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**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON TEACHER-  
STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether participating in extra-curricular activities with students impacted the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Ten students and five teachers were interviewed. All 15 participants were either in grades 8 or 9, or a teacher of those grades. The results of this study show that participation in extra-curricular activities has a profound impact on the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Students and teachers alike reported positive experiences leading to an increased personal bond between student and teacher. Students reported a genuine appreciation for their teachers who volunteer their time to offer extra-curricular activities within their school. The increased time spent together outside of the classroom creates a stronger relationship characterized by a stronger sense of trust and higher levels of student motivation in the classroom.

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### Chapter 1

#### Introduction to the Study

After more than half a decade of teaching in multiple middle schools, it has become apparent that the majority of students consider the rigors of the average school day to be a chore, and look forward to the moment when the last bell rings, and they get to go home. Not exactly a ringing endorsement to the programming that students take part in throughout the day, but not all students leave to go home either. Some stick around to be a part of a sports team, attend a meeting, or take part in some other form of extra-curricular activity. Students may be involved in numerous school sports teams, school bands, student councils and other extra-curricular activities – many of which are organized by their teachers. In my experience, teachers will informally confess that being involved with these students outside of the classroom causes a change within it. In the Canadian school system, teachers are not required to provide these extra-curricular activities; they do so as a volunteer initiative. Through personal experience it appears that students who are viewed by their teachers as being difficult are often portrayed differently by teachers who are involved with them through extra-curricular activities. At the present moment, there is a gap in empirical research in this area.

During my time as an undergraduate pre-service teacher, many professional educators offered the advice to be involved with a school after hours. I recall the justification that ‘every minute spent with students outside of the classroom is worth at least 5 in it’. It was accepted by all pre-service teachers that this was true, but this idea was not supported by any research. A look into the existing literature around the teacher-student relationship provides some insight.

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Extensive research has been conducted on the impact of relationships in education (Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2013; Hughes, 2011; Uitto, 2012; Veldman, Tartwijk, Maulana, Opendakker & Bosker, 2013). Veldman, et al. (2013) studied the effects of teacher-student relationships on teacher's job satisfaction. They found that teachers and students alike benefitted from positive relationships in the classroom setting. Maulana et al. (2013) studied student's perception of their relationship with their teachers. Their research showed that students who felt they had a better interpersonal relationship with their teachers had higher levels of motivation in their classes. While these studies suggest that a positive teacher-student relationship can impact student success and behaviour, they consider the relationship as one that exists only in a static state. In Hughes' (2011) longitudinal study, it was shown that the teacher-student relationship changes over time. She showed that as the relationship improves, students become more engaged in the classroom and incur higher levels of academic achievement. Uitto (2012) studied the impact of a professional's personal life on their teaching. While she did not discover how the personal life impacts the student-teacher relationship, she did observe that the relationships will grow/exist outside of the classroom. With an abundance of data that suggests a positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and achievement, there is a gap in exploring what elements provide influence on this relationship.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and describe the impact on the student-teacher relationship for students who are involved in extra-curricular initiatives with their teachers. The existing literature suggests that the student-teacher relationship has a significant impact on student success. This study seeks to examine if extra-

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curricular involvement in various schools in the researchers Canadian school jurisdiction has an impact on the classroom relationship. By examining one area that may have a direct influence on the student-teacher relationship, the results might be used to understand factors that influence student motivation in their classroom.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Research shows a clear link between the teacher-student relationship and the student motivation and performance (den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2004; Fan, 2012; Wilson & Taylor, 2001; Wu, Hughes and Kwok, 2010; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1998). Eccles and Barber (1999) found that students who are involved in extra-curricular activities tend to perform better in academic and social aspects of school life. There is a gap in the research in this area as no empirical research investigates how being involved in extra-curricular activities with teachers impacts the relationship students have with them. The collective wisdom of pre-service educators suggests there is a belief that some connection exists. The current study examines the connection between involvement in extra-curricular activities and the teacher-student relationship in the classroom.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study is guided by a general research question and several subsequent questions. The general research question is: Does participating in extra-curricular activities with teachers impact the teacher-student relationship in the classroom for students? The subsequent questions are:

- Do students and teachers interact differently in extra-curricular activities than they do in the classroom?

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- Do students perceive their interactions with teachers during extra-curricular initiatives as personal or professional relationships?
- With multiple meetings for an extra-curricular activity during a season of play or school year, do student perceptions of their student-teacher relationships change after the activity concludes?
- With multiple meetings for an extra-curricular activity during a season of play or school year, do teacher perceptions of their student-teacher relationships change after the activity concludes?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study for Research and Practice**

Teachers and students form their relationships in the classroom as well as outside of it. It was once believed that as time in the classroom was increased, the teacher-student relationship would improve. Maulana, Opdenakker and Bosker (2014) discovered that the relationship between the teacher and student would fluctuate over time. There has been no discovery as to what factors influence the quality of the relationship and how they cause its quality to fluctuate. In order for teachers to ensure they are enacting efficient classroom relationship strategies, it is necessary to discover what factors influence the relationship.

Significant research has been completed in the area of teacher-student relationships (Alderman & Green, 2011; Birch & Ladd, 1998; Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991; den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2004; Fan, 2012; Godwin & Klusmiere, 1995; Hammer, 2005; Maulana, Opdenakker, den Brok & Bosker, 2011; Murray & Pianta, 2007; Newberry, 2013; Opdenakker, Maulana & den Brok, 2012; Veldman et al., 2013; Wilson & Taylor, 2001; Wu, Hughes and Kwok, 2010; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1998; Wubbels

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et al., 1985). This research lacks an investigation into specific factors that impact how the relationship in the classroom can be impacted. The focus on research to this point has investigated links between the quality of the relationship and the affect that has on classroom behaviour and academic performance. While it has shown that the relationship between teacher and student can impact the quality of the classroom climate as a whole, teachers gain no insight from this as to how to establish a positive relationship; they merely learn that they should have them.

Researchers have also investigated various impacts of participating in extra-curricular activities. While involvement in extra-curricular activities has been shown to be beneficial, Bailey (2006) observed that these positive outcomes are slightly dependant on the teacher or coach running the program. It is interesting to note that the extra-curricular experience is enhanced based on the student's personal feelings toward the teacher running the program. As the relationship between teacher and student has been shown to improve the experience in extra-curricular activities, it is important to teachers to realise that they can also enhance the experience in the classroom through their relationships.

Teachers employ a vast array of classroom management strategies on a daily basis. Each individual teacher uses the strategies that they have either developed personally or learned through some external source. For some, cultivating a relationship with their students is the building block of their classroom management, while others may not be concerned with their student's personal opinion of them and only focus on meeting curriculum outcomes. The vast majority of teachers recognize that the relationship is an important aspect of teaching. As teachers continue to develop methods to build their

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relationships in the classroom, research must be conducted to determine what factors influence the development of these relationships.

### **1.5 Terminology**

For the purpose of this study, the following distinction has been made:

- Extra-curricular activities are any programs/clubs/teams that are offered in part by the school either before school, during a lunch hour or after school.

