Astin (1984) listed five hypotheses for consideration in development of his theory of student involvement:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized (the student experience) or highly specific (preparing for a chemistry exam).
2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum.
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features.
4. The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
5. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. (p. 519)

While these five postulates explain what student involvement theory is, understanding more of the practical applications of the theory while looking through a lens that includes participation in athletics, which is both a positive and negative experience for the athletes, is also necessary. Astin (1984) conducted his early research prior to the development and acceptance of his theory of student involvement, and he also undertook several additional studies to refine and validate his findings and details. Initially, a need to identify the factors affecting a student's experience in the college environment from his study of 1975 suggested that institutional environment significantly affects persistence (Astin, 1975). In this longitudinal study, Astin (1975) determined that every positive indicator of the undergraduate experience leads to a significant increase in involvement. Conversely, for every negative factor identified, the individual student's involvement experience was reduced or limited. As various factors of involvement were studied, one indicator of success seemed to stand out more than others; this factor was living in residence on campus. Both Astin (1973) and Chickering (1974) studied this phenomenon and noted the increased retention of students regardless of institutional size or location. To further research this positive effect and correlation between student success and involvement of those students living on campus, Astin (1977) replicated the

previous study and determined that when students live on campus, they find more time and opportunities to be involved.

Models and Theory for Student Development

Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) as reported by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) theorized that student interactions in college are linked to a variety of previous experiences students bring with them from family interactions, personal learning, academic success strategies, and goal attainments prior to the college experience. In Tinto's work, the idea that successful encounters or, as Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) detailed it, the "rewarding encounters" (p. 54) experienced would help lead the student to greater involvement at college and aid in persistence to goal completion or prevent dropping out before getting their degree. Castaneda (2004) reported in her dissertation that athletics are part of the institution and can serve to promote the goals of the institution as long as the mission of the college provides for the experience and sees that the experiences is supported. Castaneda (2004) further pointed out that athletics can provide a socializing function, gives participants opportunities for leadership growth, promotes the team concept and teaches sportsmanship. These opportunities and areas are all part of assisting students with development of life skills/soft skills within an environment that is supported and as Kuh (2011) remarked create conditions that matter to student success.

Pascarella (1985) in his Causal Model for assessment of change in students mentioned and used the pre-entry characteristics students have as a basis for explaining the maturing changes students encounter from their collegiate experience. The student's record of achievement, personality, attitudes, and aspirations for success all helped as Pascarella (1985) suggested serve as an indication of explanation of student change. He

also mentioned the positive impact on success/persistence that an engaged faculty and increased student-faculty interactions had for students as they adapted and navigated college environments and experiences. What is important from all three men's theory's and models is that what the student brings with them to college does help predict eventual success/maturation and the student's ability to negotiate college and find ways to engage. The successful student changes and matures with more experiences and developed and learned approaches to decision making. The engagement a student has is guided by his or her comfort in situations and his/her support systems as Pascarella (1985) stated these influences have a direct influence on student development and eventual outcomes from the college experience.

Athletics and the Out-of-Class Experience

It is interesting to note that there is an indication that positive persistence and completion are enhanced by participation in athletics and that athletics is a positive predictor of student success. To understand the impact that athletics has on the out-of-class experience, it is important to understand the various classifications of intercollegiate athletics and the expectations upon student-athletes participating at the NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association, 2013) Division I, II, and, III levels within the association.

The NJCAA developed over 76 years ago, is an amateur sport governing body designed to protect student-athletes with equal emphasis on athletic participation and academics. There are three divisions within the NJCAA known as Division I, II, and III following a similar divisional structure as the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2013) which has rules for personnel, amateurism, recruiting, student-athletic

eligibility, student-athlete scholarship benefits, financial aid, playing, and practice

seasons that govern athletic sports participation at each level (National Junior Collegiate

Athletic Association, 2013). There are differences within the allowable forms of

scholarship, playing seasons, and time on task for student-athletes participating at each

divisional level. This literature review will focus on the NJCAA Division I and II

student-athletes' experience and satisfaction with their out-of-class experience and leader

skills learned as well as practiced during the experience.

The value of the varsity or intercollegiate athletic experience was determined to

be a positive outcome by Tieu et al. (2010) with their study of first-year university

students through a questionnaire assessing quality of their out-of-class experiences. The

research noted that the better the adjustment of the student to his/her university/college

life, the more successful the experience. Strange and Banning (2001a) reported that "the

character of an environment is dependent upon its members" (p. 35), and leaders have to

have an ability to sense, judge, think, feel, perceive, and lead. Sitkin and Hackman

(2011) also described leadership as a group dynamic in that "leadership is plural, not

singular, so there can be a number of leaders" (p. 495), and in the athletic arena there are

ample opportunities for leadership and leaders to develop and hone their individual skills

through participation. Furthermore, they noted that "as you become more secure as a

leader, it gets easier to share leadership, to empower others" (p. 495).

Athletics for many years have been seen as a breeding ground of leadership

opportunity for students. While there is anecdotal information to support this claim, the

research has not been completed to totally reinforce this claim. Helping students gain

comfort and trust within the team environment enhances the out-of the-classroom

experience. The experiences athletic teams share and competition they compete in may be a competitive advantage to personal maturity development as a result of the team concepts nurtured and taught in the drills and contests provided. Bird (1977) in her research of highly successful women's volleyball teams proved that team success enhanced cohesion among team members and coaches. When successful athletic experiences were compared to teams that had not experienced the success of winning, satisfaction with the experience was not as rewarding. While she had hoped to find similar experiences for both groups, she did not find the comfort levels with satisfaction of the team experience in teams with losing experiences. Being a part of a successful experience enhances the experience and tends to create long-term benefits for the individuals on the team of the group experience itself. Tied into her findings were the players, views of leadership skills, and the ability to lead, a skill that was learned through the athlete's participation. Bird's (1977) research supports the basics of student involvement theory claimed by Astin (1993) that the more highly involved a student is in the experience, especially ones with successful outcomes, the more adaptable the individual becomes to his/her environment and perhaps the more rich the experience becomes through participation. While this study alone does not say that athletics or other out-of-classroom experiences teach skills and competence, it does support research that indicates positive involvement builds skill and opportunity.

However, deeper investigation into the available research and trying to connect the dots regarding what students choose to engage in outside of their time commitment to athletics, yields limited research available for review and investigation. Gaston and Hu (2009) contributed research to the existing knowledge base with their work that examined

what student-athletes do with their time outside of participation in sports and how the

experience influences student learning, personal development, and satisfaction with the

college experience (p. 317). This study supported the contribution of educationally

purposefully designed activities have on students, varying with the different sport

programs of their choice related to desirable outcomes of learning. Recent controversies

in intercollegiate athletics have brought attention to the value of the athletic experience

for students and have highlighted the need for continued research into both the positive

and negative outcomes that can be experienced through athletics participation while in

college. Gaston and Hu (2009) focused their attention on factors of the student's

background, the profile of the sport in the college setting (revenue or non-revenue

producing), as well as what could happen when student background characteristics were

controlled when students were engaged in purposeful activity.

The BASS (Basic Academic Skills Study) is an instrument developed by the

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) measuring student-athlete interests,

attitudes, and academic skills. This instrument, the BASS, is given to all divisions of the

NCAA, and the data of satisfaction can and does vary from Division I to Division III

athletes. Looking at the results of the Gaston and Hu (2009) study, student-athletes

engaged more often with students not on their teams outside of practice than teammates

and that participation in clubs and other student organizations was limited due to time on

task for demands from coaches and practices. Not all that surprising is the finding that

student-athletes competing in Division I and Division II found less time to socialize

outside of their circle of teammates and coaches. Time outside of the confines of practice

and sporting demands gives little time for other involvement and social networking on

campus for student-athletes. The NCAA solicited responses through a survey to over

26,000 student-athletes to determine satisfaction with their experiences across the three

levels of divisional play, looking at the student's experiences in athletics, academics,

social experience, recruitment, well-being, and time commitments. Results of the 2006

BASS survey (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2011) indicated that the athlete's

decision to attend an NCAA Division III institution was equally weighted on two

criterion: the quality of the athletic program and the quality of the academic program.

For student-athletes choosing to attend either an NCAA Division I or Division II

institution, students made their choices based upon the quality of the athletic program's

opportunities versus the strength of the institution's academic programs. Interesting is

the similar institutional choice for student-athletes competing in the NJCAA as their

choices mirror those of their senior college/university counterparts. Student-athletes,

regardless of athletic association affiliation (NCAA or NJCAA) make the same decisions

for the same reasons.

Comparing daily time commitments for athletics, students indicated that they

spent an average of 40 hours per week in activities for their sport in Division I and the

average time commitment for student-athletes competing in Division III was 31 hours per

week (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2011). When results were tabulated for

time spent on academic commitments (classes and homework), Division I athletes

reported an average of 43.7 hours spent on academics versus and average of 38.7 hours

on academic by Division III student-athletes. A larger difference of time afforded to

student interests outside of athletics was reported between Division I and Division III

athletes. NCAA Division III student-athletes reported an average of 7.6 hours available

for activities outside of their sport, while Division I athletes reported an average of a less than 1.4 hours per week available to them to devote to other personal and social interests (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2011). While the statistics reported are not inclusive of those same factors for NJCAA student-athletes, the demands of time, practice, and other student involvement are comparable. The demands on the time of Division I student-athletes are more rigorous than those of Division III or general college-going students. The exposure to leadership development and opportunity to develop leadership traits are provided at all levels of sports participation. What the research tells as reported by Tieu et al. (2010) is that involvement in groups does help with persistence for completion of the pursued degree. Tieu et al. (2010) also reported that "out-of-class activities show that involvement in highly structured activities and activities which are high in quality are positively related to more positive outcomes" (p. 353). Athletics by nature and structure are highly organized and structured, thus they complement success and desired outcomes of student involvement. There are limited studies available that look at involvement and the outcomes affecting student-athletes at all levels; however, there are available studies such as that of Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) that compare engagement of student-athletes with that of non-athletic university and college students. There is value in knowing the differences in educational experiences as a result of attending different institutions with examination of the athletic divisional levels of competition and their demands on student daily schedules.

A general overview of the literature routinely points to the demanding commitments of time devoted to training and practice, development of time management skills, study time, and grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale or above by

athletes (Umbach et al., 2006). The use of the NSSE (National Survey of Student

Engagement) data served as the database for comparison of the collegiate experiences of

athletes and non-athletes which allowed for random sampling of student engagement and

satisfaction with the experience itself. This data was also separated by gender as there

are differences in perceptions of time, activity, quality, and the overall experience itself.

An early idea of Umbach et al. (2006) or anticipated hypothesis of their study suggests

that students participating at NCAA Division III levels would be expected to be the "most

engaged" due to the availability of more time away from the demands of the

intercollegiate sport program (pp. 718-719). Other findings of their study reinforced the

view that NCAA Division III student-athletes, regardless of gender, are more

academically inclined, interact with faculty more frequently, and prefer collaborative

learning activities. When compared to their counterparts at NCAA Division II and

NCAA Division I institutions, the NCAA Division III student has a "qualitatively

different, better-rounded educational experience" Umbach et al. (2006, p. 720).

Surprising to the researchers, but not significantly so, were findings in the area of

engagement that regardless of the institution attended by athletes and non-athletes, there

were very few differences in opportunities, but NCAA Division III student-athletes were

more likely to engage as compared to their counterparts in NCAA Division II and NCAA

Division I. The researcher also noted that "student-athletes consistently graduate at

higher rates than the non-athletic student body" (p. 725). At the time of this study, the

difference was 2% higher for student-athletes. The researchers felt compelled to dispel

the notion that participation in athletics does benefit the student and encourages

engagement, putting the role of athletics in a positive light despite some of the negative

press. Also, as Umbach et al. (2006) reported "we should keep score as to the quality of the educational activities of student-athletes throughout the campus" (p. 727). Looking into the ways that student-athletes spend their time outside of sports participation remains to be a topic of exploration and further study, and the parallel to the experience for NJCAA student-athletes needs more investigation as well. While the experience is fundamentally similar, the time demands and rigor of competition differ with the pressure to perform and win with the high dollar revenue needs/expectations that NCAA Division I and II athletic programs demand.

Lueptow and Kayser (1973-74) sought to study the relationship between athletic involvement, academic achievement, and aspiration in their collection of data from self-administered questionnaires to seniors in a Midwestern state of some 20 high schools. In their findings, they found that athletic participation without involvement in other extracurricular activities tended to be depressing to the participants. Also of note was the finding that participation rates were related to parent community status and education in the small communities where students lived. Students with parents who were socially important and networked seemed to be more likely to participate and play on their high school teams as compared to students with parents who were less socially connected. Students with greater athletic and academic ability participated in athletics at higher participation rates. Additionally, findings indicated that academic performance of the high school "athletic stars" and attainment of educational achievement as perceived by the high school students' friends allowed the "athletic stars" to be more successfully engaged at the high school level (p. 29). While their research is dated, it still is relevant as it shows that perception and access can be predictors of success even at the high school

level where all students are considered equal in opportunity for participation as they are not recruited to participate solely on athletic ability.

Extracurricular Activity

Through the years there have been several contributors to the body of knowledge surrounding student experiences in out-of-class activities and their involvement in these various activities. Some studies have found positive correlations to a student's involvement, and others have noticed some evidence to the contrary. Maloney and McCormick (1993) focused their study on the role that athletics as an extracurricular activity plays in academic achievement. Their research looked at student GPA, college major choice, and semester college credit hour loads in revenue/non-revenue producing sports to see what differences occurred with respect to gender and GPA. One drawn conclusion drawn that students participating in "big time sports" do not perform as well in the classroom as other students (p. 562). Maloney and McCormick (1993) noticed an "in season effect" for student-athletes of GPA attainment, that GPAs were higher out of season versus in season. This was likely explained due to increased practice time commitments and increased time spent on sport activities as requested and required by their coaches. While this study did not fully support the positive effects of intercollegiate extracurricular participation, it does need to be part of the dialogue of the value of athletics as an extracurricular experience. Maloney and McCormick (1993) drew this conclusion, which is valid in the overall discussion of out-of-the classroom experiences, that "a strong academic background is critical to academic success in college. A student's high school performance is a predictor of success at college and 'good grades breed good grades' a strong start in college is also a predictor of later success" (p. 569).

Most recently the research work of Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Soloman, and May (2011) examined the positive and negative associations with extracurricular activities (ECAs) in the areas of non-traditional students, alumni, employers, and ethnic backgrounds and diversity. Their findings emphasized the importance of social networking, leadership, future employment, and long-term impact for future employment. The definition of ECAs used for the study was "broad and included all activities beyond the classroom" (p. 206). Activities included university clubs, family commitments, and religious activities, as well as engagement within a student's demographic groups. Also studied were the perceptions of employers on student ECAs and college alumni who looked at the experience and the outcomes of the experience. Key findings of the study by Stuart et al. (2011) were in the areas of social capital and the opportunity to network as a result of the ECA participation and the eventual outcomes related to job employment opportunities. A cultural fit with the choice of ECA was necessary and was highly valued by employers. Job skill sets employers found to be desired in their hires were centered in the areas of personal qualities, attitude, and aptitude for learning. The job skills that employers found most desirable were previous work in teams, face-to-face negotiation skills, strong communication abilities, and interpersonal social skills. Sports exercise or adventurous and/or unusual ECA's, "have indicated development of passion and interest in life skills" Stuart et al. (2011). An additional finding by Stuart et al. (2011) effectively summed up the experience of the ECAs stating that "voluntary work, team sports, and committees help to distinguish graduates on the job market" and that the value of the ECA experience was more important than the quantity of the ECA experiences for students.

Supporting the notion that undergraduate student learning is enriched by various exposures to extracurricular activity, Tieu et al. (2010) explored research that validated this concept. Within their study, they noted that student involvement does make a positive contribution to lifelong impacts for both teens and emerging adults. This emerging adult, growing from the late teen years into the entering college student, is open to many new learning experiences. Exposure to the variety of options in the college or university setting is a great learning lab for practice and skill acquisition. The study found that involvement in activities outside of the classroom and paid job employment resulted in "positive adjustment to university life" (p. 344) and also found that the quality of the experience mattered. During the study, researchers discovered research that is currently on going studying out-of-class involvement is growing and is not just a counting the hours of involvement and the number of activities, but seeking to link involvement of the experience to positive learning outcomes of the experience.

Tieu et al. (2010) researched and investigated the value of high-structured activities versus those of low organization and the effect on learning for the students involved. They concluded that high quality activity is likely to lead to high engagement resulting in high levels of significance for the individual's choices and levels of involvement in the activity. Tieu et al. (2010) in their research examined student involvement over a period of a calendar year, listing the number of activities students participated in. Then in a follow up questionnaire, those same sampled students were asked to complete a set of eighteen questions that looked specifically at three aspects of the quality of their experiences that helped the students to "build self-esteem, how the students identified themselves in their peer groups, and how important the activity was to

them" (p. 348). Correlations between the variables indicated that the numbers of hours of involvement were not of significance, but significance was shown in relation to self-esteem, social rapport, and university adjustment, supporting the hypothesis that quality of the structured experience was most important.

Stuart et al. (2011) studied the contribution of social networks for non-traditional and under-represented students who "need to learn the rules of higher education, as they face time and money issues as challenges to completion" (p. 205). They learned in their study that the phenomenon of social capital development by students during college-going years created many opportunities for adult students to engage within their college community, and when adult students do engage others and build their social capital, the benefits are worthy to them. Some findings indicated that the benefit of social capital involvement is not realized until completion, job attainment, and realization of the networking contributions gained from their experiences in participation in extracurricular activities. For the non-traditional student body, the experience in opportunities for leadership roles and voluntary work through club activity participation benefited the student with a payoff for their employer. Skills non-traditional students learned as a result of the participation in ECAs were of value to employer workforces (p. 211).