### **1.6 Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made when conducting this study:

1. that participants had participated in extra-curricular activities that were organized by their classroom teachers, and that they had developed relationships with them in both settings; and
2. that the participants were truthful during their interview and were willing to share their perspectives with the researcher.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis contains six chapters. Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the study by presenting both the purpose of the study and stating its significance for research and practice. The general and subsequent research questions are presented along with the definitions, limitations, scope and assumptions that guide the research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature, starting with the theory of the ethics of care in teaching and investigating interpersonal relationships in the classroom. The impact of teacher-student relationships is discussed focusing on how these relationships may form and change. The literature regarding extra-curricular activities is examined to investigate the impacts this may have. In Chapter 3 the researcher discusses the research design and

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methods used to conduct interviews with participants. This chapter concludes with a discussion of trustworthiness and ethical issues surrounding the study. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and interpretation of the data. Each question from the interviews are analyzed individually and the emergent themes from each question are presented in this chapter. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study with reference to the specific research questions above. The final chapter presents a number of conclusions resulting from the study and discusses a number of implications that are significant for research and practice in education.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Existing literature shows that the relationship between student and teacher has a profound impact on classroom management and student motivation (Alderman & Green, 2011; Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991; Fan, 2012; Hammer, 2005; Maulana et al., 2011; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Wentzel, 1998; Wilson & Taylor, 2001; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). This study will provide teachers with an understanding of how that relationship can be improved. Teachers will be able to apply the results of this study to their practice, and make improvements to their student behaviour and motivation levels.

#### **2.1 Ethics of Care**

The classroom is a social system featuring significant interaction between student and teacher. The quality of the classroom is dependent on the relationship and actions of the students and teacher within (Fan, 2012). In the 1980's Nel Noddings theorized that this relationship could be described as a sequence of encounters called caring. In this relationship, the teacher is the carer and the students are cared-for (Noddings, 1984; Noddings, 2012; Gordon, Benner & Noddings, 1996). Noddings refers to this as a reciprocal relationship where students communicate needs to the teacher, referred to as expressed needs, who then tends to these needs. Teachers who are perceived as caring learn the needs of their students and tend to the expressed needs as well as a set of assumed needs (Noddings, 2012; Noddings 1984). Noddings emphasizes that a strong caring relationship can improve all other aspects of the classroom. She acknowledges that teachers need to occasionally put aside the demands of the school system to build a

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relationship with their students. With a strong caring relationship in the classroom, everything else will go better (Noddings, 2012).

Currently, there are no widely recognized resources or strategies for the development of these relationships. Although Noddings' framework clearly shows that the teacher-student relationship is central to teaching and learning, Newberry (2013) observes that teachers are left to their own devices for devising a strategy to develop these relationships. It is also noted that teachers must use their judgement to form these relationships and often base their strategies on the student's attitudes and behaviours, their press for a relationship, the curriculum and the overall class climate (Hoban, 2005; Newberry, 2013). Given the number of factors a teacher must consider in making relationships it is a logical conclusion that there are no singularly applicable strategies for relationship development. While this will always be the case, it is imperative that any and all possible avenues for relationship development be explored.

### **2.2 Interpersonal Relationships**

A review of literature on teacher-student relationships shows the Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour (MITB, see Figure 1) as a widely used tool to define and measure these relationships. In this model developed by Wubbels et al. (1985), teacher-student interpersonal behaviour is divided into two dimensions called Proximity (teachers co-operative and friendly behaviour) and Influence (teachers control and dominance over students) (Maulana et al., 2011). Wubbels has continued to work with additional authors to show a link between Proximity and student motivation, as well as creating a diagnostic tool to measure teachers interaction with students called the

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Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) (Maulana et al., 2011; Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991; Opdenakker et al., 2012).

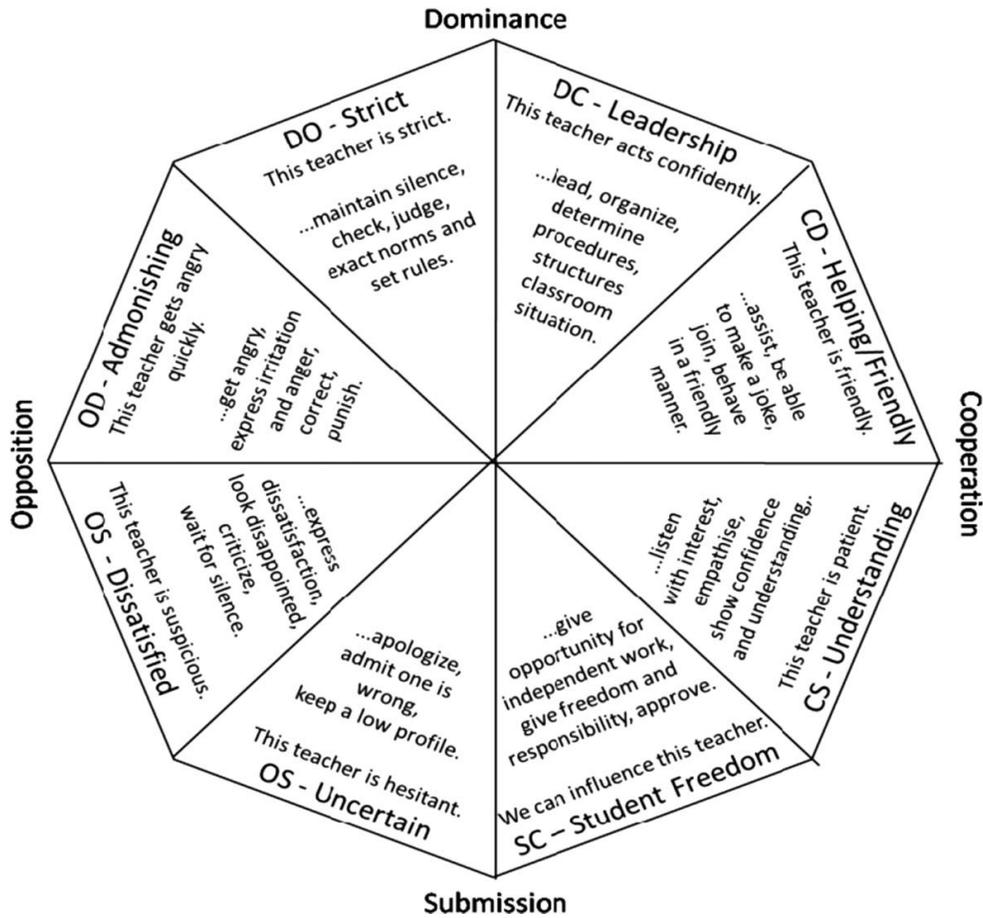


Figure 2.1. Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour (MITB; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

Both Proximity and Influence could be thought of as belonging to a continuum, where Proximity ranges from cooperative behaviour on one end to oppositional at the other; the Influence continuum would range from dominant to submissive behaviour. Figure 2.1 shows the Proximity cooperative and oppositional behaviours (CO) existing on a vertical axis while Influence dominant and submissive behaviours (DS) exist on the

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horizontal axis. In applying the model to the classroom teacher, Wubbels et al. (1985) divide each quadrant of the model into two parts, creating 8 different styles of teacher interpersonal behaviour. Each section is given a label made up of two letters – one letter from the vertical axis and one from the horizontal axis. Teachers who can be characterised by Dominant and Cooperative behaviours would be labelled as either DC or CD. The order of the letters is determined by which side of the continuum best represents the teacher's behaviour, with the closest descriptor being first. The labels that describe each section are Leadership, Helping/Friendly, Understanding, Student Responsibility/Freedom, Uncertain, Dissatisfied, Admonishing and Strict. Figure 1 shows the typical teacher behaviours that would be associated with each behaviour style (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

These interpersonal behaviours are the foundation of the research. In order to determine how students feel about their teachers care, it is important to ensure questions are founded by the ethics of care and the MITB. Research has found that the relationship between the teacher and student has a profound impact on students. Multiple studies have shown that a positive relationship has a significant positive impact on academic performances, and a friendly and positive relationship can improve a teacher's ability to motivate students to learn (Fan, 2012; Hammer, 2005).

Additional research has shown that interpersonal relationships between teachers and students can impact students overall interest in school (Wentzel, 1998; Wilson & Taylor, 2001; Alderman & Green, 2011). Holtzworth-Munroe and Jacobson (1985) use attribution theory to explain this, as satisfied students and teachers will use relationship-enhancing behaviours such as an increase in classroom motivation. These authors refer to

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external attribution for their explanation, where individuals assign the cause of their behaviour to an external situation or event, outside of their own control.

This framework will be used to distinguish what type of relationship students perceive to have with their teachers at both extra-curricular activities and during regular classroom time. Questions will be focused on characterizing the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students based on the MITB. As students describe their teacher interaction during their activities and in the regular classroom it will become evident whether their relationships change based on the context of the meeting and if involvement in extra curricular activities has an impact on the relationship. Newberry (2013) found that, as teachers were able to improve their relationship with students they tended to have a better experience at school and became more pleasant in the classroom. Students report that their positive relationships are built in a structured environment that is founded on respect (Wubbels et al., 2014). The current study will provide participants a chance to comment on multiple environments to determine if the foundation of the relationship in one environment impacts another.

### **2.3 Changing Interpersonal Relationships.**

Studies of the development of teacher-student interpersonal relationships are not plentiful. Maulana, Opdenakker and Bosker (2014) posit that the relationship between the teacher and student can change over time. It had previously been assumed that as time in the classroom increased, these factors would also increase. This is not a linear trend however as other studies have shown that the relationship can vary over the course of the year. These results suggest that each teacher personality will have a different impact on

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the teacher-student interpersonal relationship (Opdenakker et al., 2012; Maulana, Opdenakker, Stroet & Bosker, 2013).

It has been shown that some factors can increase a teacher's ability to form these relationships including experience, which has been linked to an increase in Proximity (Opdenakker, et al., 2012; Cetin, Ellidokuzoglu & Dogan, 2014; Hammer, 2005). Some evidence suggests that over time, teachers are better able to extrinsically motivate students to engage in classwork during class time. These changes are not related to the teacher's behavioural traits, which allows the possibility of an improving relationship to be the cause (Opdenakker et al., 2012). It has also been shown that engaging in fun activities, spending time outside of class and discovering students' personal interest can improve the relationship and increase classroom behaviours (Murray & Pianta, 2007; Alderman & Green, 2011; Fan, 2012).

While it has been shown that relationships can improve, some research also suggests that time can have to opposite effect on the teacher-student relationship. Studies have shown that a linear relationship may occur in some cases where the Influence of a teacher decreases as a school year progresses. Opdenakker et al. (2012) suggest that changes to the relationship between students and teachers can be predicted as it is partially determined by the subject and gender of the teacher. Student intrinsic motivation has also been shown to decrease in some cases, leading to a deterioration of the teacher-student relationship. It is possible that teachers don't realize motivation is decreasing, and do not pay as much attention to relationship development (Opdenakker et al., 2012). The current study will fill a gap in research of factors that influence the relationship in the classroom.

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### **2.4 Teacher-Student Interactions.**

Teachers and students form their relationships in the classroom as well as outside of it. Noddings (1984) noted that teachers must occasionally put aside the demands of the school system to build a relationship with their students. This relationship is formed from a series of encounters between the student and teacher. These encounters have been shown to be critical to the formation of the interpersonal relationship. If these interactions consist of nurturing acts by the teacher a relationship of caring is developed and students will be more likely to become intrinsically motivated and autonomous learners (Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001; Seifert, 2004). Developing student's ability to become intrinsically motivated is a common goal among numerous teachers. The academic benefit for students who are intrinsically motivated are numerous ranging from students being more engaged at school, preferring intellectual challenges and having a high overall academic performance (Froiland & Worrel, 2016).

It is not currently established if students perceive the organization and delivery of an extra-curricular activity as an act of caring by the teacher. Caring acts by a teacher tend to be reciprocated in some fashion, where students may not express gratitude but may pursue a new project, or ask further questions on an existing one (Noddings, 2012). Responses can vary with regards to student effort, strategies and ability, but are attributed to the teacher's mood and actions in the class (Seifert, 2004). Wentzel (1998) showed that when teachers support their students, they hold a stronger interest in their class and pursue higher grades. How teachers may support students in an extra-curricular setting remains undefined in the literature. Some researchers have proposed that this support is accomplished by fostering a positive experience within the activity. Teachers who create

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these positive interactions with students have been shown to have longer, more enjoyable careers (Ben-Chaim & Zoller, 2001; Maulana et al., 2011). Research has also shown that these interactions can also be more strongly associated with self-esteem than interactions with a student's parents (Martin, Marsh, McInerney, Green & Dowson, 2007).

### **2.5 Effects of Teacher-Student Relationships.**

The teacher-student interpersonal relationship has been shown to affect both teachers and students in the classroom. Teachers have been shown to have a higher level of job satisfaction when they experience positive relationships with their students (Veldman et al., 2013). Presently there exists a gap in the research in considering the context of where the teacher-student relationship exists. Many who complete research in this area make the assumption that teacher-student relationships exist only in the context of the classroom. The notion that these relationships exist outside of the classroom, and in the extra-curricular setting must be critically evaluated to determine if the elements of the teacher-student relationships has an equal effect across multiple settings.

According to Wilson and Taylor (2001), being in a class with a teacher that students like will cause them to work harder in the class and believe they can achieve at a higher level. Wu et al.'s (2010) study also showed that students perform higher academically with teachers whom they have a positive relationship compared to teachers who are less positive. It has also been found that when students perceive their relationship with their teacher as positive, they are likely to work harder to meet classroom academic and behaviour expectations (Wu et al., 2010; den Brok et al., 2004; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1998). This research lacks a probe into the factors that would influence a student to describe their relationship as positive. This research is not linked to

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the MITB, so it remains unclear if there are specific teacher attributes that foster a positive relationship, or if simply spending more time with a teacher over the course of a school year will foster a positive relationship.

There is a wide array of influences on the overall climate of a classroom. A teacher can create a positive classroom climate by using humour, favourable facial expressions and using kindness toward students both inside and outside of the classroom (Fan, 2012). One must again consider whether these factors exist equally in an extra-curricular setting when compared to the classroom.

It has been found that a child's pre-existing behavioural pattern can have a profound impact on the teacher-student interpersonal relationships. It has been found that this behaviour is a stronger influence on the teacher-student dynamic than the teacher's relationship features. It has also been found that none of the teacher-student relationship features impact student behaviour in the first grade (Birch & Ladd, 1998). This evidence suggests that conducting the current study with younger students would pose a significant threat to the validity of the study.