When the research considers the value of extracurricular experiences or engagement strategies for first-generation students as compared to that of second-generation students, it is important to look at population characteristics as Pike and Kuh (2005) studied. In their research a comparison of variables of gender, minority status, pre-college aspirations, and college attendance helped to gain an understanding of the various degrees of engagement for first- and second-generation students (p. 281). Pike

and Kuh (2005) reported higher levels of achievement academically, attainment of a

Bachelor's degree and living on campus as positive engagement correlations for these

two groups of students. Colleges constantly seek to provide an all-inclusive holistic

environment to assist students in feeling at home and comforted in the college setting.

Interesting to the researchers was the knowledge that of the compared variables, "only

living on campus had a direct positive effect on learning and intellectual development"

(p. 285). Another key finding of the study emerged when similarities between first- and

second-generation college students were considered and examined. Increased college

success and persistence were higher in students' families when at least one parent

graduated from college. First-generation students were less likely to have a role model or

successful mentor in the family who had attended or attained a college degree previously.

Lack of exposure to college success may be a limiting factor in students' engagement

strategies or willingness to become involved in college activities (p. 289). Key findings

of the study by Pike and Kuh (2005) determined that "gains in student learning were

directly related to integration of the diverse experiences and perceptions students have of

their college environment." Pike and Kuh (2005) also reported that student academic and

social engagement experiences were "indirectly related to gains" in a student's learning

curve (p. 290). A concluding finding is that institutions significantly interested in

improving first-generation student success rates should require these at- risk students to

live on campus at least the first year of college attendance. On campus living as a

success strategy is one of the best predictors of student success (p. 291).

　　　　Pike et al. (2003) looked at the tie-ins of the college's mission statement, student

involvement, and the resulting positive outcomes of increased student involvement to

overall student success. Their findings are somewhat similar to others in this area; however, the research on these three particular themes is limited, and therefore a reason for further study such as this proposed examination into the beneficial outcomes of participation in extracurricular activities during the college going years. One theme that emerged from the research of Pike et al. (2003) is that "it is reasonable to expect that perceptions of the college environment are related to involvement measures, it is not obvious that positive perceptions contribute to greater integration of academic and social experiences" (p. 245). For the student affairs practitioner today, what does matter is that differences in student success are found across the colleges students choose to attend, and individual fit and choice of where to attend college do matter. Additionally, the findings of Pike et al. (2003) spoke to three areas of importance in developing and maturing college students. Those three areas are:

1. Educational aspirations had positive effects on integration and gains in learning and intellectual development. Being a first-generation college student was negatively related to social involvement and had negative indirect effects on both integration and gains.
2. Being a first-year student also had negative indirect effects on both integration and gains.
3. Contrary to expectations, academic and social involvements were not directly related to gains. Perceptions of the college environment and integration of academic and social experiences have substantial positive effects on gains in learning and intellectual development. (pp. 254-255)

While focus on these three items of aspirations, integration, and involvement are important for student success, there are other influences that need to be developed to support the whole person and guide him/her gently in to adulthood. Pike et al. (2003) also pointed out that these findings could not with certainty be generalized to all college students (p. 266).

Pike et al. (2003) did find that the individual student experience "varies substantially from campus to campus" and that perhaps the overall "institutional effect on student experiences and learning gains, to the extent they exist, may be more a function of the background characteristics of students who enroll" (p. 259) at the institution of their choice. This finding would suggest the individual institutions, the people, staff, faculty, and environment, are all important and that the college's mission is also important. Institutions that do purposefully follow through educate their students, giving them a wealth of experience and opportunity.

The effects of student engagement found by Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2008) helps to answer if engagement strategies during the first year of attendance had significant impacts on student grade point average (GPA) and had assisted students' return for their second year of study as an effect of engagement in general or conditional experiences (p. 543). They determined that on multiple levels there are "confounding pre-college and college influence . . . and that student engagement in purposeful activities had a small but statistically significant effect on first year grades" (p. 547). Additionally, Kuh et al. (2008) concluded that two particular outcomes needed to be reported: "1- student engagement in purposeful educational activities are positively related to academic performance of persistence between year one and year two, 2- engagement has a compensatory effect on first-year grades and persistence to the second year of college at the same institution" (p. 555). This generalization points to the assumption that creating meaningful conditions with structure does help students complete and persist. Also mentioned in the research of Kuh et al. (2008) is the importance of faculty and staff interactions with students. They stated that faculty "must

use effective educational practices throughout the institution to help compensate for shortcomings in student's academic preparation and create a culture that fosters student success" (p. 556).

In examining the effects of extracurricular activities as developmental opportunities for interpersonal skill development, a study by Rubin, Bommer, and Baldwin (2002) found that extracurricular activities are safe places where students look to refine and practice these emerging skills. However, their findings, like others before them, are mixed and vary widely sometimes. The focus of their research centered on exploration of students' learned interpersonal skills from their experience and exposure to opportunities to practice those skills. Also, whether students holding leadership positions develop stronger interpersonal skills was researched and examined. A general observation during the study indicated that not all experiences are of equal importance in practice of skills. Findings of the research supported the supposition that there are differences in the various experiences themselves. When students participate in activities that align with their needs, the experience better prepared students and developed their personal skills. Also, Rubin et al. (2002) presented the idea that "involvement is clearly better than no involvement" (p. 450). Those students who do not actively participate in the activity but rather join to be part of the idea are known as "serial joiners" as Rubin et al. (2002) found. They labeled these students as ones who did not gain meaning from their experiences or develop skills that continued for any length of time after the college experience was finished (p. 450). Clearly, student activities that provide the "biggest bang for the buck" are the most beneficial to the student as reported by Rubin et al. (2002).

Additional research by Kuh (1993) reviewed what seniors at various colleges had to say about their out-of-class experiences and the value they placed on that experience through a series of semi-structured personal interviews. The data was categorized into themes and outcomes that were identified into a listing of the top ten outcomes reported by the senior students. As seniors, these selected students had ample time in college to participate in various extracurricular experiences and had the ability to express their feelings and experiences with quality articulation of thought and insight. The three questions Kuh (1993) posed in the research were to collect answers regarding "1-what lessons were learned from the experience, 2-what ways did they 'the students' change, and 3-do outcomes considered by the student differ due to the type of institution attended and their individual backgrounds" (p. 279). The top outcomes reported by the interviewed seniors are listed below and are similar to findings from many of the studies referenced earlier in this literature review, which speaks to the consistency of the results reported in student involvement opportunities and extracurricular/out-of-class experiences reviewed. Those top outcomes listed below are as reported by Kuh (1993):

1. self-awareness (including self-examination);
2. autonomy and self-directedness (taking responsibility for one's own affairs, moving from dependent thinking to independent thinking);
3. confidence and self-worth;
4. altruism (interest in welfare of others, empathy, tolerance and acceptance);
5. reflective thought (critical thinking, seeing connections, seeing different points of view, and examining one's thinking);
6. social competence (working with others, teamwork, leadership, assertiveness, public speaking, communication, and patience);
7. practical competence (time management and/organization);
8. knowledge acquisition (academic- and course-related learning, mastery);
9. academic skills (learning how to study, write, and conduct independent research);
10. application of knowledge (relating theory to practice using skills learned in the classroom, lab, and library);
11. esthetic appreciation;

12. vocational competence (acquiring attitudes, behaviors, and skills for post-college employment);
13. sense of purpose (clarifying life goals and work that will occur after college); and
14. other (concepts of conservative thought to liberal attitudes or vice versa). (p. 285)

This listing of student-experienced outcomes helps support and gives meaning to ideas that Baxter Magolda (2007) related in her development of personal self-authorship and meaning-making in life. She theorized that students become independent, mature thinkers. Independent mature thinking is an outcome of what colleges strive to teach students to help them develop into competent adults. Concluding research by Kuh (1993) found that experiences beyond the classroom make substantial contributions to learning: knowledge and academic mastery is attained in the classroom, lab, and studio. Kuh (1993) also suggested that the student's background is for the "most part" unrelated to learning and personal development (pp. 300-301). However, students do come to campus with previous exposures to decision- making skills and influences which may inhibit them from participation in ECAs initially. College for many students is a time to try new things and to learn from the experience.

What Remains to Consider

Colleges across the country are looking for the magic bullet to engage, prepare, and graduate students who have gained expertise and matured as a result of attendance at their institution. As reported in the literature the out-of-class experience or ECA does make a difference to the success of the individual student. However, defining that success cannot be measured by any single measure of GPA, number of experiences, hours participated, or positions held in clubs and/or organizations. Considerations need to be given to the environment and culture of each campus.

The environment, as readings from Strange and Banning (2001b) report, contributes to educational success by promoting safety and inclusion as well as encouraging involvement and building a community of learners. With respect to participation and involvement, higher education institutions can exert influence in these areas well before a student ever steps foot on campus by the college being aware of its climate that "welcomes students or excludes them" as Strange and Banning (2001c) spoke of in the text (pp. 137-138). They also reported that the "quality of education can and will be improved by three critical conditions present on campus, those three conditions are student involvement, high expectations of students, and the assessment and feedback of our students" (p. 138). Research that connects findings related to the effects of culture and campus environments would be worthy of future study as well. Also, questions of leadership, work skills, and the connection of participation in athletics to development of those skills, needs to be considered. The teamwork, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, and collaborative learning that occurs in that field needs to be explored further as well.

Pike and Kuh (2005) in their study of first- and second-generation students gave a simple suggestion for improvement of success for students with a very simple engagement strategy of "get them ready, get them in, and then get them through" (p. 292) and that by altering what a student does after he/she arrives definitely has influence on student development. Kuh et al. (2008) reported that "students leave college for a mix of individual and institutional reasons: change of major, lack of money, family demands, and poor psycho-social fit" (p. 541). These ideas would also contribute to the literature and assist institutions in developing program and recruitment strategies.

The created community says much about the developed campuses and the culture. Retention is a goal for many colleges and universities today. There is not a definitive idea or program that builds this, it is the people, curriculum, and students attending the institution that make the difference. When students walk on campus for the first time, are they welcomed by students who say "glad you are here" or are they welcomed by faculty and staff who say "can I help you?" Perhaps they are welcomed by clean parking lots, well-lighted rooms, well-groomed lawns, and well-maintained buildings. Regardless of the welcome, they sense a community that they can be included within and belong to. Strange and Banning (2001d) said that "communities offer a sense of belonging, security, and engagement to participants and they offer so much more" (p. 161).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the design of the research, qualitative research traditions, method of data collection, potential researcher bias, details of the participants as well as an outline of the data collection procedures. Further, an introduction of the data analysis process and the use of peer validation of the data for reliability of the research itself will be presented. The chapter will end with a brief summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to better understand the influence on personal development and development of life skills/soft skills that occur as a result of participation in intercollegiate athletics as an out-of-classroom experience for college students at a small Midwestern Community College. This study examines the value and personal growth experienced by community college-aged students within the environment and experiences of intercollegiate athletics from their individual and collective experiences. We know that students mature and develop self during college and as Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggested, those changes in development and identity is "change on a broad front" (p. 572). These changes that students experience have been explored in previous studies; however, there still remains an opportunity to learn more about students' needs, personal change in student behaviors, engagement strategies that work, individual personal development outcomes as a result of the student experience, and how students mature as a result of their experience. To assist and contribute information to the known body of knowledge, this study examines the question: How do first-time, full-time community college students that are participating

or who participated in intercollegiate athletics describe the contribution of that participation to their overall personal development during their college-going years.

By understanding the various individual athletic experiences, more insightful knowledge of the contribution of that athletic experience to their personal development as a result of the experience may help explain the need for inclusion of intercollegiate athletics as a staple extracurricular activity (on campus) of today's community college campus.

Research Design

To derive the essence of the student's experience and what it means to the participants, this research will follow a qualitative process using phenomenological methodology that allows the investigator to be present in the research as an integral component. To understand the meaning of the extracurricular and/or out-of-class-experience for college-aged students, several approaches will be used to gain insight and understanding. This presence in the research helps the researcher to experience the phenomenon through both self-awareness and self-knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, the heuristic research process seemed to be the best approach to use for this research. Moustakas (1994) defines heuristic research as the "processes that are essential in investigations of human experiences" (p. 17).

Qualitative Approaches

Moustakas (1994) suggests that heuristic research "begins with a question or problem" and then "helps the researcher to illuminate or answer" that question through research and will provide both a challenge and new education (p. 17). Phenomenology, Moustakas (1994) learned, helps the researcher to:

- Recognize the value of qualitative design that studies the human experience.
- Focus on the wholeness of the experience rather than its objects and parts.
- Search for meanings and essences of the experience rather than explanations.
- Obtain descriptions of the experience through first person accounts in an informal or formal conversation and interviews.
- Use the data collected as the true source of understanding the behaviors described.
- Help to formulate questions and concerns that the investigator has interest in, is involved in, or committed to better understand the issues.
- View the experience and behaviors observed as integral and inseparable as part of the whole person with all of the parts that make him/her unique. (p. 21)

When the researcher plays an integral part in the research as Creswell (2013) suggests: they bring with them certain beliefs and assumptions which help to make choices of approaches chosen for research. These beliefs and assumptions help to shape how the problem or research questions are formed according to Creswell. Lester (1999) described the use of phenomenology as a means to illuminate specifics and to identify the phenomena as a perception of the individual. This ability to see the perception from the perspective of the individual adds dimensions, as Lester further suggested by allowing the researcher to be an interested party to the research instead of being detached as only an observer. Creswell (2013) acknowledged the need for the researcher to be an active part of their research. The epistemological assumption, he explained allows the researcher to get close to their participants being studied to help understand what they are saying (p. 20).

Phenomenology (Kafle, 2011) is an "umbrella term" with many approaches and options for study. Initially the movement toward usage of phenomenology began with Edmund Husserl, as a radically new philosophy that focuses on the essence of the phenomenon explained through meaning and understanding of the lived experience (pp. 181-182). Creswell (2013) further clarified the use of qualitative research when we

wanted to "empower individuals to share their stories and hear their stories" (p. 48).

Creswell additionally suggested that the use of qualitative research presents an

opportunity to write in a flexible style the reporting of findings through our conducted

interviews and data analysis in this approach. Further, qualitative research is used as

Creswell reported to help us develop theories for certain populations and samples when

existing theories are not available to explain or document the lived experiences of our

population. Qualitative research allows research to measure and analyze data without

overlooking the unique experience of a group of individuals that can be unique to their

experience (Creswell, 2013).

Specific procedural steps when using qualitative research do follow scientific

methods (Creswell, 2013) of beginning with an issue or problem, questions to understand

the issue, an examination of literature, gathering of data, analysis of the data, and a

written report of findings (p. 50). Qualitative study is the right choice for research aimed

to better understand the contributions of individual lived experiences by those living the

experience and helps the researcher to document development of skills and abilities

learned through and by the experience. The following procedural steps form the structure

of research following the qualitative approach:

1. The use of open ended questions which allows the researcher to listen to the participants, which allows for understanding of the problem or issue.
2. The researcher employs a rigorous data collection procedure that summarizes details of the data itself after spending time in the field obtaining the data.
3. Framing the approach to the design of the study with multiple realities.
4. Use of an appropriate qualitative approach which allows the researcher to identify and define the research conducted.
5. Researcher studies a single focus or concept of exploration.
6. Detailed methods of data analysis.
7. Analysis of the data on multiple levels of abstraction with the development of codes, meaning units, themes, and uncovering the essence of the experience. (Creswell, 2103)

Through the investigation of the interviewed students and their experience, new ideas and insight into the extracurricular activity (ECA) experience of students participating in intercollegiate athletics at the community college will be learned. As students share their personal thoughts, a discovery of the significance of their individual journeys through college and life will be gained. It will be a time to share in their personal moments of growth, development, and acceptance as they reflect on them. Creswell (2013) listed a strength of phenomenology is the ability to describe the common meaning of the lived experience for several individuals and it is this understanding of the universal essence that allows the researcher to tell the stories of the group studied in terms of the experiences and experience as the participants lived it. During the interviews, the physical sense of accomplishment, pride, and need or desire to share one's story will become vibrant and present. Throughout the individual student interviews, as Moustakas (1994) offered, there will be a constant need to "check and judge to facilitate the process of achieving a valid depiction of the experience" (p. 18). This checking process allows for verification of the dialogue shared repeatedly and often, which Moustakas (1994) explained helps to develop the meanings and essences of the individual's experiences.

Researcher Bias

As a student affairs professional, an awareness and acknowledged potential bias of perceptions of what the out-of-class-experience may offer to college-aged students is recognized. During the baccalaureate experience, the researcher participated in intercollegiate athletics at a four-year comprehensive university. In addition, the researcher served as a coach for 10 years at the community college level, 4 at an

institution in the NAIA, and four at a Division III NCAA university. Moreover, the

researcher has significant involvement as a student affairs administrator, fostering an

understanding and a commitment to the contribution of out of class experiences to the

holistic development of college students. These prior experiences were acknowledged as

potential research bias in this study. To the extent possible, bracketing of the researcher's

experience will be used to be open to experience the students' experience as the stories

are told and recorded. As this investigation progressed, understanding more fully what

the athletic experience provides to the student-athletes personal development while

gaining an appreciation for the impact and meanings that students' associate with their

intercollegiate athletic experience occured. Merriam (2009) reminded us that the primary

researcher in qualitative research is primary and central to the collection of data and

analysis. Being human it is hard to completely eliminate biases. Merriam suggested

however, that when a researcher has direct experience related to the phenomenon being

studied "the researcher usually explores his or her own experiences, in part to examine

dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of personal prejudices,

viewpoints, and assumptions" (2009, p. 25).