### **2.6 Measuring Teacher-Student Interpersonal Relationships**

Many researchers have attempted to develop a tool to measure the interpersonal relationship at all levels, as it has been shown that the relationship quality is dependent on the input from both the teacher and the students (Godwin & Klusmiere, 1995; Fan, 2012; Birch & Ladd, 1998). As both teachers and students play a role in the development of their relationship, it is necessary to consider opinions from both parties when attempting to gain an understanding of the development of their relationship.

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Pianta, Steinberg and Rollins (1995) created The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale; a 30-item scale to assess teachers perceptions of their relationships with their students. A more popular measurement tool is the QTI. The QTI is based on the MITB's dimensions of Influence and Proximity, including eight areas of interpersonal behaviours and a five-point response scale. The original QTI consists of 77 items, written in Dutch, and has been translated into several other languages in multiple countries (Maulana et al., 2012). While the QTI has gained notoriety in the field, its quantitative nature does not lend itself well to the current study. The QTI provides a snapshot of the current teacher-student relationship and does not consider the factors that develop the relationship. This could be a useful measurement tool to use in a longitudinal study to investigate if a relationship incurs some form of change. The current study is informed by the QTI and MITB as questions are framed with Proximity in mind to determine if this quality, when applied outside the classroom, impacts the relationship.

### **2.7 Extra Curricular Activities**

Involvement in extra-curricular activities is an integral aspect of school culture for many schools. In many cases, students value their participation in school-based extra-curricular activities more than their schoolwork itself (Coleman, 1961; Holland & Andre, 1987). Being involved in any form of extra-curricular has numerous positive outcomes for students including more personal student-teacher contact and a sense of belonging in school (Holland & Andre, 1987; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Barber, Eccles & Stone, 2001; Brown & Evans, 2002). Considering the motivation for joining any particular extra-curricular activity sheds light on the impact it has on those involved. For teachers, providing an extra-curricular activity is not a contractual obligation, thus it is considered

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as volunteer time in their school. Likewise, students are not required to participate in extra-curricular activities; rather they do so by choice. In some cases, teachers may use the opportunity to participate in an extra-curricular activity as a motivator in the classroom or as a means of behaviour management for involved students. The current study will investigate student and teacher motivations for providing and participating in particular extra-curricular activities.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities has been shown to be beneficial, however Bailey (2006) observed that these positive outcomes are slightly dependant on the teacher or coach running the program. As participation in an extra-curricular is not an obligation for the student or the teacher, one must pause to consider how this negative scenario would impact the relationship in the classroom. The existing research is currently centered on the benefits of participating in extra-curricular activities. The current study will seek to investigate how a negative relationship or experience in the activity may impact the student or teacher involved. While many teachers voluntarily organize these activities, some new teachers do so to appease their administrators. In their 2012 case study, Bowels and O'Sullivan reported the pressure applied from administrators for new teachers to volunteer their time after hours in the form of extracurricular activities (Bowels & O'Sullivan, 2012). In this case, it is possible that the organizing teacher of the extra-curricular activity does not bring a positive attitude, or a genuine interest in the activity. While the majority of research assumes a shared interest in the activity, the current study will investigate whether students and teachers perceive that a genuine shared interest in the activity does exist.

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A great deal of work has also been conducted relating student participation in extra-curricular activities to delinquency rates. Several studies show that youth who are involved in these activities show decreased rates of delinquency, higher self-esteem and are more socially competent (Mahatamya & Lohman, 2011; Anderson, Sabatelli & Kosutic, 2007; Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003; Holland & Andre, 1987; Pettit, Bates, Dodge & Meece, 1999; Pierce & Shields, 1998; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Barber, et al., 2001; Coley, Morris & Hernandez, 2004; Dworkin, Larson & Hanson, 2003; Fredricks et al., 2002; Larson, Gillman & Richards, 1997; Raymore, Barber & Eccles, 2001). Eccles and Barber (1999) found that the results varied by age; older students involved in extra-curricular activities were found to enjoy school more, however they were also found to engage in risky behaviours such as underage drinking. These factors have contributed to the current study by aiding in the narrowing of the scope of the study to the middle school age group. Students must be old enough to have the social competency necessary to recognize the difference between the profession time and personal time of teachers.

While the majority of research in this area focuses on sports as the main form of extra-curricular activity, there are some authors who have looked at non-athletic forms of activities. Although studies have found no difference between athletes and non-athletes as it relates to their social development, the current research aims to achieve a student balance containing students who are involved in extra-curricular sport in addition to those who are involved in other forms of extra-curricular activity. Clear evidence also exists to support that participation in any form of extra-curricular activity during the secondary school years will increase the likelihood of a student attending college full-time by age 21

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(Holland & Andre, 1997; Eccles & Barber, 1999). It has been reported that male athletes tend to have a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than do non-athletes (Holland & Andre 1997). The current study will not seek to investigate the impact of participation in extra-curricular activities on student's academic achievement. This is an area that may be best suited as a follow-up study after the results of this project have been examined.

### **2.8 Closing the Gap**

Previous research shows a clear link between classroom teacher-student relationships and student achievement. It has also been shown that participation in extra-curricular activities provides multiple benefits. The current study aims to close the gap in empirical research between these areas. In all of these cases, previous researchers have not considered any impact that participating in extra-curricular activities with a classroom teacher may have on a student. At the time of this study, there exists no published research available through Memorial University's online library that examines this impact on the teacher-student relationship.

## Chapter 3

### Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

Prior to beginning a study, the researcher must identify the research problem that is of interest, evaluate the various types of research designs and form a plan to conduct the research. After deciding on the appropriate research methodology, the sample site and population are decided upon and data is collected and analyzed appropriately. Throughout this process, it is critical that the researcher address measures of trustworthiness for the data being collected. It is imperative that the research be conducted with the requisite ethical considerations in mind.

#### 3.2 Research Design

When designing a study, one of the most challenging tasks researchers face is to identify the problem that needs to be studied. According to Creswell (2012), “research problems are the educational issues, controversies, or concerns that guide the need for conducting a study” (p. 59). After identifying the problem, researcher must then determine research questions that will guide their research. Researchers are inquisitive in nature; seeking to uncover further information about the topics that are of particular interest to them. The statement of the problem arises from the researchers thirst to obtain more knowledge about a topic.

Bell (2005) outlines a sequence of steps that are to be carried out when undertaking a research project:

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You will need to select a topic, identify the objectives of your study, plan and design a suitable methodology, devise research instruments, negotiate access to institutions, materials and people, collect, analyse and present information, and, finally, produce a well-written report. (p. 1)

After deciding on a topic and objective for a study, researchers must turn their attention to determining the most practical research method to use in conducting the research. Historically, very few research methods existed, however in recent years numerous alternative approaches have become popular including quantitative, qualitative, grounded theory and action research. Each approach has its strengths as well as its limitations, so it is important that a researcher choose the best method to conduct their study. In some cases, researchers will combine multiple methods for a study. Quantitative research is best used when the researcher seeks to gather information about a research problem that is based on trends or tendencies of participants. Some quantitative research designs seek to determine how one or more variables may affect another. Grounded theory studies is a systematic procedure that appeals to many researchers in education as it enables the researcher to generate a broad theory about some central phenomenon that is grounded in the data. Action research designs have become the most applied and practice design for many researchers as it allows them to explore some practical problem and develop a solution for the problem. Qualitative research is used for the current study as it is best suited for research problems where the researcher does not explicitly know the variables at play. This method is best suited when the researcher seeks to gain additional insight into a phenomenon from participants (Creswell, 2012). In the current study, interviews were chosen as the instrument to best understand the phenomenon of extra-curricular activities. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews,

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allowing the research to probe for a deeper understanding in conversation with participants.

### **3.3 Interview Approach**

Creswell (2012) uses several distinguishing factors that categorize a study as qualitative research. Through data collection, the researcher acts as the primary research instrument. Most commonly this would involve some form of observation of interviews. The inquirer tends to pose general questions to participants and allows the participants to shape the responses. At the conclusion of the data collection, qualitative data must be analyzed through words or images, and statistical analysis is not completed. Although the participants create the data, Scott and Usher (1996) suggest that is impossible for the researcher to escape their pre-understandings and the collected data is gathered, recorded and presented through the lens of the researcher. In an effort to mitigate researcher bias, the interviews conducted in this study are done using pre-determined questions posed to all participants.

The current study makes use of broad interview questions, allowing participants to share their views in their own context. After the conclusion of each interview, the research transcribes the data into a computer for analysis. This method allows for the research to identify themes in the responses. Creswell (2012) points out several key benefits to using interviews as a data collection method. They provide useful information when the research cannot directly observe participants while allowing participants to provide detailed information regarding the research problem. In contrast to the observer, the use of interviews allows the interviewer to ask specific questions and probe for further understanding when the opportunity arises. This can also be seen as a

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disadvantage, as only the information the interviewer seeks to know would be asked. It is also necessary for the interviewer to have adequate interviewing skills to provide attention to the conversation in the interview while also obtaining the pertinent information desired. At the conclusion of all interviews in the current study, the researcher provided an opportunity for all participants to provide any additional information that they believe should be included in the data.

Although it is the most time consuming form of qualitative data collection, one-to-one interviews were chosen for this study as it allows the research to collect individual information from participants. The specific structure of the interview in this study is through semi-structured interviews with students. Data collected from these interviews was triangulated using additional interviews conducted with teachers. This data was then coded to find themes that are reported in the writing.

### **3.4 Participant Selection**

This study was conducted at 3 different schools, all residing in the same school board. The researcher contacted the school board office to obtain consent to speak to the principal at the 5 schools within the jurisdiction that fit the scope of the study; these five schools are ideal sites that employ teachers who organize extra-curricular activities for students they teach. Site and participant selection was conducted using LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) ideal-typical purposeful sampling strategy. Sites that provided the strongest selection for an ideal-typical sample were chosen. The criteria for the purposeful sample were for students in grades eight and nine who take part in an extra-curricular activity that is organized by their teacher. After obtaining consent from each of the five Principals to conduct the study at their school, the researcher visited with each

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Principal to determine how access the researcher would access the site to conduct the study. As the same school board also employs the researcher, personal connections with teachers who coach and organize extra-curricular activities for these students were used negotiate access to their classrooms by seeking their permission to speak to their class.

After access to the site was obtained, a presentation was given to each class of grade 8 and 9 students in the school. This presentation gave a brief overview to familiarize students with the role of research in education, provided some relevant examples of studies that have been done and introduced the current study. The researcher used familiarity with the teacher to build trust with the students as a method to encourage participation in the study. An explanation of the interview process was given, informing students that the interview would be conducted at their school. A sample question was provided so students gained further knowledge of the interview and to ease any apprehensive feelings toward the process. The following question was given during this presentation:

- Think about a teacher who organized an extra-curricular activity that you took part in (coached a team, organized a club, etc.). Do you believe that participating in that activity impacted your relationship with the teacher in the classroom?

Informed consent forms were given to potential participants for them to take home, complete and return. Only 3 of the initial 5 schools had students who responded with an interest in participating in the study. In total, 10 students were selected as well as 5 teachers.

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### **3.5 Data Collection**

As the ideal selection of participants was used, interviews took place at the individual school where students attend. At each site, an interview time and location was set up with the administrator. Once in the interview space, the researcher explained important aspects of the research that had previously been stated: the purpose, the method and expected time. The researcher used a personal iPhone to record the interview, acknowledge that the phone is the researchers personal property, and is locked by a password. The entire content of the interview was stored, locked, safe and available only to the researcher. Anecdotal notes were also used to make note of any noteworthy aspects of body language or other elements that would not be readily apparent on the audio recording.

All of the questions in the interview were developed and asked in accordance with LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) guidelines. Questions followed Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) guideline and cover all of the relevant content, from describing the extra-curricular activity, the time demands, location (reportorial), motives for participating (to elicit values), positive and negative teacher-student interaction during the extra-curricular sessions (controversial), teacher-student interaction in the classroom before the extra-curricular began, during the extra-curricular "season", after the extra-curricular had concluded (propositional). Each question would be scripted very carefully, making each question very clear and concise and would be asked in a predetermined order to each participant.

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### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Interview recordings were transcribed into text for analysis. This was combined with the researchers anecdotal notes taken during interviews for analysis. The goal of the data analysis will be to find meaning in the data, making the anecdotal notes referring to the researchers feelings during the interview increasingly valid. Formal data analysis followed procedures outlined by Marshall and Rossman (2006).

Data was first organized by type: interview transcripts and notes. With the data organized, scanning occurred where data was read and re-read (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The data was first read by scanning the entirety of an individual interview. This allowed the author to determine themes that each specific participant created. After these themes were identified, the data was reorganized and scanned question by question. In completing two separate analyses of the data, the researcher was able to determine the themes and ideas that were central throughout both data analysis exercises. With the discovery of these themes, the data was then integrated to find connecting ideas to find the true meaning in the phenomenon (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As theories developed for the big ideas, testing was done on the data by checking selections for validity of the theory. Information for this study was stored on the researchers personal computer, which is password protected.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

The principal form of triangulation for this study is through variation in interviews. Interviews will be conducted at multiple sites, using participants who are engaged in extra-curricular activities with multiple teachers. The study will not exclusively focus on sports as the form for extra-curricular activity; although coaching

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teams is the most common example studied in existing empirical research and most common form of extra-curricular involvement for teachers. Triangulation will also be done using students and teachers as participants.

### **3.7.1 Credibility**

The study gains credibility by only focusing on the teacher-student interpersonal relationship as it pertains to extra-curricular involvement and within the classroom. Any additional contact between teacher and student outside of these areas will not be considered applicable data in the study.

### **3.7.2 Transferability**

By including multiple forms of extra-curricular activities (i.e. sports, bands, clubs, committees, etc.) the data will be transferable to any type of program a teacher may wish to run. When selecting participants for the ideal sample, consideration will be given to the type of extra-curricular activity students are engaged in with their teachers.

### **3.7.3 Dependability**

This study is highly dependable and could be replicated in any jurisdiction that allows teachers to organize and facilitate extra-curricular activities for their students. The researcher does not need access to additional materials or specific sites for interviews. Any site where students and teachers engage in these activities would be an ideal site, containing the ideal selection of participants for the study to be replicated and results confirmed.

### **3.7.4 Confirmability**

In order to obtain confirmability, the role of the researcher in this study must be acknowledged. As the primary research instrument during interviews, it must be

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acknowledged that any researcher possesses some level of bias in a study. Although the research has been conducted through an objective lens, it is noteworthy that researchers are unable to escape from their pre-understandings, even temporarily (Scott & Usher, 1996). Using pre-determined questions for interviews will allow the researcher role to remain objective. Through this strategy, the requisite knowledge will be developed through the interaction between the researcher's pre-understandings and the behaviours of study participants. It is important to note that these pre-understandings will not cause bias; rather they will provide open-minded research as those understandings get put to the test. For this reason, it is a benefit to have these pre-understandings to form a starting point for knowledge creation.