Data Collection Method

The data collection for this study began after approval was obtained by the

Institutional Review Board on November 19, 2014, for the Protection of Human Subjects

at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (see Appendix F). The study data collected came

from the semi-structured personal interviews of second-year first-time, full-time student-

athletes living in on-campus housing facilities at a Midwestern Community College

during the fall term of 2014. Of the available population sample of 23 student-athletes,

14 students volunteered and agreed to be participants in the researcher's study. Of the 14 student-athletes, 7 were male and 7 were female giving the sample equal representation by gender. Additionally, the sample included 5 students who are international students attending the college to participate in their various chosen athletic sport. The participants in the sample were asked a series of open-ended questions in individual interviews that were digitally recorded. The personal interviews allowed the study participants to explore their individual experiences with out-of-class engagements, personal interactions in clubs, athletics, student clubs and organizations, time spent with roommates in common living arrangements, time with advisors, and conversations with instructors in a story telling manner. Creswell (2013) stated that participants in a qualitative study may be located at a single site; however, they do not have to be, but most importantly all participants of the study need to have experienced the phenomenon explored which allows them to speak to the experiences they have lived (p. 150).

Approval from college administration for conducting this research at Midwestern Community College was obtained prior to beginning. A research recruitment flyer was used to recruit participants as well as a general invitation to participate in the study through an information session with all second-year first-time, full-time student-athletes of the four intercollegiate varsity sports at Midwestern Community College. Student-athletes during the information sessions were given an overview of the research topic and were then invited to participate in the research by contacting the principal investigator on their own through contact via e-mail with the investigator as indicated on the recruitment flyer (see Appendix C). Participants then met with the principal investigator to review the approved informed consent criteria which further detailed the study purpose and

procedures. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable or unable to continue during the process. Participants were then asked to sign the informed consent document giving their consent to participate in the study via signature on the consent form (see Appendix D). After obtaining participant consent the researcher then proceeded with the individual interviews per the approved interview protocol of the study (see Appendix A) of the semi-structured open-ended questions of the proposed interview protocol. Two meetings were held with each participant. At the first meeting, a semi-structured interview occurred. The average interview lasted for one hour. A second session involved a question and answer session, during which time the participants reviewed the transcripts of their interviews as we as a summary of the findings and their position within the thematic analysis.

The specific interview questions were developed from the central question and sub-questions previously determined to assist the researcher in gaining an understanding of the phenomenon of the student-athlete intercollegiate experience. The questions identified and drafted allowed the participating students a safe and confidential opportunity to share their personal experiences of their involvement in extracurricular activities. The interview questions were reviewed earlier in a pilot study by college students who had previously participated in either high school or intercollegiate athletics for external validity. These college students of similar backgrounds were given the sample set of questions to check for understanding, refinement, and revision to help frame the interviews and the students in the pilot study suggested no changes to the proposed question set. Merriam (2009) suggested that a key to obtaining good data from interviewing begins with the interviewer's ability to ask good questions. Additionally,

when questions are worded with words that make sense to the interviewee in their world

view, Merriam suggested the participants' ability to answer them substantially increases

and data collection is vastly improved in quality (p. 95).

The use of the pilot study process was a necessary procedure to the study to help

the researcher clearly communicate the process of the interview and to frame the

proposed questions so that the interviews would produce quality data for analysis of the

interviewees' stories. From both the pilot study and the peer review of proposed

questions no changes were implemented as the reviewers felt the questions were easily

understood and would help participants tell their experiences associated with

intercollegiate athletics. Questions posed were phrased in simple terms to avoid student

confusion and to help the investigator refrain from interpretation of student accounts of

the ECAs. Additionally a linkage table (see Appendix B) was developed to assist the

researcher so there were a representative number of questions asked that address the

central question and sub-questions to provide that the interview yields a complete picture

of the student experience.

Participants

The sample group consisted of 14 student-athletes from the available pool of 23

second-year first-time, full-time student-athletes at Midwestern Community College.

The study sample included 7 men and 7 women who are participating in intercollegiate

athletics at a rural serving community college. A purposeful selection process was

employed as the question of interest involved 18-22 year-old college-aged students at a

single institution who had participated in intercollegiate athletics. To obtain a

homogenous sample of adequate size the decision was made to interview all students who

agreed to participate in the study. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found that sample

saturation could be reached with a homogenous sample size of at least 12 individuals.

They also suggested that if sample saturation was not reached with 12 participants then

additional interviews would be warranted.

The interviews conducted allowed the researcher to obtain equal perspectives

from both males and females of their experience with seven males and seven female

participants. The participants received an informed consent form (see Appendix D) to

review their rights as participants in the approved research of IRB # 14777 as approved

by the University of Nebraska. The primary investigator reviewed with each participant

the informed consent form prior to the conduction of the interviews. All participants

signed the informed consent form, agreeing to be interviewed and audio recorded. The

student interviews were digitally recorded to aid the researcher in accurately capturing

the interview, the interview tone, and validity of the spoken word when review of the

transcribed interviews occurred.

To maintain the integrity and the confidentiality of the research study as well as

insuring that ethical guidelines were met, precautions for protection of the anonymity of

the interview participants were taken. One list of interviewees with pseudonyms was

maintained. Data will be stored for one year in a locked cabinet in the principal

investigator's home office. Informed consent was obtained by all participants prior to the

initiation of the interview process. Only the principal investigator had access to the

original audio recording of the individual interviews. The audio recordings were

transcribed by a professional transcriptionist service who also signed a confidentiality

statement (see Appendix F). The principal investigator reviewed the transcribed

interviews with interviewees to document that a detailed and accurate transcription was produced. There were no identified risks associated with the study as noted in the Institutional Review Board approval documentation (see Appendix F).

Through investigation of this experience and/or the interviewed student interviews, it was assumed that new ideas and insight into the extracurricular activity (ECA) experience for community college student-athletes will be learned by the researcher. As students share their personal thoughts, a discovery of the significance of their individual journeys through college and life will be gained. The sharing of the student's personal moments of growth, development, and acceptance as they have lived the experience will be a highlight of the research. The use of one-on-one interviews, as Creswell (2013) suggests serve as an aide to the researcher with rich sources of information to analyze the experience of the participants. The researcher also was able to observe body language and non-verbal signals exhibited by the participants during the interviews to frame the experience. Observation as Creswell mentioned is a key tool of qualitative research that gives insight into the participant experience through facial expressions, tone of voice, and assists the researcher with subject rapport and engagement.

The designed interview protocol of set open-ended questions was developed in order to gain consistent answers to posed questions. Creswell (2013) advised that an interview format of five to seven open-ended questions is a research best practice that assists the researcher in obtaining quality interviews. However, to gain additional insight into the college-aged student's experience probing questions needed to be asked. Merriam (2009) offered validation to the use of probing questions that allow for the

researcher to follow up on comments and due to the impossible nature to identify these questions ahead of time. Probes are useful for the researcher to gain clarity of participant responses of what the interviewee said. As the interviews are reduced into meaning statements and eventual development of themes, validity, and reliability is assured. The researcher also developed a template for recording of field notes taken during the interviews which quickly captured important statements a key component of data collection as mentioned in Creswell (2013) to help the researcher remember key phrases and experiences.

Data Analysis

The researcher used techniques associated with a modified data analysis process described by van Kaam in 1959 and 1966 (Moustakas, 1994) to help manage the volume of data collected during the participant interviews. From the participant interviews the researcher used field notes to remember important passages described by the interviewees of their experiences. Usage of field notes is supported as a best practice for qualitative phenomenology base research (Meadows & Morse, 2001). Individual transcripts of each interview were developed. Listening as well as reading and several re-readings of the individual transcripts allowed for multiple checks of understanding what interviewees stated and explained. The multiple reads of the interviews assisted in the listing of each relevant phrase or expression of the out-of-class experience on an Excel spreadsheet for horizonalization of the relevant significant statements, sentences, passages, and words used by the participants. Usage of this modified data analysis coding process helped the researcher reduce the volume of data. Merriam (2009) stated that the use of descriptive coding helps with interpretation of the meaning of the experiences as described by the

interviewees. The initial analysis of data identified more than 400 statements, passages, and words that described the perceptions of student-athletes regarding the contribution of participation in intercollegiate athletics to their personal development. These statements were grouped into 20 categories or meaning units. A clustering process of like phrases were sorted and then reduced and then incorporated to identify eight themes related to the students' experience.

From these 8 themes, structural descriptions of the phenomenon were composed looking at similar themes by gender, international born student-athletes, and U.S. born student-athletes. From these three common and 14 individual structural descriptions, the essence of the experience for the participants emerged.

Member checking of the recorded interview transcripts by the study participants were used to confirm and corroborate the 20 meaning units developed, which is a key data validity checking component (Creswell, 2003). Verification of the data and its reliability, as Creswell (2003) outlines for qualitative research, support the resulting findings. To aid with the validity of the researcher's findings, peer review by colleagues was conducted on the researcher's process of data analysis and coding techniques a best practice supported by Merriam (2009) to endorse the quality of the interpretation, meanings, and resulting themes. The usage of peer reviewers allowed for protection of potential researcher bias due to the researcher's personal experiences in athletics at the college level from personal participation to her experiences as an intercollegiate coach. Peer reviewer number one is a doctoral student who has completed qualitative research courses and is employed as a faculty member at a community college. Peer reviewer number two has completed a doctorate, utilized a phenomenological methodology in the

dissertation, and is employed as an administrator at a community college. Peer reviewer number three has completed a doctorate and is an administrator at a community college.

Peer reviewers were asked to give input into researcher coding, meaning unit development, and resulting themes derived from data analysis. The peer reviewers agreed with the researcher's conclusions. The researcher's usage of the modified data analysis procedure allowed for grouping of units and an opportunity for filtering of many purposeful interviewee comments which aided the review of large amounts of data collected from the transcribed interviews of the participants.

Summary

The researcher has been careful to follow protocols as required by the IRB guidelines and recognizes that as Merriam (2009) stated, the "trustworthiness of a qualitative study depends on the credibility of the researcher . . . the best the researcher can do is to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process" (pp. 234-235) while submitting an objective reporting of findings. The researcher did conduct individual interviews of the represented population of student-athletes at the community college study site. To analyze the transcripted data a modified data analysis procedure was used to interpret the significant statements, develop the resulting meaning units, and cluster the meaning units into emerging themes.

From the developed themes summary descriptions of the phenomenon for each individual in consideration of their life experiences were detailed according to common characteristics by gender, country of origin, and common threads of the study. The purpose of this study was to understand and explore what the value and contribution of the experience in intercollegiate athletic participation provides to college-aged students in

personal development and outcomes later in life as a result of the experience itself. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter 4 and by discussing the emergent themes from collected data. The data is presented in narrative form that allows for a rich description of the experiences and voices of interview participants. All interviews were digitally recorded and accurate transcriptions have allowed the researcher to effectively analyze the meaning units and themes resulting from the analysis.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to better understand the influence of participation in intercollegiate athletics on the personal development of community college student-athletes. The central research question: How do first-time, full-time community college students participating in intercollegiate athletics describe the contribution of that participation to their overall personal development? Sub-questions included the following:

1. What specific developmental life skills/soft skills can be documented as a result of the experience in extracurricular activities?

2. What is unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of life skills?

3. Does the student-athletes' coaches' role and leadership style enhance or inhibit development of desired life skills within and outside of the experience?

4. Does a positive or negative athletic participation experience contribute to the development of life skills?

5. Is there a peer effect of personal development with participation in group or team extracurricular activities that is common?

I found the participants in this study willing to share their experiences with me, in part because we share a common interest in athletics from being both a participant and sports fans. Merriam (2009) suggested that "those who have had direct experience with the phenomenon . . . are more acutely aware of the perceptions, prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions" (p. 25) that others may have with the experiences being explored.

Through this shared knowledge I believe the participants were comfortable sharing their

personal stories and were trusting of me as an interviewer.

To better understand the analyses of data, it is important to have a basic

background of the student-athletes participating in the study. The chapter begins with an

explanation and description of the participants and then moves into data analyses.

Participants

This study included a total of 14 participants from a possible sample size of 23

second-year student-athletes who were first-time full-time college students. An interview

recruitment flyer was given to all interested student-athletes explaining the purpose of the

study after a short information recruitment session prior to the beginning of sport practice

sessions. All students who indicated a willingness to participate in the study and who

were at least: (a) 19 years of age, (b) actively participating in intercollegiate athletics,

and (c) a student at the site of the college being studied were included in the research. Of

the 14 participants, 7 were male student-athletes participating in the sports of men's

basketball and men's golf at the college. Seven (7) of the participants were female and

they were either participating in women's basketball or women's volleyball. Of the 14

students agreeing to participate in the study 5 were students who would be considered

international students attending the college from countries outside of the borders of the

United States of America. All students participating in the study had been recruited by

the various sport coaches to participate in intercollegiate athletics at the college. Some

were receiving financial support to pay for college expense from an athletic scholarship

awarded by the coach from the college and some were not as they were financing their

own college educations. The interviewed student-athletes are studying a variety of

educational programs of study offered at Midwestern Community College. Some

student-athletes were studying vocational career track programs on their way to earning

the Associate of Applied Science degree. Others were planning to complete academic

transfer curriculum coursework completing either the Associate of Arts or Associate of

Science degree.

Structure, as Creswell (2013) described it, is the "what happened or how they

experienced it in terms of the condition or situation" (p. 80) of the phenomenon that the

students experienced during their intercollegiate athletic experience. The personal

transformations of the student-athletes from high school graduates to first-time, full-time

college students into maturing young adults as described in the interviews of the research

helped to define narrative descriptions of the participants that follow. The following

individual structural descriptions of what the experience meant to each student is

presented to help better understand what the student felt was most important to them in

their lived experience of participation in intercollegiate athletics at the community

college.

G-1. G-1**,** a golfer who is a male athlete gained from the experience life building

skills, increases in networking skills and a source of personal pride in management of

himself as a person in personal situations he deals with. Through his athletic experiences

he also developed confidence from athletics and being on his own as a young adult. He

indicated that academics and athletics helped him to earn a college degree which he plans

to use to obtain a job. He welcomed opportunities to be a leader and develop a work

ethic as well as skills in communication. Through these statements he describes his

experiences in the following passages:

> I have a lot more patience than I thought I did. . . . It was positive because it helped, it helped pay for my schooling, helped school and it, it gave me something to do after school so I didn't just go home and kind of lounge around. Uh I met some pretty cool people. . . . It's a learning tool [athletics]. I mean, not only for me, for me to be able to go out and play and be able to talk about work over golf and understand it but to be able to help somebody.

He also said

> I found out that I'm actually pretty good at managing my time and I'm able to maintain that really good grade point average and still have a social life, even though people say you can't do that [be an athlete and a student].

G-2. G-2, a male golfer as well also indicated he found out that he relies on himself as an individual to make decisions rather than defer decision making to his parents. He completely enjoyed his experience as a student-athlete at the college level. He has competed in sports his entire life and has played two collegiate sports and hopes to be a coach someday using his experiences in athletics to help him be a better coach. He is confident in himself and his leadership abilities. Sports and competition have given him his identity as demonstrated by the following:

> Um, it's my whole life, really. Sports are um – so, it kind of came down to a thing where I needed to put myself back into school. . . . And I didn't know any other way but through sports. Because if I – if I'm – if I'm going to school, I'm not playing a sport, it's kind of hard for me to find motivation to keep grades up or to really find, you know, like my why – like why am I actually doing this. So, that was a big key for me plus uh, it's a new challenge. So, that was nice.

WB-1. WB-1, has found personal pride in being an athlete and has revealed she is a strong and confident female with the ability to develop new friendships in a completely new environment. She has developed communication skills, become a leader, and has enjoyed every minute of the experience. She is a tough competitor and has adopted her team as a family while attending college. She explains herself through the following words:

It's been – definitely been really positive. Um, it's a big – it's a very change from high school because all the study and basketball is like every single part of your day. You wake up, you work out, you go to school, but you're thinking about oh, they're gonna go basketball. You have basketball practice, you watch film. It's like you're here just for basketball so it kinda takes over your life. I would say that I found out that, um, like I'm as – like strong individual, I guess. Like I'm confident just being myself. . . . Um, I would say even with just training every day, for example. Um, you feel better about yourself, you feel like you're part of a team. You feel like, um, like you're comfortable as a team but then you're also confident by yourself.

WB-2. WB-2, a female basketball player described herself as a leader and hard worker who has played the game for a few years. She has made friends through athletics and has gained confidence in herself through participation in sports. She is a determined competitor and describes herself in the following manner:

I've had to become like more of a leader off the court as well as on the court. 'Cause I'm – I'm the leader of this team and usually I'm, you know, the younger one so I think having to be like more mature and always show respect even if sometimes I'm angry. You know, I have to do it so. I don't really think I'm a follower. I mean, I communicate really well. It's a lot of different types of people. Um, some I get along with like crazy and some, not so much but just have to learn to deal with it, I guess. I know we had a – someone doesn't want to talk, don't talk to him, like yeah. Yeah, definitely like I honestly – I think I've experienced every day a type of person on this team so I feel like in the future, I know how to take them. Um, just like I know when I'm frustrated or whatever, I can always like, come and shoot. Honestly this makes me like, figure out everything and I have like, played forever so it's just like part of my life. So, you know, it's pretty much my second home.