### **3.8 Ethical Issues**

In order to carry out this research at Memorial University, the researcher had to comply with the "Policy on Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants" (2012) and obtain approval from the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR), an ethics review board. Decisions made by this board are governed by the following ethical principles:

- respect for human dignity and autonomy of the person through protecting privacy and confidentiality, and free and informed consent,
- respect for vulnerable persons,
- respect for justice and inclusiveness, and
- minimizing harm, maximizing benefit and balancing risks and benefits for research participants (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2012).

In creating a study, Creswell (2012) cites three main ethical considerations researchers must take, which are all consistent with the guidelines set forth by the ICEHR:

the beneficence of treatment of participants (maximizing good outcomes and minimizing risk), respect for participants (protecting autonomy and ensuring well-

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informed, voluntary participation), and justice (a fair distribution of risk and benefits). (p. 22)

In the current study, the following procedures were used to protect participants in this study:

1. Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the presiding school board.
2. Participants were informed of the study and participation was voluntary.
3. A letter of informed consent was distributed to interested participants. It was made clear to participants that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time. The letter also detailed both the nature of the study as well as the harms and benefits associated with participation.
4. The researcher was forthcoming about the time commitment and promised to protect the identities of participants by using pseudonyms in the report.
5. Data (interview recordings, transcripts and notes) were kept in a secure location. All information collected was treated as confidential.
6. All data analysis was performed by the researcher to ensure confidentiality.

The study proposal was submitted to the ICEHR of Memorial University and approval was granted.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter outlined the research design and gave justifications for the methodologies used. A semi-structured interview was determined to be the most appropriate instrument to collect data that would address the purpose of the study. Detailed descriptions were given as to how data was collected and analyzed. The issues of trustworthiness and ethical concerns were also addressed at the chapter's end.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher presents the seven questions used in the semi-structured interview and discusses the various themes that are evident in the data. Data obtained from students is analyzed separate from teachers. The themes are elucidated with reference to responses given by participants. Specific categories surfaced across responses and are summarized at the end of the chapter.

#### **4.2 Emergent Themes**

This study examined extra-curricular activities to determine if participating in them together would impact the teacher-student relationship. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and each item was analyzed separately to identify underlying themes. Predominant categories emerged from the themes as the researcher analyzed each response to each question individually. Student responses are analyzed separate from teacher responses, and then compared. Creswell (2012) contends that the “preliminary exploratory analysis in qualitative research consists of exploring the data to obtain a general sense of the data, memoing ideas [and] thinking about the organization of the data” (p. 243). After this process is complete, the researcher must segment, label and analyze the data to identify any broad themes that may exist. Using participant responses, the researcher explains the emergent themes for each question below. This chapter concludes with a summary of the predominant categories evident in the data.

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### 4.3 Classroom Impact

#### Student Responses

The first question of the interview asked students to think about a teacher who organized some extra-curricular activity that they took part in, then posed the question: “Do you believe that participating in that activity impacted your relationship with the teacher in the classroom? If yes, in what ways”? All of the students said that they do believe that their participation in the extra-curricular impacted their relationship in the classroom. Student 1 stated “that you get to know each other better, and you get to spend more time together. So when you get back into the classroom, ... interacting between the two becomes more free and calm”. Student 6 suggested “that the teachers that do extra-curricular’s find that they know me more and they find out how they can handle me, how to teach me and how I can be better in the classroom”. This comment reflects the opinion of all of the participants, in that participating in extra-curricular activities has a positive impact on the relationship between teacher and student. Throughout analyzing the data for this question, the following themes emerged:

- knowing the person;
- expectations;
- time spent together;
- student ratio;
- comfort.

A discussion of each theme follows.

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### 4.3.1 Knowing the Person

Students feel that knowing their teacher better, in a context outside of the classroom, helps them better relate to their teacher. The majority of students mentioned that knowing their teacher as a person outside of the classroom had some impact on their relationship. Some students simply enjoyed getting to know their teacher while others detailed how that helped them. Student 1 felt that “if you spend more time with the teacher, ... you just get to know each other more, the more you hang out together” while Student 4 talks about their track and field coach, saying “I didn’t know him before track started and now I talk to him in the halls”. There is a difference in getting to know a teacher at an extra-curricular compared to in the classroom. Student 2 states that this is due to the fact that:

You get to really see their personality more individually during a practice. While in the classroom it’s them teaching everybody so you kind of get to know them better for sure once you’d had some one-on-one time with them.

Students view the time outside the classroom as less formal, where they can interact more with their teacher about topics outside of the curriculum. They enjoy being able to engage in conversation with their teachers in a less formal setting.

Students enjoy having that extra element to their relationship with their teacher. The additional contact outside of the classroom inevitably leads to more contact with it. Student 8 claims “they don’t favourite you but they know you more than the other kids in the class so they are more likely to talk to you and pick you for things”. The teacher does not always engage the additional contact or interaction inside of the classroom, rather it becomes a reciprocal relationship as “sometimes it makes [students] more comfortable to talk to [their teachers] because they’re closer” (Student 9). This additional willingness to

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communicate inside of the classroom will cause students to be more engaged and better allow teachers to teach to their students. Student 6 says that their teachers “know me more and they find out how ... to teach me and how I can be better in the classroom”. Students enjoy that extra bit of interaction and it can even allow them to have more fun in the classroom – leading to an overall more positive experience in class. Student 7 summarizes this nicely by talking about when “you have that bond with them you understand what they’re doing and you could almost communicate better and not be so ‘do your work.’ You would be able to have a little bit of fun with them too”. There is another element to the relationship that students experience in the classroom. The additional time spent together in extra-curricular activities allows the student and teacher to know each other better, creating a more relaxed atmosphere where both questions and jokes occur more easily both inside the classroom and in any other setting.

### **4.3.2 Expectations**

The majority of students indicated that after getting to know their teacher through their extra-curricular activity, their expectations for the classroom increased. While this might at first seem unfair within the classroom context, not one student expressed an negativity toward this concept. Despite this apparent higher bar, student 6 points out that “they don’t give me a boost ahead ... but they know how to deal with me” in the classroom. Teacher’s expectations for students are very individual in the middle school classroom, as each student is capable of achieving at a different level academically. Student 7 says that the work “they expect from you and the work quality that they want goes up ... because they see what you do in other stuff and that you should be able to do higher amount or lower when they get to know you better. They get to set their

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expectations to what you're capable of". Not only might the expectations for work change but other qualities may also come to be expected in the classroom. Student 1 points out that may also be true for certain "characteristics – if they see that you're a leader in an extra-curricular activity you should contribute those skillsets to the classroom". Viewing expectations in this way allows for the teacher to possibly lower their expectations for a student if needed.

Teachers are able to tailor their expectations to their students as they get to know them throughout the school year. Through extra-curricular activities, Student 5 says they can "challenge you to step outside the box more as they get a better sense of you". This extra connection can allow teachers to challenge their students in ways that may normally not be possible. Student 2 describes this element in saying that "if they see you work much harder during a practice ... that it might get them to expect more work out of you". Student 3 details how their expectations in band rose saying that:

We were working on our Christmas concert he was just expecting me to play one thing. And then later on in the year he was expecting me to do music festival and play a solo ... so it's as if his expectations have gone up.

Based on these comments, it appears that this teacher took the time to realize the ability of his student and then raised the bar as they learned what the student was capable of. It is a learning process for teacher and student that occurs in each course, however as teachers learn the needs and personality of their students, they can engage the student in more meaningful ways. Teachers learn not only the academic ability of their students, but through extra-curricular activities they also get to know what truly motivates their students. Student 10 summarizes this as follows:

I would say that their expectations for me are different than other people because they know more about me and they know that I care about my marks in school

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and therefore if I didn't do well on something they would know that I want to do better. I think the expectation is different than with a teacher who doesn't coach me because the person who doesn't coach me only sees me in class so they don't really get to know my personality.

Students who experience these heightened expectations do not have any objection to this type of treatment, and if anything, they embrace it. Student 4 recognized that their physical education teacher “knew [when I wasn't trying] and he would get mad if I didn't participate to my fullest abilities. ... I liked that he was pushing me harder”. Students expect to be treated fairly in their classes, and do not object to meeting higher expectations if they feel as though they've shown their teacher that they are capable of doing so.

### **4.3.3 Time Spent Together**

Time spent together during regular classroom hours provide the only time for the teacher-student relationship to grow. Throughout a school year this is a finite amount of time and does not typically amount to a significant amount of time in the course of each school day or week. Students recognize that while an extra-curricular activity is running, i.e. during a season for a sports team, seeing their teacher more frequently makes a difference. In fact, “the more time that you spend together just makes the classroom environment a lot better between the two of you” (Student 1). Not only does this impact the relationship in the classroom, but also the additional time will affect all interactions between teacher and student. Student 10 points out that “if I were to talk to one of my teachers who has never coached me compared to someone who has, they've spent more time with me so they just know me better in general”. It does not require numerous meetings to impact the relationship, however only a few meetings are needed at an extra-curricular activity to accomplish this. Student 9 notes multiple ways in which time

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impacted the relationship with their teacher after getting cut from a team during a tryout, stating:

I felt awkward and that it was a personal thing. I think time let me get over it, but I see them more – they were light at the tryouts when they were not having to deal with a class.

In this case, the passage of time during regular class hours allowed the student and teacher to repair their relationship.

The nature of the time spent together is not a linear relationship. The time spent together at an extra-curricular activity will have a great impact very quickly, as noted by Student 9's comments. This is due to the nature of the time spent together at an extra-curricular. Student 8 describes this by saying that "because they are coaching you, there is more of a connection because they are putting their own personal time and information into coaching you". Students are aware that teachers are not required to provide extra-curricular activities at their school and they appreciate when teachers volunteer their time to do so. The quality of time spent together during an extra-curricular activity is improved by the approach that the student brings to the environment. Student 6 states:

I think where I spend more time with them in extra-curricular activities it just gives them more time and more ways to see how I work. They get more time but also a different side of me comes out in sports.

As students are required to go to school, but attend extra-curricular activities by choice, they tend to bring a different approach. This different side of the student is one that teachers may never see in the classroom.

### **4.3.4 Student Ratio**

Some of the students interviewed referred to the teacher-to-student ratio as an explanation for the ability to develop a stronger relationship during an extra-curricular

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activity compared to the classroom. Student 2 describes the ability to “get to really see their personality more individually during a practice or [other meeting]”. The amount of individual attention a teacher is able to provide to a student is limited in a large class. Student 3 describes the roadblock to individual attention, noting that the band teacher “has the entire band to think about so he doesn’t focus on me at all during those times”. Students appreciate the individual attention that is more readily available during an extra-curricular activity. They recognize that “in a classroom there are way more students than on a team where there is less so they get to know you better and they kind of understand me more and they get to know me more” (Student 10).

### **4.3.5 Comfort**

Students also described having an increased level of comfort in the classroom with teachers who organize their extra-curricular activities. Student 9 states “you just feel like you know them more because you see them when they’re not acting like a teacher and they’re less serious. Sometimes it makes you more comfortable to talk to them because you’re closer”. Having that additional interaction outside of the classroom allows students to feel closer to their teacher. This feeling of comfort creates an atmosphere where students are more willing to ask for assistance, or simply carry a conversation in their classes. Student 7 notes “it usually means I’m a little more comfortable with them and I’m not just going to sit down, do my work without saying anything”. The heightened level of comfort allows students to feel as though they are engaged in more of a partnership in the classroom, and tend to display more willingness to oblige their teacher’s requests. Student 10 states feeling “more comfortable with them and its almost more like a friendship instead of them being a teacher to me. Its just much more

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comfortable. Its just a different relationship”. A relationship in this context is significantly more productive in the classroom and will assist students in performing their classwork.

### **Teacher Responses**

The first question asked to teachers in their interview mirrored the question asked to students: think about a student who participates in an extra-curricular activity that you organized. Do you believe that participating in that activity impacted your relationship with that student in the classroom? Teachers unanimously answered this question with by saying that participation does have an impact on the relationship in the classroom. In analyzing the reasoning in their responses, four themes emerged:

- knowing the person;
- expectations of students;
- rapport with students;
- interactions with students.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.3.6 Knowing the Person**

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of teacher responses was how well they felt they got to know their student as an individual person. Prior to participation in their extra-curricular activity, teachers would only know their students as exactly that – students. Engaging with them outside of the classroom allows the teacher to better get to know their students in ways that are not possible in the classroom. Teacher 4 describes this as a reciprocal relationship stating, “I find when I spend time outside of school with kids they get to know me in a different way and I get to know them in a different way”.

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Teacher 5 continues to say that knowing their students outside of the classroom is about know more than the student but also their family background. “There are certain kids that you coach that you can let your guard down because you know them, and you know their parents”.

Developing the relationship outside of the classroom allows teachers to better understand the needs of their students. This allows them to manage their needs in the classroom more efficiently, which can allow the student to enjoy more success academically. Teacher 3 enjoys “seeing a student in a different context [because] you get to know them better. I think they respect you more because you’ve shown your willingness to put some extra time into them and something they care about”. This additional respect that exists in the relationship allows teachers to know when they need to cut a student more slack in their behaviour, but Teacher 3 also points out that “if you’re a little bit sharper with them, they know that’s not who you always are. You just have a bigger bank of experiences with that person to draw on and the same thing for them. If teachers have a heightened sense of their student’s needs, students will trust their teachers more. Teacher 1 points out the benefit of this, saying:

Having a stronger connection and knowing them more, I think, allows them to trust me more when I’m teaching them and makes them want to learn from me. It’s more impactful. They have more trust in me as an educator, and in turn, when it comes to the classroom it allows me to have a more successful learning environment.

### **4.3.7 Expectations of Students**

Teachers are trained to make an effort to treat their students fairly. Some of the teachers interviewed indicated that they would expect students who are involved in an extra-curricular activity with them to understand and meet their classroom expectations

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better than students who are not involved in their activity. Teacher 5 notes: “I think my expectations for everyone are the same. I think the people that I’m involved with and that I coach understand those expectations even clearly than one a student I haven’t coached would”. While the stated expectation of classroom performance and behaviour does not explicitly change, teachers acknowledge that they expect students that they work with in extra-curricular activities to meet their expectations better than their peers. Teacher 1 says “They know what I expect of them better. We have a better understanding of what is expected and their expectations would change”. Teacher 2 continues to say:

I think you have a higher expectation because you know what they’re like. But maybe in some ways you’re also a little more flexible because you know a little more about them. You know if they need to be pushed or not and you know a little more about what achievement would look like for them.