WB-3. WB-3, also a basketball player, is reserved and shy but revealed a lot of wisdom in her interview of her experiences so far in her young adult life. She expresses herself maturely in her comments and has developed many friendships through the experience of athletics while developing her personal identity. This strength and maturity is demonstrated in the following passages of her interview related in her own words. She shared experiences that have helped identify her independence and confidence:

Uhm, never give up. So you have to be like mentally, mentally prepared on that ground, so not only on the court but off the court just grounded in that. Like don't worry about failing, just give your best, nothing can go wrong if you just try your hardest. Always encourage others. Uhm, basketball is a sport and it is practically my second family like the girls, I just love them. Uhm, you just to have that extra commitment outside school, I guess. Uhm, well, I'm pretty easy going person, so, I kind of just go with the flow naturally, but in times like we have to settle on being a leader, I can do that.

WB-4. WB-4, is a basketball player as well and she has recognized the silent leader in herself but also has developed a strong personal identity through sports. She appears mature for a young woman and this comes from having strong role models in her family. She through her words reflects confidence and the ability to complete whatever she sets her mind on completing:

I would say like an experience for life. A lot of memories. Uhm, a lot of memories. A lot of like life lessons, just like small things so I could always – when the issue comes up, I'll be like, 'Oh, yeah, I already went through that on my own.' Kind of the 'I can do this' thing? I would say in a way, the more silent leader on the team. You know, because the talkative spot is all talking about, you know, me getting, I mean I got that one. You know, I just – when it's on the court, I just try to tell the girls, 'Hey, run to place,' direct them, lead by example, by knowing everything so myself. Uhm, yeah. Probably the passion for the sport . . . I would say. Uhm, I don't know. That's pretty simple because like I just love playing, like that's – that's like the place where I go to is just I don't have to think. That's like a usual objective. You just go by the instincts and of course like basketball being a team sport helps a lot like I love being social.

MB-1. MB-1, is a male basketball player who identifies himself as an athlete who grew up as a "gym rat" spending hours on the court developing his abilities as a basketball player. He has a mature outlook on life and has used athletics as a proving ground for those he meets and he shared that he is a competitor. He sees himself as a role model for teammates and classmates, a role he willingly assumes. He enjoys the relationships and friends he has made through athletics teaching him skills to get along with people. In his own words he describes the athletic experience as follows:

I've gained confidence as a person to say 'I can do it' it shows yourself that if you put your mind on something, have a plan to do it, and you go on and do it, you can do other things, everything else that you set your mind to. I've gained personal satisfaction, reminds us something and you accomplish it or complete it, it's very rewarding. It's not material-rewarding but it's a good feeling. . . . I'm goal driven. I set goals and I try to achieve them, and I set hard goals but I set achievable goals at the same time. . . . If I'm gonna do something, I'm gonna do it, um 100%. That's a big one. Umm, I don't waste time doing something half speed. If I'm gonna do it I'm gonna do it.

MB-2. MB-2, a male basketball player, is quite mature and soft spoken. He has worked hard to accomplish goals through sports and wants to make his parents proud of his accomplishments. He has learned to control emotions, become disciplined, and has found he is a leader in his roles on the team. He describes these traits as follows:

I learned – being here, I learned so much you know. I thought I was this perfect guy "but this was entirely a learning experience for me." I fell multiple times over and over but I got up and tried again. I learned its okay to fail but what's not okay is to quit and not try gain. I was never into sports but I started getting good at it and my high school coach, he really saw something in me potential. So from that point on I like – gave it 100% every single day and I loved it. It's like I had to overcome adversity, it's like I had no motivation, I wasn't driven, it's like everything was gone, I was going to tell coach but something in my mind said "hey turn around, you can do this" so since that day I went through it, at the end it was tremendous. Everything elevated from my game, my classroom grades, everything "it's just – it's just elevated." I learned how to make something out of nothing. I learned how to take every situation, every negative and try to find good in it, you know not to try to down myself about it.

MB-3. MB-3, also a basketball player has learned maturity, gained networking skills, and developed pride in self and life through lessons learned on the court and from coaches. He spoke to so many skills learned through athletics he had a hard time identifying all of them:

Well I learned – I learned that I could accomplish anything. Sometimes you don't see the benefit right there and there but you – you just have to be patient and hopefully you see the benefit. I really love sports, and you know I like don't know what I'll do without – without basketball. It adds that extra stuff to me, you know. Well, I found out that, uh – I'm human . . . in high school it always felt like I could do this and do that without consequences. But then coming here, I have to

be on my own so I have to, you know, face those consequences on my own and not my parents helping me out. So I think – think I've learned a bit . . . be more responsible. It teaches discipline and patience or you try to go a little faster or you try to go a little slower, you know just adjusting to the situation. So I guess that's a life skill you could adjust to the situation.

MB-4. MB-4, through basketball has found that relationships and friendships are

part of the special experience that lasts for a lifetime. He also has found a sense of

identity and has matured on his own through sports. In his words he describes himself as:

I'm really, really competitive . . . I don't really follow, but I'm a little bit of everything, but mostly a communicator. If the team isn't like really engaged on what's going on, I'm trying – I'm – I'm going to try to like get their attention and get their engagement. By myself, I get a lot of respect from people . . . I really never knew that I got – like I get someone's respect and people respect me. The experience it's a positive thing because when I go on to my next level, it's just – I'm going to use that to, to – um uh, I'm just going to use that like because I really know that's going to happen, so I'll be prepared. I always wanted to play sports; it's been a part of me.

MB-5. MB-5, through participation in basketball has learned to never give up

and be deliberate in your pursuit of excellence. He also has enjoyed the relationships and

friends made while finding a leader in himself. He definitely sees a big picture from his

participation in sports as described in his words:

I'm motivated. What I mean by that is every day, I know I'm going to finish here and transfer to somewhere else and get a head start to go somewhere. When we all graduate we're gonna leave . . . and we might not get to see each other and that's one of hard parts. You are gonna miss everybody – cause they are college mates, brothers. Becoming – becoming a captain, that's a big responsibility but at the same time you know, just like you have siblings, I learned from a brother and not I'm like my little brothers learn from me. They respect me as a person too also, so that's what helped me become a leader, because you have to gain respect to give respect.

VB-1. VB-1, a volleyball player, was reflective in her description of the

experience. She could see transferability of skills for life after sports and also enjoyed

the ride and opportunities sports has given her. She has been a leader but it was not the

most important role to her identity. She describes the experience as follows:

> I've been from so far away, I would say like didn't really know, I didn't know a single person when I came to this school and so, getting to have like kind of like a family like I always said, coming right into it was really nice. I don't know if I would learn this not being in athletics . . . I am away from home I had to take a risk be kind of on my own and I have not really done that before. And so, ahm, I kind of my hand – hand was kind of like that I feel responsible for myself. You've got to learn to work with many different personalities definitely like as a team, you know, you're not going to have, a wide range of personalities and you've got to learn to work with all of them. I found, I can open up and talk. Hah, I do have a voice, I don't have to be so shy all the time and I think, like you just learn about yourself. It's more than just winning or losing because I don't know, in 50 years I probably cannot remember whether I won a certain game or not. I still look back on games I played not only remember who it was, but I remember the girls I played with and the memories I have in that.

VB-2. VB-2, a volleyball player, has discovered her voice and found strengths

she was not aware she had as a result of her athletic experiences. She has matured and is

quite confident in her abilities and has learned to work with people through sports as

offered in her words as follows:

> That I can be whatever I need to be and in a certain moment, you know, if I need to be a follower I can say okay, I'll listen to you, you tell me how to help me out and I can be the leader and say, 'Hey you know we need to do this,' and ahm, and then it's helped me better learn how to communicate without being so like aggressive sometimes because I know I can come off as that sometimes, so, it's definitely help me ah, better communicate, like, what tone of voice and what use different words sometimes rather than, 'Oh wow that sucks.' It is like, 'Oh no, okay, well, that was kind of silly but you can do this,' to help you get better rather than just saying, ah, you know. Definitely a positive experience, ahm, just because it's you're getting to continue doing something you love and then getting to do it with people that love it just as much as you, ahm, makes it so much better, because in high school, you know, there is always that one person that's like, well I'm just going out, just because I can, but when we are in college, you know, everyone, you want to be the best on the team, you love it, you know, you are all playing for each other. Ahm, and yeah, just all the things that I've learned about myself and about other people, ahm, yeah, it's definitely been positive.

VB-3. VB-3, a volleyball player, recognized the role of leadership as one skill or strength that she needed to develop as her abilities here assisted the team and gave her opportunities to be a success. The words confident, strong, and competitive come to mind when describing this athlete, and for her, confidence has been learned and practiced through sports. She describes herself in the following passages:

> I love being a leader. I love how people can come to me with anything that they want. I love helping people it's just a great thing to know about people trust you enough to come to you for advice. Being a captain on a team, I learned that I have to be a solid foundation for my team. I need to be able to take things underneath my bell and not let my emotions show. And I also need to be a leader for the other girls on the team. I need to let them know that anything that they need help with or if they need someone to talk to they can come to me and I just have to make sure that everything that needs to be done gets done and I think that in the future this will help me since I want to go into medicine to be a leader in the field that I choose. I think that I'm strong and I've become more confident in myself, like I don't feel a reason to never do anything because I can't do it. If I want to do it I can just go for it and give it up my own. The first time I went home after freshman year, my parents are like, "Why are you talking so much?" I was just like, "I don't know." And its lot easier like I talk on the phone with my grandparents and I think everybody in my family can really see a difference in my talking skills.

Data Analysis

The initial steps of data analysis revealed over 400 statements of significance were noted that described the experiences of the interviewed students. The goal of data reduction during this phase of the data analysis was to categorize the ideas, passages, sentences, and words of the experience described by the interviewees while not affecting or changing the original meaning of the verbatim statements. Using the modified data analysis process described by van Kaam in (Moustakas,1994), I was able to group and categorize like meaning units of the out-of-class experience that participants viewed as contributing to their personal development life skills. The modified data analysis process

reduced the individual statements into 20 meaning units. Table 1 presents these meaning

units and examples from the transcripts associated with the respective meaning units.

Table 1

Meaning Units and Example Statements

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Accomplishment	• "I would say the best part of the experience is, um, I guess just getting the opportunity to do what I've always wanted to do. Um, I'm not only excited about -- like the basketball part of it, working out part of it. But I'm also, um, excited about the education that I get with it." (WB-1)
	• "Signing day . . . just because I went to a high school that is pretty negative toward you about the athletes anyway, that they'll never make it to anything. So, signing definitely made me feel good and then, he, the, he was willing to drive three hours from here to come and sign the kid and made me feel pretty special." (G-1)
	• "Um, I'm good with kids . . . I could be of big help towards something in my life." (MB-4)
Belonging	• "I feel like it [life skills] was accelerated by being a part of the team." (MB-1)
	• "The best part is the competiveness, competition, and – and, um just going on road trips, bonding with the team." (MB-4)
	• "My connection to the team like we – like I said, we bond a lot, we talk to each other, we talk about our personal life to each other sometimes – And like we get on each other – we're like brothers." (MB-4)
	• "It's more than just winning or losing because I don't know, in 50 years I probably cannot remember whether I won a certain game or not. I still look back on games I played not only remember who it was, but I remember the girls I played with and the memories I have in that." (VB-1)
	• "Definitely a positive experience, ahm, just because it's you're getting to continue doing something you love and then getting to do it with people that love it just as much as you, ahm, makes it so much better, because in high school, you know, there is always that one person that's like, well I'm just going out, just because I can, but when we are in college, you know, everyone, you want to be the best on the team, you love it, you know, you are all playing for each other." (VB-2)

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Confidence	• "Confidence as a person yes . . . To say 'I can do it' . . . It shows yourself that if you put your mind on something, have a plan to do it, and you go on and do it, you can do other things, everything else that you set your mind to." (MB-1)
	• "Yeah I, found, I can open up and talk. Hah, I do have a voice, I don't have to be so shy all the time and I think, like you just learn about yourself." (VB-1)
	• "Communicating volleyball is all about communicating. So there is not a day that goes by that you can't communicate on the court and then communication is key in life too, like, if you have a problem with someone, it is easier just to go up and talk to them, don't do this assume things about them." (VB-3)
	• "Yeah, I would say being in volleyball definitely helped my social skills so I wasn't necessarily scared to go to other things and there's a lot of stuff to do on campus, so, it's just easier, once you know how to talk to people and not be afraid of it to participate." (VB-3)
Fulfilling	• "Athletic experience has been fun." (MB-1)
	• "Oh, I find, very satisfied. Ahm, it was a lot of fun, I was, I would do it over and over again and again, I'd say yes come right here." (VB-1)
	• "I had a nice like as a whole like as a person I know I grew more because of the experience and made memories I probably would never forget and yeah, even if I don't go on or I do I will always have like, you know, that I enjoyed my time here." (VB-1)
	• "It was awesome except for one when we had our little parts and it would get stressful having ahm, to miss class so, that was the only thing that would make me say it was a nine. But, otherwise it was a really, really, really good experience, yeah." (VB-2)
Goal Driven	• "It's been, for the most part, positive . . . 'Uh, it's definitely made me try' . . . Time-management is huge 'cause I'm taking 20 credit hours so, uh, I'm, I'm more focused on my school than golf and my coach knows that and that can get kinda frustrating but overall, it's really positive." (G-1)
	• "I don't, I don't quit umm . . . and don't give up easy." (MB-1)
	• "Um, whether it's balancing academics and athletics or balancing the things you wanna do versus the things that you need to do. Um, making time to talk to your family back home or go in a golf course, it's just about the balance, I think. That's probably the toughest part." (G-2)
Identity	• "I say to my brother this all the time 'what would I be doing without basketball?' I don't know what I'd do every day." (MB-1)

Table 1 continues

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Identity (cont'd)	• "I was always the student who would listen to my teachers and should not have a question, be shy and nervous. It [athletics] taught me to be more confident in myself and not be afraid to ask questions, you know not be shy, you know be vocal, be their voice, be heard." (MB-2)
	• "I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I can be a good leader. Ahm, that I can manage my time well and that I can succeed if I put my mind to it. Ahm, and I, like I said earlier, I definitely learned how to control my emotions a lot better ahm, and, I don't know, also kind of learned more that I am not quite so shy around new people, that it is easier for me ahm, to just start talking to people, no problem." (VB-2)
	• "Um, it's my whole life, really. Sports are um – so, it kind of came down to a thing where I needed to put myself back into school . . . And I didn't know any other way but through sports. Because if I – if I'm – if I'm going to school, I'm not playing a sport, it's kind of hard for me to find motivation to keep grades up or to really find, you know, like my why – like why am I actually doing this. So, that was a big key for me plus uh, it's a new challenge. So, that was nice." (G-2)
Independence	• "I kind of learned a lot on how I operate. Um, I – I think I read – actually I read it in a book that Coach, gave to me in the class . . . There's uh, quote that says, 'In order to have what you really want, you must first be who you really are,' and I took that right away. So, I pretty much made it a goal to figure out who I was, like how I as a person attacks certain situations . . . And now that I'm on my own, I really get a chance to figuring that out because I can't just run upstairs and go, 'Hey, Mom.' This happened; what should I do?" It's on me. So, yeah." (G-2)
	• "I don't know if I would learn this not being in athletics . . . I am away from home I had to take a risk be kind of on my own and I have not really done that before. And so, ahm, I kind of my hand-hand was kind of like that I feel responsible for myself." (VB-1)
	• "Um, I would say just being away from – being away from my family and my friends. And also, just being away from the city. Like I kinda miss just going – being able to go anywhere I want whenever I want." (WB-1)
Individual Strength	• It's like I had to overcome adversity . . . It's like I had no motivation, I wasn't driven, it's like everything was gone . . . I was going to tell like 'Coach, you know, I can't take it' . . . But something in my mind say 'hey turn around, you can do this.' So since that day forth, I went through it. At the end it was tremendous . . . everything elevated from my game, my classroom grades, everything 'it's just – it's just elevated'." (MB-2)
	• "You know, I learned how to – to never quit, to never give up on anything. Once you start it, you got to finish it. There's not quitting. I learned how to be relentless, you know go the extra mile in the classroom, on the court, you know, just give more what is expected." (MB-2)

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Individual Strength (cont'd)	• "I think that I'm strong and I've become more confident in myself, like I don't feel a reason to never do anything because I can't do it. If I want to do it I can just go for it and give it up my own." (VB-3)
	• "I – I don't think I've ever been through adversity that bad . . . But at the end made me so much stronger, so much more confident in myself 'hey you can do anything you want to do'." (MB-2)
Leadership	• "Umm, standing out for a friend in a group and speaking." (MB-1)
	• "Umm, a better leader because I take so much pride in what I do. So I want to be the best and everybody wants to be the best. When you set yourself apart, umm, people see that and they tend to follow what you do." (MB-1)
	• "I'm both a leader and communicator. I was always, you know, kind of like, oh, yeah, you, I'd be, probably I can kind of be, but I was kind of like really outspoken one." (VB-1)
	• "Ahm, that I can be whatever I need to be and in a certain moment, you know, if I need to be a follower I can say okay, I'll listen to you, you tell me how to help me out and I can be the leader and say, 'Hey you know we need to do this,' and ahm, and then it's helped me better learn how to communicate without being so like aggressive sometimes because I know I can come off as that sometimes, so, it's definitely help me ah, better communicate, like, what tone of voice and what use different words sometimes rather than, 'Oh wow that sucks.' It is like, 'Oh no, okay, well, that was kind of silly but you can do this,' to help you get better rather than just saying, ah, you know." (VB-2)
Maturity	• "I learned – being here, I learned so much you know. I thought I was this perfect guy like 'Okay. You can do this.' But it was – entirely a learning experience for me . . . I fell multiple times over and over but I got up and tried again. And that's what I learned like 'it's okay to fail' but what's 'not okay is to quit and not try' again." (MB-2)
	• "I would say discipline, responsibility, teamwork, ah, just me and myself have come out more like I'm very shy person, I would say, I'm just being involved in that, I was forced to kind of like go out, branch out, which is nice." (VB-1)\
	• "I definitely do and I think its things that will build to go or carry with you throughout your whole life that it's not going to be ah, oh it's just good for you throughout college but it's a lifelong thing definitely." (VB-2)
	• "Um, just the whole experience of being here? Positive, definitely. Um, even though sometimes it might've felt like a negative. Um, as I'm nearing the end now I can definitely see everything that, um, helped develop me as a person that I am today versus who I was when I first showed up here two years ago." (WB-1)

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Maturity (cont'd)	• "It's definitely positive. Um, just the growth I guess, individually that I had – since I've been here, is really rewarding. And then on top of that, I actually, it's really cool to see my teammates have to go through the same process and see them get better as a person and as – and as an athlete." (G-2)
Opportunity	• "Coach, he always told us to 'hey go out and meet new people'. Get involved in these different activities like Wacky Wednesdays, Night at the Movies. He just wants us to go out and mainly meet people like 'hey come to the game', you know." (MB-2)
	• "There were definite things like I would have never done some of this, like opportunities, I will never have done probably because of, if I hadn't been in sports." (VB-1)
	• "I was, you know, really satisfied with playing for, playing here volleyball and ahm, I played last year, I was well, ahm, and I really, something I really enjoyed that I was really grateful for that, I got the chance to do it." (VB-2)
	• It was positive because it helped, it helped pay for my schooling and it, it gave me something to do after school so I didn't just go home and kind of lounge around. Uh, I met some pretty cool people, not just from our school, from other schools that I still talk to on Facebook and I think my golf coach is probably a pretty good reference on applications." (G-1)
Relationship	• "Um, I think about people. Well like everyone is different and you just got to treat others as you do – you like – like how you would be treated by others because every has feeling, emotions, everybody goes through things. And you got to be polite and respect others." (MB-4)
	• "We do a lot of team bonding, which ahm, I would say just from one year to the next we had more and I think as a whole we got stronger ahm, yeah, we learned to trust each other better." (VB-1)
	• "Ahm, any sport helps you work, or, has helped me, you know, build to work with other people or if you don't like a person, when you're on the court with them, you'll like them, you'll have to like them, you have to work with them, you know. And I think that is something that will carry with me throughout my entire life, you know, because there is not always can be anyone that you love that you work with." (VB-2)
	• "At first I was a little shaky but then we started doing like our team bonding, we all got to get to know each other on different level besides just volleyball. And coach really encouraged us to be together besides on the volleyball court. And we'd always have to spend at least an hour together, during two days and then she wanted us to do it once a week during the season too." (VB-3)
Respect	• "Well when I got into basketball . . . I don't think I've had much opportunities that I have . . . opportunities for me to communicate with college coaches . . . just started coming in. Like people wanted to like – like people wanted to talk to me, interview me. People wanted to know what it is to be an athlete, you know." (MB-2).

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Respect (cont'd)	• "The worst part of the experience is – hmm. The worst part is like all the criticizing outside of the – like outside of the athletic and stuff." (MB-4)
	• "That everyone is different. You can't say anything to everyone. You have to know ahm, kind of, what type of person they are and how they take things because some people you had to yell at them and say, you need to, you know, get your stuff together but other people you have to be more nice and softer with them and say, hey, you know, it's okay you've got, you know, you've got the next one, so, it's definitely helped me be able to read people better and ahm, know, yeah, how they take things and ahm, yeah, learning about, just all different kinds of people and where they come from, and I don't know, just everything like that." (VB-2)
	• "We're here to get the same education you guys are getting. And like just because we're taller than everyone, they don't have to look at us differently." (MB-4)
Role Model	• "Being an athlete, being in the game in a big stage – that's, that's the best feeling . . . People are watching and you need to perform." (MB-1)
	• "Your actions speak louder than your words, so if you say you're gonna do this and that . . . people notice and see things and they follow that." (MB-1)
	• "I get a lot of respect from people . . . because – because I'm good. I don't know. I don't know. Because I'm probably someone to look up to." (MB-4)
	• "I would say leadership is definitely me, even though I wasn't a captain . . . um, I still feel like what I do – especially freshmen – now that we have freshmen that they follow my example." (WB-1)
	• "Uh, not to sound egotistical but yeah, in every sport I played, I've willingly taken on that [leader] role." (G-2)
Self-Reliant	• "I learned that – well, me, I always trust people. I learned that you can – you can never rely on anyone . . . You have to force yourself to be independent like 'hey I've got this' you know." (MB-2)
	• "Probably the main thing I've learned is there is so many valuable lessons I've learned here by myself than I wouldn't have gotten if I went 20 miles from my house probably." (VB-1)
	• "You definitely have to be mentally tough. There is days that are not going to go your way and you just have to get through it. The workouts are not very easy there so you just got to tell yourself that you can do it. Mental toughness was a big thing. And also in the, I can do things if I put myself to it. Just got to stay on track." (VB-3)
	• "I think the toughest part has been when I first got here. It was such a transition 'cause you're taken away from everything that you're familiar with. And put in a new environment so just I guess just like that initial adaption . . . figuring out the new family, where you fit, what's your role is." (WB-1))

Table 1 continues

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Self-Reliant (cont'd)	• "I definitely know how to time manage more now because high school is nothing like this and you're gone for two three days at a time sometimes you really have to be on top of your homework you have to be on a good talking level with your teachers. So I'd say communication was a big thing out of it too." (VB-3
Servant Leader	• "I mean, there has to be a leadership and then there also has to be the followers too, I feel like you know, that you can still have your input." (VB-2)
	• "Being a captain on a team, I learned that I have to be a solid foundation for my team. I need to be able to take things underneath my bell and not let my emotions show. And I also need to be a leader for the other girls on the team. I need to let them know that anything that they need help with or if they need someone to talk to they can come to me and I just have to make sure that everything that needs to be done gets done and I think that in the future this will help me since I want to go into medicine to be a leader in the field that I choose." (VB-3)
	• "I love being a leader. I love how people can come to me with anything that they want. I love helping people; it's just a great thing to know about people trust you enough to come to you for advice." (VB-3)
Team Player	• "If you make a conscious effort to truly play together and not be selfish things happen much better." (MB-1)
	• "You've got to learn to work with many different personalities definitely like as a team, you know, you're not going to have, a wide range of personalities and you've got to learn to work with all of them." (VB-1)
	• "We all have to be together as a unit. It is not just ah, one person out there by themselves. I mean, I could say that even for wrestling, I think, you have to work together as a team, you know, in the practice room you are out there on the mat all by yourself in a meet but you have to be there as a team, I think. Any sport you have to have a team connection." (VB-2)
	• "Uh, you can, you learn a lot about somebody when they're struggling. You, the, the true person comes out when somebody's struggling. And you also learn what kind of people, those people are willing to help you if you're struggling or if they're still your friends when you're struggling, I guess." (G-1)
	• "Ahm, a life lesson that I learned, will definitely be ahm, just working with other people ah, getting along with everyone in the court whether they said something that ticked you off or did some, you know, that you're like, 'Why would you do that,' but having to say, 'All right, we'll get the next time'." (VB-2)

Meaning Unit	Example Statement
Transferability	• "The drills during the practice were definitely practice drills but coach had set aside like a rule a strike system for us which are definitely like the life skills, like, we obviously know that there's things that we shouldn't be doing, so if we were to do those things then we get a strike and if we got up to three strikes and then we be kicked off the team. So she is trying to help us be the better person by setting rules for our team." (VB-3)
	• "Uh, it's, it's a, I don't know how to rephrase it. It's a learning tool. I mean, not only for, for me to be able to go out with like in a play and be able to talk about work over golf and understand it but to be able to help somebody 'cause I feel that to come to school here, I could help somebody get better just from what my coach saw in me . . . A lot of it's, you, you, you may clearly get friends from people you golf with and you can tell just from, when you golf with somebody within nine holes, if it's somebody you want to make friends with or kind of pass on the road." (G-1)
	• "Um, you're building relationships with these people, and it – it's more than just athletics really. So, whether you can – I mean me being older than most of the guys on the team, sometimes I kind of feel – not like I know at all but on a little bit – a step above when it comes to at least life skills or life lessons. But if you just listen and watch and interact with these guys, you actually learn a little bit." (G-2)
	• "I definitely, um, gain responsibility like I said earlier. Um, I'll say it's contributed to my work, um, I think . . . It's definitely prepared me for the future, um, leadership-wise. And just having confidence." (WB-1)
Work Ethic	• "I learned that I'm hard, hardworking . . . If you work hard for something you don't wanna give up easy." (MB-1)
	• "You can ask anyone that I compete for everything, ahm, and just, you know, also I wanted it ahm, for a scholarship. I thought, you know, that is something that drove me as well to, ah, to excel as much as I could so I could, you know, have a scholarship for sport and then it will help me with school." (VB-2)
	• "It's kind of like uh, you do – you do it on your own pretty much with us. And you uh – you really get out what you put in. So, um, it's kind of to the individual, but um – I mean I can – I – I like the freedom that we're allowed to have and uh – I mean if you're really, really want to put the work in, you – you'll see rewards from them." (G-2)
	• "Just in like if you're not doing everything the correct way, I mean, you can't short cut things. It all eventually catch up with you." (VB-1)
	• "You know, I learned how to -- to never quit, to never give up on anything. Once you start it, you got to finish it. There's not quitting. I learned how to be relentless, you know go the extra mile in the classroom, on the court, you know, just give more." (MB-1)
	• "Even my conditioning [drills] teach you're not gonna just run lines in a game but it's gonna help you get ready for the game, the main point of stuff like this is to mentally train yourself to get through tough times." (MB-1)

Using the statements for each meaning unit, an explanation to further define the meaning unit was developed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the experience. Table 2 presents the explanation of the meaning units.

Table 2

Explanation of Meaning Units

Meaning Unit	Explanation
Goal Driven	I set my mind to it and complete it, finish what you start.
Servant Leader	To lead others effectively you first need to know how to follow so that you can learn how to be lead.
Teaching	Never too old to learn and gain wisdom to allow you to show others what you've learned.
Transferability	The experience has developed skills that I can use in life and work.
Work Ethic	The experience has taught me soft skills for the working world.
Independence	I need to accomplish this on my own and have the skills, networking, and resources.
Leadership	I've been exposed to lead and like to be responsible for decisions and/or to captain my role with the team.
Maturing	As a result of my experience I have learned from my choices and make good decisions.
Opportunity	The experience has allowed me to see, do, try, and be a part of many new things.
Relationship	I've learned to network and develop interpersonal skills that help me work with others.
Team Player	Working together as unit or team the group accomplishes more and becomes a group of like-minded people.
Accomplishment	I feel good about what I've done and I'm satisfied with the outcome.
Individual Strength	I have the ability to be relentless and I can rely on myself and my skills -- I can do this attitude.

Meaning Unit	Explanation
Respect	I have teammates, classmates, fans, and others appreciate and honor me for my skills and accomplishments.
Role Model	People can and want to follow in my shoes and they want to be like me.
Self-Reliance	I can figure things out on my own with some guidance and acceptance.
Belonging	I fit here and I'm comfortable and I have a place here.
Confidence	I am sure of myself and have learned I have skills.
Fulfilling	I've gained skills from the experience and it has been positive for me and worthwhile.
Identity	I am defined by the experience it explains me, is me, and is who I am.

Themes

The final step of the data analysis procedure involved a clustering process where the meaning units were placed into seven broadly emerging themes representative of the lived experiences of the participants in this study. The clustering process and emergent themes are represented in Table 3.

In the following sections, the emergent themes are presented with expanded narrative examples from the participants.

Influence by coaches. Several of the interviewed student-athletes described the impact their coaches had on their ability to learn to set goals, finish, or complete those goals, and the interpersonal relationships developed as a result of their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Sub-question number 3 asked, "Does the student-athlete's coach's role and leadership style enhance or inhibit development of desired life skills within and outside of the experience?" In the words of the student-athletes, coaches

Table 3

Themes

Theme	Meaning Unit(s)
Influence by Coaches	Goal Driven
Life Building	Servant Leader
	Teaching
	Transferability
	Work Ethic
Maturity & Self-Ownership	Independence
	Leadership
	Maturing
Networking & Communication	Opportunity
	Relationship
	Team Player
Pride	Accomplishment
	Individual Strength
	Respect
	Role Model
	Self-Reliance
Relationship & Connection	Belonging
Self-Identity	Confidence
	Fulfilling
	Identity

assume many roles of influence for those student-athletes during their attendance at the

college. For some athletes, the role of mentor, guide, listener, and/or quality leader is

how coaches were viewed; one could hear the influence that the coaches had on their

student-athletes through the following comments:

- "Coach is a good motivator, he's not the ra-ra type, but he does just enough that he gets you going when you need to. He says stuff to keep you self-motivated. He's mentor." (MB-1)

- "Coach, he always told us to 'hey go out and meet new people' [networking opportunities and relationship building with peers]. Get involved in these different activities like Wacky Wednesdays, Night at the Movies. He just wants us to go out and mainly meet people like 'hey come to the game, you know.'" (MB-2)

- "Coach has a big influence, I mean, like now I have gone to her about, you know, playing on and I talked with her about certain things like, anything like that. It's not even just for sports I go to talk to her about if I had problems I go and talk to her and she's just someone there for me to talk to." (VB-1)

- [Coach] "He's very wise. He makes you think. . . . He sends us a general thought quotes [maturity and self-ownership for personal actions] and you read it and read it and you're like 'Oh my God. He's absolutely right.' And you get to thinking about it. And you try to put that into you." (MB-2)

- "Our head coach, he just like tells us if you want to – if you want to get the next level, we got to do – we got to do, uh, like big things to get to the next level. We got to do thing that's going to make us better . . . made me want to continue to play for him and continue to grow as a basketball player." (MB-4)

- "I call coach a mentor, because I learn a lot of skills from him. He's shown me straightened routes to take, you know every time." (MB-5)

- [Coach] "He's great – he's a great speaker, like I say. He motivates you, encourages you, and he tells you positive stuff like he demonstrates stuff – he's just a good person like even outside of basketball so, he's great listener." (MB-5)

- [Coach] "Pushes us to be a better person . . . he gets on us if we have bad grades . . . [coach] is a mentor and a guide." (MB-4)

- "He makes it better than I thought it would be. Um, you know, as a – I guess, as a little scared coming into this, not being a golfer yet, that I would have – a coach who wants my swing to look a certain way, is very dictated, I guess. But I got the exact opposite and he's – I – I don't want him – I don't want to make it sound like he doesn't do much, but he's almost more of a friend than a coach. So, uh, he's very loose. Uh, he makes it fun for us; we have a bunch of fun with him. It's – I think it's an advantage that he's kind of young, um, but – Yeah, he uh – he – he really – whether he's helping us with our swings or just joking around time, he makes us want to be better." (G-2)

The comments above were from both male and female athletes as they spoke of their coaches' leadership style as it influenced decision making and responsibility for self leading to development of life skills. Athletes did not describe life skills learned or developed directly but referenced the following as life skills learned: networking, being a leader, learning to listen to others, being self-disciplined, and that you finish what you start which was task completion. Student-athletes were directly and indirectly influenced by their coaches' personal leadership style. An obvious relationship of respect developed as they got to interact with and learn from their coaches.

One athlete mentioned that he also learned to speak up in a respectful manner should he disagree with his coach but he also recognized that standing up for yourself was a life skill too as shown by this comment:

- "Telling your coach, 'No.' Or, when they don't . . . Yeah, telling, being able . . . Ahh, I don't know how to word that – the conflict between your coach and yourself with the sport and school because to them, you're there for the sport and for yourself, the school [commitment]." (G-1)

For this student-athlete having the courage and/or conviction to speak your mind was important and also a skill that would be a useful one in life beyond and outside of athletics. Goal accomplishment also meant the following to the interviewed athletes:

- [Life lesson] "Uhm, work hard and never settle . . . Some things I will be better at than others." (WB-4)

- "I'm goal driven. I set goals and I try to achieve them, and I set hard goals but I set achievable goals at the same time." (MB-1)

- "Yea, better time management and like helping others." (MB-4)

Through these comments the theme of goal accomplishment seemed to fit well with the meaning unit descriptor of setting your mind to something and then completing that goal.

Life building. The theme of life building comes from the clustered meaning units of servant-leadership, teaching, transferability, and work ethic. Sub-questions 1 and 2 asked the question of "What specific developmental life skills/soft skills are documented as a result of the experience in extracurricular activities, and what was unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of identified life skills?"