While teachers believe that these students should meet their expectations better, they are also willing to be more understanding when students are unable to do so. The improved relationship that they have developed allows them to understand their students better and set expectations for those students that they can meet.

### **4.3.8 Rapport with Students**

The third theme that emerged in this question is the increased rapport that teachers develop with students. This increased rapport allows teachers to work with or talk to their students in ways that would not otherwise be possible. Teacher 4 says:

I might be more comfortable around them because I know them more. I don’t think I favour them but I might say some things to them that I might not say to other kids because I’m not as comfortable with them.

The additional comfort in the relationship also allows teachers to rely on those students who participate in some extra-curricular activity with them for additional tasks or assistance. Teacher 1 states that “we have a stronger rapport and relationship with each

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other and there is an element of understanding. I would go to them first if I needed something done in my classroom”. Teacher 5 compares this to any relationship outside of school, saying “that’s the way I feel a healthy relationship works. It’s a give and take”.

### **4.3.9 Interactions with Students**

Teachers described their interactions with students who participate in extra-curricular activities as different than students who do not participate with them. Teachers know these students better, so “there is definitely a more relaxed feel with the conversation” (Teacher 1). In addition to the relaxed feeling that teachers have talking to these students, when they talk to these students they also have “more depth of conversation which made you treat them differently. Not academically but personally”. Teacher 4 described several factors that contribute to the change in the way teachers interact with the students they are involved with outside of the classroom, as well as how these interactions impact their classroom: “I feel when I give back to sport programs in or out of school it benefits my relationships huge with them, which then will benefit how they perform in my classroom, both behaviour wise and performance wise”. This teacher does not suggest that they provide any preferential treatment of the student’s academic performance, but does note that the change in interactions and the increase in the relationship does allow students to perform better. Teacher 4 continues to describe how these factors impact students in the classroom:

I feel like, if I spend a lot of time with a kid outside of school. I can be a little more loose and say some things that I might not usually in a classroom. After hours upon hours of games, practices, road trips, I feel like that respect should come in turn to the classroom. I feel like behaviour, I really don’t have a lot of problems in general, and also I think that comes back to the time I spend with kids outside of the classroom.

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Teachers do not describe changing their academic standard for the students that participate in their activities, however they do note their interactions with them become different, and this leads to improved classroom interactions and student performance.

### **4.3.10 Common Themes and Contradictions**

The most powerful piece of information to be discovered in this section comes in the answer to the actual question: Do you believe that participating in that activity impacted your relationship in the classroom? All 15 of the participants who took part in an interview answered this question by saying yes. The reasons they provided were done to detail, not only the impact this participation had on the classroom relationship, but the positive impact that it had on the relationship. In describing this phenomenon, students and teachers alike noted that they felt closer to one another. Participants felt that knowing the other person outside the context of the classroom allowed them to connect better within the classroom. Both students and teachers felt that there was a change in the student's expectations in the classroom. In this theme, there exist minor differences.

Students perceive that their teacher's expectations for them rise after they participate in an activity together; while teachers feel their expectations remain the same. The primary distinction for teachers is that they begin to expect their students who they are connected to outside the classroom to meet their expectations better than they may have in the past.

While not as explicitly equal as the first two common themes, the remaining themes in this question for the two sets of participants are interrelated. Students feel that the time spent with their teacher outside the classroom, coupled with the more favourable student-to-teacher ratio allow them to better connect with their teacher and develop a sense of comfort in their classroom. Teachers show a tendency to detail how the

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additional time together has impacted their relationship, commenting on the improved rapport and how it allows them to interact differently in the classroom.

### **4.4 Individual Attention**

#### **Student Responses**

The second question in the interview asked students: “Think about a time that your teacher worked with you individually for your extra-curricular activity (one-to-one coaching, dealing with adversity, etc.). What do you believe was the teacher’s motivation for providing that individual attention?” As students described their individual scenarios of individual attention, they did not want to seem as though they received the attention as a form of favoritism. Students spoke with a belief that their teacher genuinely cared for all of the students who took part in the extra-curricular activity. In analyzing the responses, three themes became clear:

- Providing help;
- Teacher rapport;
- Student potential.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.4.1 Providing Help**

Students believe that their teacher, as the person organizing their extra-curricular activity, is there to help them. They speak in a way that shows they genuinely appreciate the assistance in the activity they are participating in. Student 9 recognizes that multiple participants in the activity may need help, but sometimes “it’s way more useful when they are just talking to you one on one because then it’s specific to what I need help with”. This student continues to say that they appreciate the attention because “it helps,

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especially if they are passionate about the sport they like to see you improve and they want to help you get better”. In this case they remain focused on the teachers desire to improve the student’s abilities. Student 7 elaborates to suggest the teacher’s focus is not solely on improving the individual, but to assist the entire group/team. They believe the teacher’s motivation is:

To help you out like that so you can help the team and you can keep you’re grades up and you keep everything else so you can still be used in the sports too. You definitely have a bond with them because you have to be able to listen and understand what they’re saying so in order for them to do that you would have to be able to be on the same page as them.

In other cases, students believe that the teacher is ready and willing to help any student who may need it. Student 2 states that they received help:

Because I asked for it. Not everyone was asking the coach for the help but me personally I wanted to get better so I wanted his help. I think he just wanted to help me get better. I think he would have done that for any person there that wanted help.

Students feel confident in taking part in extra-curricular activities when they know they will be able to improve in the given activity. They feel that confidence in knowing that their teacher is offering an activity “just to help you” (Student 5).

### **4.4.2 Teacher Rapport**

The second theme that emerged in this question is the impact that the one-to-one attention has on the teacher-student relationship. The development of teacher rapport with students is influenced greater by one-to-one attention. Student 2 states that both teacher and student benefit “because you’re getting that one on one time with him and you gain respect”. Students recognize that they gain more respect for their teacher in the one-to-one time and that their teacher also benefits from the growing rapport between the two. Student 4 notes the mutual benefit by stating, “our relationship got much stronger. It

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helps me with my jumping and I got much better once he started helping me more. [The stronger relationship between us [helps him]]”.

The individual attention is able to strengthen the relationship in ways that group dynamics do not allow. Students are aware of this fact, as Student 7 says, “everybody could benefit from that because then you have a better relationship and you would be able to be better at what you’re trying to do and that would also benefit everybody”. The benefit to students is not only felt in the relationship, but as Student 5 points out, it also has an impact in the classroom when “you get to know them more and they know you. That’s a benefit because your guard is down. When you first meet them you don’t know them and your guard is up and you can’t really take stuff in”. Student 10 further emphasizes this connection to the classroom:

I benefit because I feel like the closer I am with a teacher who also coaches me that I become more motivated in their class because I genuinely enjoy being there and because I enjoy doing the sports. It all around makes me happier.

Providing students with individual attention in the extra-curricular setting provides students with a chance to build their relationship with their teachers in a way that is not possible in the classroom. The connection that students make from this setting to the classroom is a positive one.

### **4.4.3 Student Potential**

Some students indicated that teachers provide individual attention to them if they