Common threads of learning to lead meant that you needed to be a good follower first surfaced several times during the interviews:

- "I mean, there has to be a leadership and then there also has to be the followers too, I feel like you know, that you can still have your input but ahm, yes, you definitely are those two big ones." (VB-2)

- "Probably, a leader because, uh, we're constantly in a . . . I mean if two people were standing there, they know the athletes so you're [watched] . . . Anything you do is gonna be portrayed different than what somebody else does. And, uh, usually, when you get in a group, you know, the athletes who want it, gives orders and tells people what to do because everybody just stands there, looking at each other." (G-1)

- "I've had to become like more of a leader off the court as well as on the court. 'Cause I'm – 'm the leader of this team and usually I'm, you know, the younger one so I think having to be like more mature and always show respect even if sometimes I'm angry. You know, I have to do it." (WB-2)

- "I would say leadership is a big one. Ahm, definitely have taken on a role of being a leader which I think is a good thing to learn how to be a leader.

  And, ahm, oh, and another thing is ahm, tight situations or, you know, never racking situations. Ahm, they won't just, you know, being in a team but even, you know, they help you bring you back up or, you know, say, hey, you know, calm down, you don't need to be so nervous but also as yourself as a single individual you have to learn to control those emotions." (VB-2)

- "Always treat your teammates with respect. If – if they respect you – like if you respect them, they will respect you." (MB-4)

- "They respect me as a person too also, so that's what helped me become a leader, because you have to gain respect to give respect." (MB-5)

- "Team meetings stuff like that. Uh when there's something that needs to be said you over, umm, you have to overcome the fear of speaking up, and sometimes it has to be done so you need to do it." (MB-1)

- "I'm both a leader and communicator. I was always, you know, kind of like, oh, yeah, you, I'd be, probably I can kind of be, but I was kind of like really the outspoken one." (VB-1)

- "Relentless, is you know . . . 'that's our motto'. Relentless is, you know, no matter what, just give it what you got, and just being like – like if someone needs a hand, help, you being there. It's going hard every day no matter what, just give it all you got." (MB-5)

- "That I can be whatever I need to be and in a certain moment, you know, if I need to be a follower I can say okay, I'll listen to you, you tell me how to help me out and I can be the leader and say, 'Hey you know we need to do this,' and ahm, and then it's helped me better learn how to communicate without being so like aggressive sometimes because I know I can come off as that sometimes, so, it's definitely help me ah, better communicate, like, what tone of voice and what use different words sometimes rather than, 'Oh wow that sucks.' It is like, 'Oh no, okay, well, that was kind of silly but you can do this,' to help you get better rather than just saying, ah, you know." (VB-2)

- "I've learned a lot . . . Most of the things I've learned from basketball helped me in life, umm, first thing is hard work, work ethic, like in . . . Personally; I've found that leads to success. If you work hard you can do good things. Umm, another thing is I learned that teamwork is very important. Umm, if you consciously make a . . . If you make a conscious effort to truly play together and not be selfish, things happen much better. Uh, let's see – communication." (MB-1)

Life skills/soft skills learned through the practice of leading others and student-athlete recognition of leadership as a valuable life skill was described by all interviewed student-athletes. It was interesting to hear the connections described of life skills learned to personal practice of the skills. The students were associating their ability to utilize these life skills later in life and work situations beyond their athletic experience. Comments outlining the identified life skills of responsibility, dedication, routines, trust

in others, setting rules, relationships, and interpersonal communication with others are

provided to illustrate the connections students described from their experiences:

- "I would definitely say responsibility's the biggest thing I'm taking away. Um, you know, you're completely responsible for every part of your day. How you treat people, how people treat you even. Um, and that's definitely something I'll take on, um, on the future jobs." (WB-1)

- "It's kind of like uh, you do – you do it on your own pretty much with us. And you uh – you really get out what you put in. So, um, it's kind of up to the individual, but um – I mean I can – I – I like the freedom that we're allowed to have and uh – I mean if you're really, really want to put the work in, you – you will see rewards from them." (G-2)

- "Just in like if you're not doing everything the correct way, I mean, you can't short cut things. It all eventually catch up with you." (VB-1)

- "I would say I like to think like you have to take it, it's never given to you, so, you want a good grade. I mean, you have to work for it. If you want to be the best, you have to work for it. Yeah, never going to be handed to you." (WB-4)

- "I mean I guess he did tell us that because we're good at golf, it will help us with future business opportunities. . . . Like the focus I'm going through right now with job searching, uh, system about it that it's, it's not just gonna happen right now. It might take two, three, four, 100 interviews." (G-1)

- "Just hard work dedication I guess, I mean, you weren't going to just get it easily it was going to take work to get to that." (VB-1)

- "You know, I learned how to – to never quit, to never give up on anything. Once you start it, you got to finish it. There's not quitting. I learned how to be relentless, you know go the extra mile in the classroom, on the court, you know, just give more what is – what's expected." (MB-2)

- "Trust, a lot of life skills that I know I will be using in the future." (VB-3)

- "If I wake up and don't have a time [routine] that that I've set . . . or I don't work out every time that day of the week, then I don't. Sometimes I won't do it, so time management." (MB-1)

- "The drills during the practice were definitely practice drills but coach had set aside like a rule a strike system for us which are definitely like the life skills, like, we obviously know that there's things that we shouldn't be doing, so if we were to do those things then we get a strike and if we got up to three

strikes and then we be kicked off the team. So she is trying to help us be the better person by setting rules for our team." (VB-3)

- "Uh, it's, it's a, I don't know how to rephrase it. It's a learning tool. I mean, not only for, for me to be able to go out with like in a play and be able to talk about work over golf and understand it but to be able to help somebody 'cause I feel that to come to school here, I could help somebody get better just from what my coach saw in me. . . . A lot of it's, you, you, you may clearly get friends from people you golf with and you can tell just from, when you golf with somebody within nine holes, if it's somebody you want to make friends with or kind of pass on the road." (G-1)

- "It teaches discipline and patience . . . you try to pick up or you try to go a little faster or you try to go a little slower, you know, just adjusting to, uh the situation. So I guess that's a life skill you could adjust to the situation." (MB-3)

- "Um, you're building relationships with these people, and it – it's more than just athletics really. So, whether you can – I mean me being older – than most of the guys on the team, sometimes I kind of feel – not like I know it all but know a little bit – a step above when it comes to at least life skills or life lessons. But if you just listen and watch and interact with these guys, you actually learn a little bit." (G-2)

- "Well here at college, it forced me to manage – time management. It forced me to you know, 'Hey, if you know you have to do this, get up and do it early' or it [basketball and classes] forced me to be early, you know not to be late all the time, not to be on time, to be early." (MB-2)

From these statements and passages the relationship of learned life and soft skills is observed through the student voices. As I listened and heard the spoken student words during the interviews it became apparent the students made connections with application or adaption of life skills and soft skills learned to future conversations, job projects and tasks or moments of leadership they will find themselves in as working adults.

Maturity and self-ownership. The theme of maturity and self-ownership is represented by the meaning units of independence, leadership, and maturing. During the interviews students related comments of working through situations on their own and those decisions they made were mature decisions independent of parental influences.

This theme helped to answer and support sub-question 2, "What is unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of life skills?" for the student-athlete. Life skills/soft skills previously were defined to be those skills that are acquired helping individuals navigate through responsible decision making, development of communication strategies, goal attainment, networking, and social acceptance. Examples of maturing, independence, and leading behaviors or incidents that demonstrate maturity and ownership for personal actions follow from the recorded interviews:

- "I mean like what I – I don't know if I'd learn this not being in athletics . . . I am away from home I had to take a risk be kind of on my own and I have not really done that before. And so, ahm, I kind of my hand – hand was kind of like that I feel responsible for myself." (VB-1)

- "In order to succeed. And that – that goes for just athletics and college as a whole . . . because I mean you – you're not coddled by mom and dad anymore, you know. You're on your own, you got to figure out who you are, and once you figure that out, you can succeed." (G-2)

- "Um, just the whole experience of being here? Positive, definitely. Um, even though sometimes it might've felt like a negative. Um, as I'm nearing the end now I can definitely see everything that, um, helped develop me as a person that I am today versus whom I was when I first showed up here two years ago." (WB-1)

- "I'm very tough and strong-minded. Like being away from home, you know. That's always in the back of your head but, you know, you're here for a reason so just got to be mentally tough, physically tough." (WB-2)

- "It's definitely positive. Um, just the growth I guess, individually that I had . . . since I've been here, is really rewarding. And then on top of that, I actually, it's really cool to see my teammates have to go through the same process and see them get better as a person and as – and as an athlete." (G-2)

- "The first time I went home after freshman year, my parents are like, "Why are you talking so much?" I was just like, 'I don't know.' And its lot easier like I talk on the phone with my grandparents and I think everybody in my family can really see a difference in my talking skills." (VB-3)

- "Sometimes you go through it, that's where you just – you can't do what you normally can do. . . . And it's really hard because that seems like it all

snowballs. It seems like – I know I went through a situation where that kind of happened. And then on – in the class, and that's all I'm thinking about and my grades are slowly falling a little bit. And I probably didn't recognize it at that time but I was probably being rude to my roommates and trying to stand offish to my friends or something like that. I probably didn't realize it at that time but I did." (G-2)

- "I'm a better leader because I take so much pride in what I do. So I want to be the best and everybody wants to be the best. When you set yourself apart, umm, people see that and they tend to follow what you do." (MB-1)

- "I kind of learned a lot on how I operate. Um, I – I think I read – actually I read it in a book that Coach gave to me in the class. There's uh, quote that says, 'In order to have what you really want, you must first be who you really are,' and I took that right away. So, I pretty much made it a goal to figure out who I was, like how I as a person attacks certain situations. . . . And now that I'm on my own, I really get a chance to figuring that out because I can't just run upstairs and go, 'Hey, Mom. This happened; what should I do?' it's on me. So, yeah. (G-2)

- "Well, I found out that, uh – I'm human . . . because when I was in high school it always felt like I could do this and do that you know, without consequences. But then coming here, I have to be on my own so I have to, you know, face those consequences on my own and not my parents [helping me out] you know. So I think – I think I've learned a bit." (MB-3)

Through these comments I heard maturing behaviors that I wasn't expecting to hear told over and over from practically each interview collected. Students indicated through their interviews that they alone were responsible for their decisions as independent young adults and they were not relying on their parent's advice as the sole authority figure for their decisions. I also did not expect to hear the personal struggle internally this caused for the interviewed students as they made decisions daily, some of which were life changing decisions.

A male basketball player relayed recognition of his personal growth and his underlying satisfaction in his ability to make mature decisions reflected in the two following statements:

- "Unique . . . my freshman year going through all that adversity. Like when I say adversity, it, it hit me so hard. I always said before there was a point where I wanted to quit. But it was just something in my head that say 'hey, you just keep going,' that was very unique – that's a part of my life that I will never forget. It made me who I am today." (MB-2)

- "I learned – being here, I learned so much you know. I thought I was this perfect guy like 'Okay. You can do this.' But it was entirely a learning experience for me. I fell multiple times over and over but, you know I got up and tried again. And that's what I learned like its okay to fail but what's not okay is to quit and not try again." (MB-2)

Networking and communication. Student-athletes recognized the opportunity to develop interpersonal skills and experience team play – teamwork – team dynamics of the athletic experience in a safe environment for practice of life skills/soft skills which they claimed would be useful in life beyond this intercollegiate athletic experience. The networking and communication theme assists the researcher in answering the central question and sub-questions 1, 2, and 5 of the study. Collected data from the interviews help to document soft skills/life skills athletes acquire from the experience. The data helps define the unique opportunities the intercollegiate athletic experience as experienced with peers provides to development of life skills. Student-athletes explained the various networking and communication opportunities afforded to them to learn networking and communication skills. They also described the unique atmosphere the intercollegiate athletic experience and association with peers has on their personal growth moments in the following passages:

- "Just the relationships you build, getting to know, even the coaches, you know. They're great role models I had especially here. Someone I can always look up to, go to if I have problems that aren't even involved with athletics, I can go to." (VB-1)

- "I guess she [Coach] has a big influence, I mean, like now I have gone to her about, you know, playing on and I talked with her about certain things like, anything like that. It's not even just for sports I go to talk to her about if I had

problems I go and talk to her and she's just someone there for me to talk to."
(VB-1)

- "You've got to learn to work with many different personalities definitely like
  as a team, you know, you're not going to have, a wide range of personalities
  and you've got to learn to work with all of them." (VB-1)

- "Ahm, any sport helps you work, or, has helped me, you know, build to work
  with other people or if you don't like a person, when you're on the court with
  them, you'll like them, you'll have to like them, you have to work with them,
  you know. And I think that is something that will carry with me throughout
  my entire life, you know, because there is not always can be anyone that you
  love that you work with all the time." (VB-2)

- "If it was just myself, I would probably would have been, ah, well, maybe I'll
  skip it but ahm. Or ahm, I guess this was all a bit harder for me because I
  don't live on campus. Ahm, but, I definitely do feel that I have done more
  things here since I was involved in a team than if I wasn't." (VB-2)

- "Ahm, a life lesson that I learned, will definitely be ahm, just working with
  other people ah, getting along with everyone in the court whether they said
  something that ticked you off or did some, you know, that you're like, 'Why
  would you do that,' but having to say, 'All right,' we'll get it the next time."
  (VB-2)

Comments recorded in the interviews indicate that team work and learning to

work with others in groups is a work in progress and reinforces the value of peer

acceptance to the uniqueness of the experience seen in the students' reflections:

- "Outside activities, uhm, yes. Uhm, well, basically, I think it was the interest
  of trying to get other friends, other college students, you know, to expand that
  base. So, it wasn't just athletics. Uhm, yeah, that was probably just our own
  will like I just wanted to have some friends. So, like Wacky Wednesdays or
  whatever, Monday Movies or just. . . . Yes, yeah. And like last year, I didn't
  – I didn't have a basketball roommate, so I had just a normal student. So, I
  got to know her and every time she brought new friends, 'Oh,' like so that
  way. I always got to know people." (WB-4)

- "Uh, I've learned that where humans to, I got in trouble, not. . . . This was in
  college, I guess, but I got in trouble and uh, even though you still get in
  trouble, it's cool to see how the team still backs you and is there for you
  even. . . . Even if you're not there, they still are there for you and try their best
  to make everything work out so you can come back. And, what I take away
  from it is you can't always… Just because somebody messes up, it doesn't

mean you can't just turn a shoulder to him and leave him out to dry. That's when they need the most help is when that happens." (G-1)

- "It's actually drills, another thing is to see how we – how we can help each other. In drills we motivate each other, we push each other to the limits, to make each other better, do it as a team." (MB-2)

- "Being around a lot of people and you know – just you know the change of attitude, you adjust yourself to certain people and because you know everybody ain't going to like your personality, so you have to get to know them better and hopefully they get to know you." (MB-3)

Pride. A common theme among the participants in this study was the development of a sense of pride related to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. This theme was developed through comments concerning accomplishments earned, individual strengths they saw in themselves, respect given or perceived, characterization by self as a role model for others, and a greater level of self-reliance. For these individuals, the sense of pride stood out as a defining moment in their lived experiences.

Many community college student-athletes have not received opportunities to participate in athletics at higher profile colleges and universities. For these individuals, the sense of pride emerged from a need to prove and announce "I can do this":

- "Personally, I want to get back at my previous coaches and basically prove them wrong." (MB-1)

- "I intend to make my parents proud as I go along." (MB-3)

- "I learned that nothing is too far, nothing is too high, nothing is too low. You could always accomplish regardless, because sometimes it feels like – like you're so far from what you want." (MB-3)

- "But at the end, it [adversity] made me so much stronger, so much more confident in myself 'hey you can do anything you want to do', so." (MB-2)

Relationship and connection. Interviewed students spoke about positive feelings of acceptance and belonging to a "team and family" during the athletic

experience. Comments alluded to the fun competing in athletics provided and

camaraderie they shared with each other on the court and off the court, and friendships

formed with teammates during the experience. Students highlighted the positive feelings

that membership on and with the team gave them individually. Rapport with peers was

described as a strength of the athletic experience which speaks to the value of the

intercollegiate experience intrinsically for the interviewed students. The identified theme

of relationships and connection are woven into sub-questions 4 and 5. The sub-questions

asked "Whether a positive or negative intercollegiate athletic experience contributes to

development of life skills and is there a peer effect on personal development as a result of

the experience." Student responses describing their views on relationships built and

connections made with teammates, coaches, and other college students illustrate the peer

influence during the lived intercollegiate athletic experience:

- "The best part, I would have to say, it's just the relationships you build. It's more than just winning or losing because I don't know, in 50 years I probably cannot remember whether I won a certain game or not. I still look back on games I played not only remember who it was, but I remember the girls I played with and the memories I have in that." (VB-1)

- "I made other friends outside of the team but not as closely and I'd say like if I was by myself, I don't know if I would go do those things but when you've got a couple of girls and you're like, 'Yeah, let's go do it,' I mean, like, 'Okay.'" But I don't want to go by myself definitely." (VB-1)

- "I'm, pretty sure of the fact it will be so much harder for me to be here if I didn't have those girls. If I was just on my own." (VB-1)

- "I would just like to say, um, the relationship that I have with my teammates is something that, uh – like I think I'll always remember them as like really good teammates and friends. And then also I think that'll help me build the strong relationships in the future." (WB-1)

The value of the relationships mentioned by those interviewed with teammates

and coaches provide evidence that the experience is special to those participating in it.

Students felt their relationships established will remain long beyond the current

experience. The experience itself positive or negative seemed to be overshadowed by the

team bonding and relationships developed as related in these passages:

- "Ahm, and then just having a group of people that you can go to right away that for help, you know, if, you know, I don't know where something is, like, you know, that was really something that I was looking forward to is having a group right away. Not having to come in and not knowing anyone or anything, you know." (VB-2)

- "Making friends on the team, definitely. Just building those bonds with your teammates. I mean, the first day I came in it was just instantly, like, I want to be with these girls, you know, so, I would say that was definitely one of the best parts and just getting to do the sport I love too." (VB-2)

- "Definitely a positive experience, ahm, just because it's you're getting to continue doing something you love and then getting to do it with people that love it just as much as you, ahm, makes it so much better, because in high school, you know, there is always that one person that's like, well I'm just going out, just because I can, but when we are in college, you know, everyone, you want to be the best on the team, you love it, you know, you are all playing for each other." (VB-2)

- "Experience is very positive, I have something to do every day and it's part of something." (MB-1)

- "Um, friendships, most of all, Uh, also with me wanting to be a coach later on down the road. Um, I've learned so much whether it's from teammates or coach because golf is such a unique sport." (G-2)

- "When we all graduate we're gonna leave . . . and we might not get to see each other and that's one of the hard parts. You are gonna miss everybody – cause they are college mates, brothers." (MB-5)

- "Like I – like I said it's just the bonding we got between each other and the coaches. That's what I'm always going to remember." (MB-4)

Self-identity. The ability to define self through athletics participation with

confidence, a defined personal identity, and a satisfaction with the experience itself

dominate this emerging theme from the students' passages as they told their individual

stories of their intercollegiate athletic experience. Answers to posed sub-questions 1, 4,

and 5 of identifying life/soft skills, uniqueness of the experience, and peer influences were explored and answered by the transcripted responses of the student-athletes from their interviews. Participant self-identity development and growth can be heard through the following comments:

- "I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I can be a good leader. Ahm, that I can manage my time well and that I can succeed if I put my mind to it. Ahm, and I, like I said earlier, I definitely learned how to control my emotions a lot better ahm, and, I don't know, also kind of learned more that I am not quite so shy around new people, that it is easier for me ahm, to just start talking to people, no problem." (VB-2)

- "I found, I can open up and talk. Hah, I do have a voice, I don't have to be so shy all the time and I think, like you just learn about yourself." (VB-1)

- "Communicating volleyball is all about communicating. So there is not a day that goes by that you can't communicate on the court and then communication is key in life too, like, if you have a problem with someone, it is easier just to go up and talk to them, don't do this assume things about them." (VB-3)

- "Now I am more comfortable approaching teachers and telling them stuff." (VB-1)

- "I've gained confidence as a person to say 'I can do it' it shows yourself that if you put your mind on something, have a plan to do it, and you go on and do it, you can do other things, everything else that you set your mind to." (MB-1)

- "Then after this year especially, it's like I can, I feel more confident going into having to move away." (VB-1)

Positive impressions of the athletic experience that allowed students to develop their individual self-identity which allowed for comfort in expressing themselves in group situations as a member of the team while developing life skills are explained by students in the following passages:

- "Being put in certain situations and knowing how to handle them and handle yourself with like, your emotions. Ahm, and then you are going over again, the time management and yeah, communications." (VB-2)

- "I would say being in volleyball definitely helped my social skills so I wasn't necessarily scared to go to other things and there's a lot of stuff to do on campus, so, it's just easier, once you know how to talk to people and not be afraid of it to participate." (VB-3)

- "It was positive because I am just happy with how it all turned out, there is nothing that I would have absolute change about it. I have learned more about myself and about other people, how to treat people, how to have time management in my life. Just was a great experience for me." (VB-3)

- "Personal development skills? Uhm, definitely just my English, I've gotten a lot better on English, that's all. I got a lot stronger. Uhm, uhm, what was I going to say, uhm . . . I mean I've done some a little speaking at the dorms. Just talking about home country and in classes presenting stuff because you're different and they all want to know . . . well yeah, the – like speeches, whatever, and just the reinforcement you got from, oh! That's interesting. Oh! That's so nice." (WB-4)

Peers who share similar beliefs, goals, and ambitions helped the interviewed

students develop themselves into the confident individuals they've become as a result of

the intercollegiate athletic experience through the following accounts:

- "I learned how to make something out of nothing. I learned how to take every situation, every negative and try to find good in it, you know not to try to down myself about it." (MB-2)

- "Uh, I really – let's see. I actually kind of enjoy failure, I guess. Um, that's what – that's one of biggest things I have no end. Um, I mean baseball is the same thing. It's a sport where if you succeed three times out of ten, you could be a Hall of Famer. But in golf, you can almost hit – fifty bad shots a round and still have a decent round. So, you really have to learn how to accept failure, and then once you get to that, it's kind of like – well, I can – I did that so well yesterday I'm gonna go out and I'm gonna get better at that today." (G-2)

- "I'm definitely – I'm definitely a great leader, a great communicator, definitely. Is this as a result of athletics? – Yes, Oh, my God yes." (MB-2)

- "Um, it's my whole life, really. Sports are um – so, it kind of came down to a thing where I needed to put myself back into school. . . . And I didn't know any other way but through sports. Because if I – if I'm – if I'm going to school, I'm not playing a sport, it's kind of hard for me to find motivation to keep grades up or to really find, you know, like my why – like why am I

actually doing this. So, that was a big key for me plus uh, it's a new challenge. So, that was nice." (G-2)

- "I really love sports, and you know I like don't know what I'll do without – without basketball. It adds that extra stuff to me, you know." (MB-3)

- "It's preparing me – it's preparing me to get ready for the next level." (MB-4)

- "It's been great to be honest, but now this year like I am a student advisor coach so it's been a pretty good experience. I get the chance to help coach and see what challenges; I'm going to face in the future." (MB-5)

For one of the male students interviewed, the simple comment of "Well I – oh man. I've developed so many skills." (MB-3), was a unique answer to my posed questions of what did you learn. He indicated that it was hard to explain in detail in the short amount of time we shared during his interview all of the skills he learned through athletics as he said "I've learned so much." (MB-3).

Equal numbers of student-athlete participants by gender allowed for comparison and differences in the eight themes identified (see Table 4). In the tables that follow the identified themes are represented as a percentage of the combined number of responses to support the findings of pride, self-identity, networking, and communication as important contributors to development of the essence of the experience. The numbers reported are a percentage of the total responses from the identified purpose statements, phrases, and passages from the transcribed interviews as categorized by the meaning units identified earlier. Two themes consistently appear as valued by the sample across all comparisons between the study sample in terms of the total sample numbers, numbers by gender, and numbers by country of origin.

Table 4

Theme Percentages

Theme	All Sample	%
Influence by Coaches	12	1.46
Life Building	107	13.03
Maturity and Self-ownership	111	13.52
Missed Opportunity	6	0.73
Networking and Communication	130	15.83
Pride	173	21.07
Relationship and Connection	108	13.15
Self Identity	174	21.19
	821	100.0

Analysis of percentages reported show the consistently represented themes of pride and self-identity between the total sample, sample split by gender, and the sample comparison by domestic born students versus international born students. There were slight differences in each comparison set. Totals for the domestic sample compared to the international sample showed similar theme percentages for experiences related to maturity and self-ownership, pride and self-identity.

For U.S. born students relationships and connections were observed to be important and life lasting and of importance. For international students the relationship and connection theme was not as important. This finding may be attributed to the fact that U.S. born students plan to stay connected with their teammates and coaches as they will continue living in the U.S.A. The international student on the other hand may plan

to return to their country of origin after obtaining an education in the U.S. and keeping in

contact with teammates and coaches could be more difficult (see Table 5).

Table 5

Domestic Males and Females versus International Males and Females

Theme	Domestic M/F	%	International M/F	%
Goal Accomplishment	5	1.72	1	0.79
Life Building	37	12.71	16	12.70
Maturity and Self-Ownership	43	14.78	21	16.67
Missed Opportunity	1	0.34		
Networking and Communication	48	16.49	23	18.25
Pride	62	21.31	23	18.25
Relationship and Connection	42	14.43	12	9.52
Self Identity	53	18.21	30	23.81
	291	100.00	126	100.00

Additionally, there are slight differences between the study themes when

comparing all males and all females as seen in Table 6. The researcher was surprised to

see the differences between males and females in the theme related to maturity and self-

ownership. The males interviewed regularly spoke of the independence they learned as a

result of their athletic experiences. They also mentioned on several occasions their

personal growth in maturity they associated with their ability to handle themselves in

personal situations, in game situations, and with adults they interacted with during the

athletic experience. Females on the other hand did not report in their interviews

Table 6

Males versus Females

Theme	Males	%	Females	%
Goal Accomplishment	5	2.07	1	0.62
Life Building	28	11.57	26	16.05
Maturity and Self-Ownership	43	17.77	4	2.47
Missed Opportunity	1	0.41	4	2.47
Networking and Communication	35	14.46	24	14.81
Pride	55	22.73	33	20.37
Relationship and Connection	27	11.16	27	16.67
Self Identity	48	19.83	43	26.54
	242	100.00	162	100.00

independent skill learning as often as their male counterparts. Surprisingly both males and females recognized and stated in their interviews the added value of their ability to develop and practice skills related to networking and communication skills as a product of their participation in athletics. For both males and females a sense of pride in their self and their teammates from the experience was positively reported by the data. Table 6 below details the reported findings by gender:

Summary

The findings of the study were analyzed in Chapter 4 using a modified data analysis technique that listed over 400 statements of significance, then assigned statements into 20 meaning units which were associated with 78 example statements that further helped frame the meaning units. An explanation for each meaning unit was

developed to further define the students' experiences more completely. Meaning units

with commonalities were then grouped into emerging themes of the student experiences.

The themes were examined noting the common trends by sample population of the total

sample, comparisons by gender and country of origin for the 14 student-athletes

participating in the study. Findings indicated strong associations in the theme areas of

pride and self-identity which help frame the essence of the phenomenon of student

participation in intercollegiate athletics. A discussion of the evidence and the data that

answered the research questions in this study frames the final chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

College-aged students participate in intercollegiate athletics at all types of postsecondary institutions from research universities to community colleges. The majority of available literature has studied the student experience of participating in college athletics at major NCAA Division I programs (Bird, 1977; Gaston & Hu, 2009; Lueptow & Kayser, 1973-74; Maloney & McCormick, 1993; National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2011). Castaneda (2004) found limited scholarly work about community college athletics even while community colleges account for more than 40% of undergraduate enrollment. This study examined the lived experiences of community college students who participated in intercollegiate athletics at one community college in the Midwest. Participants shared their experiences in interviews, and the analysis of responses resulted in seven themes identified and described in Chapter 4.

This chapter begins with a summary of answers to the research questions developed for the study. A discussion of the study findings based on the extant literature follows and concludes with the researcher's reflections. Implications and suggestions for additional research end the chapter.

Research Questions

The central research question of this phenomenological study was "How do first-time, full-time community college students that are participating in intercollegiate athletics describe the contribution of that participation to their overall personal development?"

Although the lived experiences varied for the respective participants, each student-athlete indicated that participation was a special component of their community college experience and worthy of their efforts expended in practice sessions, games played, required team meetings, and personal commitment to the sport they chose to participate in. Common threads among the participants were identity formation and the development of personal pride resulting from individual and team accomplishments. For a few of the student-athletes, athletics was a tool to pay for college and the gateway to a perceived better life with new opportunities. For others, the athletic experience was individual validation proving to former coaches, current coaches, family, and friends that attainment of their athletic goals was possible and that continued opportunities to compete and participate in athletics beyond the community college experience were awaiting them. Each student reported moments of struggle in adapting to a new environment, but they found that participating in intercollegiate athletics as part of the community college experience helped establish their personal identities and helped to define them as young adults at this point in their lives.

Kuh (1995) referred to the out-of-class experience as "the do-it-yourself" educational experience. For the participants in this study, participation in intercollegiate athletics provided those "do-it-yourself" moments that resulted in positive personal development improvements. Castaneda (2004) noted in her research that the athletic extracurricular experience helped to build a community and identity within the community college student body. Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, and Hannah (2006) found that students involved in productive activities develop habits that show gains in personal

development. The lived experiences of the participants in this study support these previous findings.

Sub-Question 1: What specific developmental life skills/soft skills can be documented as a result of the experience in extracurricular activities? Interviews with the students revealed a number of life skills/soft skills that they felt were learned from their participation in athletics, such as trust, confidence, ability to set and complete goals, communication skills, ability to develop relationships, opportunities to practice leadership, and follower skills. Some recognized the transferability of these skills to future experiences, such as on-the-job skills or situations that would require working with others on projects or in teams. Development of soft skills learned in extracurricular activities and athletics are those desired by employers in finding employees that fit in with the culture of the organization, (Stuart et al., 2011). Skills identified as desirable were skills of common communication, ability to self promote, development of social networks, confidence in self, and perhaps transferable skills that help with that cultural fit in an organization, (Stuart et al., 2011).

Sub-Question 2: What is unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of life skills? The importance for student participants to develop their self-identity and a need to belong as an accepted member with student peers were revealed in the students' comments. Participants described the immediate peer bonding the team atmosphere of athletics provides to newcomers as a valued outcome of the experience of participating in intercollegiate athletics. Their ability to identify with their "new peer family" at the beginning of the experience created a comfortable campus environment. This environment allowed the student-athletes to create safe havens to

develop and mature in the comfort of peers experiencing the same new experiences at the same time. These new friendships formed from the shared athletic experience were a positive result from the experience and believed by the students' to be friendships for their lifetime. Astin (1993) reminded us, the more individuals are involved in an experience the better the success of that involvement and the richer the experience is as a result of engaged participation. Being a part of this immediately accepting family afforded participants: new opportunities to be leaders, opportunities to be role models, and, opportunities to be student celebrities on campus. Some student-athletes referred to their celebrity status as "superstars" among peers within the college student body of the campus. Sitkin and Hackman (2011) described leadership as a group dynamic where "leadership is plural, not singular, so there can be a number of leaders" (p. 495), and in the athletic arena there are ample opportunities for leaders to develop and hone their individual skills. Furthermore, they noted that "as you become more secure as a leader, it gets easier to share leadership, to empower others" (p. 495).

The safety and comfort of the "family" in the team they participated on empowered students to seek opportunities to practice communication strategies for improved interpersonal conversations, learn successful strategies for teamwork, and develop mature decision making skills. Sports exercise or adventurous and/or unusual ECA's, "have indicated development of passion and interest in life skills" (Stuart et al., 2011). A trusting safe environment provides support to learn as you go.

Sub-Question 3: Does the student-athletes' coaches' role and leadership style enhance or inhibit development of desired life skills within and outside of the experience? Coaches served as mentors for the interviewed student-athletes. The role of

the coach in the experiences of those interviewed was valued as affable, where the coach served as a guide, a trusted resource, and as a parent figure. The coaches' leadership style encouraged athletes to believe in themselves and not fear failure. Students understood they would be challenged and asked to work with each other for team success.

Bird (1977) found that a coach often views his or her role and impact on player development very differently than the student-athletes view their coaches. She reported coaches see their role as task-oriented and players view their coaches as authority figures or persons in positions of power. For some of the students interviewed, the coach did assume a role of power, but others viewed their coach as someone who helped them learn about life beyond the sport through lessons, drills, and experiences both on and off the court.

Findings indicated that a coaches' presence in the intercollegiate athletic experience is positive for community college student-athletes. Coaches provided guided practice situations for the participants through individual skill learning settings that allowed participants to develop life skills throughout their experience. These structured and guided experiences led to quality practice of the learned life skills.

Sub-Question 4: Does a positive or negative athletic participation experience contribute to the development of life skills? Elliot (2009) reported positive gains in student satisfaction, self-confidence, ability to manage emotions, and independence from parents in her findings on the effects of co-curricular involvement for community college students engaged in college sponsored programs. The community college athletic experience for the participants in this study indicated the formation of strong

relationships, immediate bonding with new teammates, and the opportunity to refine

skills for continuing athletic careers beyond the community college experience. One

athlete stated that the value of teammates and belonging to a group as

> It's more than just winning or losing because I don't know, in 50 years I probably cannot remember whether I won a certain game or not. I still look back on games I played not only remember who it was, but I remember the girls I played with and the memories I have in that. (VB-1)

A successful athletic experience as Bird (1977) mentioned enhances the

experience where successful coaches help their players focus together on the goal of

winning and achieving. A female volleyball player offered this comment on her

experience which details the experience as one that she was able to combine fun, pride,

accomplishment, and life skill development to in to a positive. She described her

experience in these terms

> It was positive because I am just happy with how it all turned out, there is nothing that I would have absolutely changed about it. I have learned more about myself and about other people, how to treat people, how to have time management in my life. Just was a great experience for me.

> Conversely, a negative association with athletics also helped develop life skills for a men's basketball player in his words "It's like I had to overcome adversity. . . . It's like I had no motivation, I wasn't driven, it's like everything was gone. . . . I was going to tell like 'Coach, you know, I can't take it.' . . . But something in my mind say 'hey turn around, you can do this.' So since that day forth, I went through it. At the end it was tremendous . . . everything elevated from my game, my classroom grades, everything 'it's just – it's just elevated'." (MB-2)

In both instances the athletic experience contributed to development of life skills

for the students making them individually stronger and more mature.

Sub-Question 5: Is there a peer effect of personal development with

participation in a group or team extracurricular activities that is common? The

value of the varsity or intercollegiate athletic experience was determined to be a positive

outcome by Tieu et al. (2010) with their study of first-year university students through a questionnaire assessing quality of their out-of-class experiences. Their findings indicated that smooth and uncomplicated adjustments into a student's university/college life resulted in a successful student experience. The student-athletes of this study reported that the participation in intercollegiate athletics facilitated their adjustment to life at the community college.

Peer groups, as defined, are collections of individuals that we seek approval or acceptance from (Astin, 1993). The team aspect of intercollegiate athletics promotes peer acceptance at the beginning of the experience due to the same initial exposure on campus together. The interviewed student-athletes mentioned they felt a strong sense of loyalty to their new teammates and did not want to let their teammates be disappointed by personal actions that could be detrimental to success for the team. Participation in athletics did have a peer effect on the participants of this research. Student acceptance and affiliation as Astin (1993) offered is a condition of membership in the group for acceptance by the group. The life skills/soft skills students learned and developed as a result of their intercollegiate athletic experience included: leadership, time management, communication and networking skills, relationship building, and accomplishment of individual personal goals of maturity and independence. The development of the student perceived life skills were key contributors to the athlete's perception of self and how others viewed them during the athletic experience.

Tieu et al. (2010) remind us that group involvement in highly structured activities relate and engender positive outcomes for those involved. Athletics and the team atmosphere is an organized, structured extracurricular experience that provides students

with an immediate identity on campus. Astin (1993) reinforced the need for students to

belong with peer groups with his research looking at the institution where institutional

size was not the key to effective undergraduate education but "the environment created

by faculty and the students – rather the type of institution per se – really matters" (p. xiv)

for students to feel engaged and belong. Student self-reported gains in self-confidence

and maturing leadership abilities were a direct result of participation in intercollegiate

athletics at the community college.

Researcher Reflections

As a former collegiate athlete, former intercollegiate coach, and my employment

for the majority of my working career in student affairs at community colleges,

bracketing of my experiences and biases were necessary. My personal experiences with

successes and challenges from athletics and student life/student affairs programs have

been enjoyable and rewarding while providing a vocation for my practice. As I

developed the proposal for this research and created the protocol for interviews, I admit

that I held several assumptions. Those assumptions included ideas of how the students

would tell their stories during the personal interviews relating their intercollegiate athletic

experiences and the value and contribution of that experience they acknowledged

contributed to their personal growth and development.

I knew each participant would have his or her own unique experiences and views,

but, I assumed some would be similar to my own experience in participating in

intercollegiate athletics. What I found was that the experiences of the participants in this

study were quite different. The participants in this study were using intercollegiate

athletic participation to prove to others they were able to be successful, confident, and

proud to be a part of the intercollegiate team they were associated with. We did share a common experience from our participation in intercollegiate athletics that allowed for our personal growth, maturity, and competition beyond the high school experience.

The interviewed students truly appreciated the opportunity that participation in intercollegiate athletics gave to each of them to grow, mature, and compete. I was in awe of the maturity that each student showed in their courage and ability to compete on so many levels, not just the competition during games and matches but in life itself. The daily challenges of managing time study and athletic commitments demanded efficient management of time to balance the dual roles of student and athlete. One male basketball player in particular spoke of his ability to overcome hardships in life and attributed that strength inside him as something he learned from his coaches. He said he learned "to never quit, to never give up on anything. Once you start it, you got to finish it. There's no quitting. I learned to be relentless" (MB-2). This relentless approach to life was his new motto to live by and the introduction to finishing what you start came from a book that one of his coaches introduced to help his athletes compete full steam in all that they experience.

Some students realized that this experience would be the last time they competed athletically while others have continued expectations for participation in intercollegiate athletics beyond community college. Through the stories of personal perseverance and mental toughness I was touched and recalled memories from my coaching days. I recalled days or scheduled athletic practices where I purposely challenged my athletes to reach inside themselves and find the will to compete harder to accomplish goals individually and collectively they thought impossible. At those times the athletes did not

seem to recognize that the skills or tasks completed were life building moments.
However, the participants in this study did say that as they looked back on their
experience they could see that challenges their coaches placed before them of a similar
nature were recollections from the athletic experience that they cherished from their
experience most. Students participating in this study described similar instances from
their experience that affirmed that athletes see these teachable moments in their lived
experience as positive maturing memories.

It was also rewarding as a former athlete and coach to see the student smiles and
twinkles in their eyes as they told their individual athletic experiences to a stranger.
There was an exhibited self-confidence in the athlete that appeared to not have been a
part of their personality prior their intercollegiate athletic experience. Their stories of
both successes and failures they encountered as a college athlete were humbling as they
were frank and honestly explained. It was refreshing as a former collegiate head coach to
hear that being a college athlete mattered to them as it was what defined them as a person
and allowed them to be respected on campus and within their peer groups. This research
taught me that athletics at the community college does matter deeply to the students
living the experience. I heard this not from my assumptions of the value and contribution
of the experience but, I heard this from their words and their experiences, I listened, and I
learned.

Essence of the Phenomenon

For the intercollegiate community college student-athletes participating in this
study, the essence of the phenomenon is personal pride and identity of self. The study

focused on the lived experiences of a group of 14 student-athletes participating in

athletics at a small rural-serving community college in the Midwest.

The narrative speaks to a shared bond between athletes competing at the

community college level in many colleges across the United States. When student-

athletes are able to participate in athletics an extracurricular activity they build positive

self-identity and they feel good about accomplishments they have earned as individuals

participating as a member of a team. The pride of being a part of a team and what being

a part of that team means in terms of a peer community and the development of lifelong

friendships is a phenomenon that the athletes did not expect when the experience began.

Practical Implications

The popularity of athletics as an extracurricular activity at community colleges

continues to grow as evidenced by the increases in participation numbers of student-

athletes in 2003 of 43,510 to an 18.4% increase in numbers in 2013 (U.S. Department of

Education Office, 2013). Growth in the traditional student body of community college-

going students highlights the need for student involvement to support student engagement

strategies. The out-of-class experience as Kuh (1995) mentioned has the potential to

contribute to the values of the college itself through the sustained effort needed by

students to complete tasks and understand what makes a college community work

(p. 145). Colleges have devoted time, energy, and student engagement programming

efforts to keep students involved in their college experience and there is evidence that an

engaged student is one who is satisfied with the experience of college. Programs to

promote student success are being designed to provide a structured experience for

registration, advisement, and out-of-class experiences today. Most recently the research

work of Stuart et al. (2011) examined the positive and negative associations with extracurricular activities (ECAs) in the areas of non-traditional students, alumni, employers, and ethnic backgrounds and diversity. Their findings emphasized the importance of social networking, leadership, future employment, and long-term impact for future employment.

Increased emphasis in student involvement and growth of the extracurricular options ensures athletics will continue to remain a popular choice activity for students for their out-of-the-classroom experience. Sports exercise or adventurous and/or unusual ECAs "have indicated development of passion and interest in life skills" (Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Soloman, and May 2011). An additional finding by Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Soloman, and May (2011) effectively summed up the experience of the ECAs stating that "voluntary work, and particularly university-linked ECA's (such as team sports and committees) help to distinguish graduates in the job market" and that the value of the ECA experience was more important than the quantity of the ECA experiences for students (p.211).

Findings of this study provide additional insight into the lived experiences of a group of student-athletes and their development of life skills desired by employers. Positive out-of-class experiences that allow students to learn and practice life skills are desirable student outcomes of extracurricular experiences. Additional studies will need to be conducted so that findings can be generalized to larger populations as there are many community colleges with athletic programs around the country in urban and rural settings. Findings of this study are good tools and topics for discussions that can help administrators support their programs and the students involved in the athletic teams the

colleges offer. Community colleges looking to increase enrollments often look at athletic programs as options for new student growth which highlights the findings of this study and adds to the current body of research/literature.

Future Research

Future research of value and contribution that the community college intercollegiate athletic experience provides to student development will be needed as participation numbers continue to grow. Athletics are popular extracurricular experiences as some 59% of 860 community college institutions in 2001 (Castaneda, 2004) that fielded intercollegiate teams and the participation numbers of men and women competing at the community college increased through the years. The continued numbers of growth for the community college system suggest students and parents want a quality experience that they can afford. Athletics help colleges provide that total collegiate experience. Athletics help to make the community college experience for students the same or similar to that offered by four-year colleges and universities.

Additional research focusing on how intercollegiate athletics at the community college fits the mission of serving students and helping them persist to degree completion would be warranted. Tieu et al. (2010) found that involvement in groups does help with persistence for completion of the pursued degree. Tieu et al. (2010) also reported that "out-of-class activities show that involvement in highly structured activities and activities which are high in quality are positively related to more positive outcomes" (p. 353). Additional studies are recommended to better understand the contribution of the intercollegiate athletic experience for community colleges in relation to persistence and degree attainment. An expanded examination in case study format of what the value and

contribution of the intercollegiate athletic experience is for community college students would also be valuable for additional comparisons between institutions of similar regional areas.

Conclusion

Castaneda (2004) argued that there is a place for athletics in the misson of the community college. Continued expansion of intercollegiate athletics at today's community colleges increases the need to understand what the value of the intercollegiate athletic experiences is to the student, in terms of growth and development. Stuart et al. (2011) effectively summed up the experience of the extra-curricular activity stating that "voluntary work, and particularly university-linked ECA's (such as team sports and committees), help to distinguish graduates in the job market" and that the value of the ECA experience was more important than the quantity of the ECA experiences for students (p. 211).

The narratives of the experiences of intercollegiate student-athletes are important to hear as colleges strive to build their campus cultures and provide opportunities for greater levels of student involvement. Astin (1984, 1999) believed that regardless of the curriculum provided to students, that to achieve the intended learning and development, a student has to participate in the learning. Stuber (2009) reported that participation in extra-curricular activities is a valuable piece of the student experience as it gives students the avenue and opportunity to develop their cultural and social resources. Those resources are important as she stated, that having the right fit with an organization socially can be a key to job attainment. The student-athletes involved in this study serve as examples of the value of participation in intercollegiate athletics at the community

college. The popularity of athletics from little league soccer to intercollegiate athletics and professional sports assures that sports will be a part of our lives for many years. The findings of this research recognize that lessons for life and development of life skills are contained within the experience.

The lived experiences of community college-aged student-athletes in this study indicate their perceptions of the value of the intercollegiate athletic experience to their overall community college experience. As a result of this personal study and reflection, I have a better understanding of what it means to be a community college student-athlete in the 21st century and what being a community college student-athlete means to that individual student's success beyond athletics.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Interviewer M Gill
Interview Subject _____
Date _____

The following questions will be asked of each participant in the study to gain an understanding of their experience as a student-athlete and college student. The interview will be digitally recorded and the researcher will take field notes during the interview.

1. Will you describe your athletic experience at Midwestern Community College?

2. Was your experience satisfying with your participation in the _____ activity(s)?

3. Did you find the activity to be engaging and why?

4. Describe the best part of the experience?

5. Conversely describe the toughest part of the experience?

6. Do you feel that you developed skill(s) as a result of your participation in _____?

7. Were practice drills designed to teach you something other than athletic skills?

8. Was it important to be connected to the team outside of practice, games, and/or team time?

9. What kinds of personal development opportunities and skills were you exposed to?

10. Did you or do you feel that you learned something about yourself as a result of your participation in _____?

11. Did you participate in activities outside of your participation in athletics?

12. Would you recommend others get involved in student clubs, activities, athletics, residence hall events, live on campus, join study groups. Other groups on campus or off campus? Why or why not?

13. Was the experience positive or negative for you and why?

14. Was there anything unique to your experience that made the involvement something to remember for you?

15. What did you gain from this other than your participation in athletics competition?

16. Are life lesson situations you dealt with as a student-athlete similar or the same as those that you've dealt with outside of the athletic arena?

17. Describe a life lesson that you learned through athletics?

18. Are you a better communicator? Leader? Follower? Engager? As a result of your experiences in extracurricular activities?

19. Did you find something out about yourself as a result of your experience(s)?

20. Was your Head Coach an important influence in your experience?

21. What was the best part of the experience?

22. What was the worst part of the experience?

23. What did you learn about _____?

24. How would you rate the experience?

25. Would you do it again?

26. Year in college _____.

27. What types of activities did you participate in?

Appendix B

Linkage Table

Linkage Table

Research Question	Interview Question
How do first-time, full-time community college students who are participating or who participated in intercollegiate athletics describe the contribution of that participation to their overall personal development during their college-going years?	1,9,10,15,17,19,23,24
Research Sub-Questions	
What specific developmental life skills/soft skills can be documented as a result of the experience in extracurricular activities?	6,7,18
What is unique about the out-of-class experience that contributes to development of life skills?	2,3,14,16
Does a positive or negative athletic participation experience contribute to the development of life skills?	4,5,13,20,21,22,25
Is there a peer effect of personal development with participation in group or team extra-and/or co-curricular activity that is common?	8,11,12,27

Appendix C

Flyer for Research Invitation

Nebraska
UNIVERSITY OF
Lincoln

Doctoral Student at UNL needs volunteers for research project as part of dissertation.

Dissertation will be looking at the Value and contribution of the participation in intercollegiate athletics on the personal development of community college-aged students.

Student-Athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics needed for 15-30 min interviews describing their athletic experience.

Participants must be at least 19 years of age to participate.

Interviews will be confidential Participants will receive some compensation for participation in research

If interested in participating in the research project please contact; Michele Gill @ 308-340-5864 or email at micheleg@northeast.edu

THANK YOU

Appendix D

Informed Consent Letter

Nebraska UNIVERSITY OF Lincoln

IRB# 2014L114777EX
Date Approved: 11/19/2014
Valid Until: 11/19/2019

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB#   (14777)

Identification of Project: The Value and Contribution of Participation in Intercollegiate Athletics on the Personal Development of Community College Students

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to understand the value of the participation in intercollegiate athletics on personal development of college-aged students as a result of participation in out-of-the-classroom experiences at small rural community colleges.

Procedures:

In order to volunteer to be a participant in this study you must be at least 19 years of age or more to freely give your own consent. Additionally, participation in this study will require approximately 15-30 minutes of your time, and is not considered as part of your participation as a student or student-athlete at Northeast Community College. You will be asked a series of questions related to your athletic and extra-curricular experience that you have been exposed to during your participation in intercollegiate athletics and out-of-the classroom experiences at Northeast Community College. There will be both open-ended questions and short answer type questions to help the researcher better understand your extra-curricular and athletic experience during your college going years. You will also be given an opportunity to provide additional clarification of your recorded interview as a part of checking for accuracy of the typed transcript. This opportunity for additional clarification should take no more than an additional 10 minutes of your time and will be arranged to fit within your schedule. The digitally recorded interview will be kept by the investigator until the research is completed in a locked office and coded for anonymity to protect your contributed research to this study.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. In the event of problems resulting from participation in the study please notify the researcher immediately so that adjustments can be afforded.

Benefits:

You may find the learning experience provides self-reflection and reinforces your participation in intercollegiate athletics through your personal experiences and participation in athletics and in out-of-the-classroom experiences. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand the personal growth and soft skills/life skills students' gain by participation intercollegiate athletics as part of the out-of-the classroom experience and the out-of-class experience itself.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the investigator and or co-investigators during the study and for three years after the study is complete. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data. The audiotapes will be erased after transcription. A final summary report of the research will be shared with Northeast Community College senior administration. Data shared will be summarized in an executive briefing format.

Nebraska Lincoln

Compensation:

You will receive a small token of appreciation for your participation, but there will be no monitory compensation paid for participating in this research.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, office phone, (402) 844-7748, or after hours (308-340-5864). If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska or your current institution. In addition your choice to participate in this study in no manner will adversely affect your student status at Northeast Community College, your status as a student-athlete at Northeast, nor your role on your athletic team. Should you choose to withdraw or end your interview early no loss of privilege which you are entitled to with regard to student status, athletic participation or your role on the athletic team of your choice at Northeast Community College will occur. Additionally, your decision to participate will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of Participant:

_____   _____
        Signature of Research Participant   Date

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)
        Michele Gill, Principal Investigator   *Office: 402-844-7748*

Dr. Brent Cejda, is the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Advising Faculty for this research study and may be reached at 402-472-0989 or by email at bcejda2@unl.edu if you have additional questions or concerns.

Appendix E

Transcription Confidentiality Agreement

Nebraska UNIVERSITY OF
Lincoln

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Statement

Identification of Project: Value and contribution of the participation in intercollegiate athletics on the personal development of community college-aged students.

I **Quick Transcription Services** (name of transcriptionist/service-Company) agree to hold all information contained on audio/digital recordings received from Michele Gill, primary investigator for UNL IRB # 14777 The Value and contribution of the participation in intercollegiate athletics on the personal development of community college-aged students in strict confidence. We also will keep in confidence any information of reference to individuals and or the institution involved in this identified research study in strict confidence. We agree to delete all audio files upon completion of transcription and delivery of the included digital recordings provided in this research. We/I understand that to violate this agreement would constitute a serious and unethical infringement on the informant's right to privacy.

I also certify that I or the company has completed the CITI Limited Research Worker training in Human Research Protections.

12-11-2014

_____   _____
Signature of Transcriptionist Service   *Date*

12-10-2014

_____   _____
Michele Gill, Principal Investigator   *Date*

Appendix F

IRB Approval/Permission to Conduct Research

Nebraska
Lincoln

November 19, 2014

Michele Gill
Department of Educational Administration

Brent Cejda
Department of Educational Administration
141C TEAC, UNL, 68588-0360

IRB Number: 20141114777EX
Project ID: 14777
Project Title: The Value and Contribution of Participation in Intercollegiate Athletics on the Personal
Development of Community College Students

Dear Michele:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project. Your proposal is
in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 0O002258 and the DHHS Regulations
for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as exempt, category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Exemption Determination: 11/19/2014.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of
the following events within 48 hours of the event:
* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or
other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to
subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or
has the potential to recur;
* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that
indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the
research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines
and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status
of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the
participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB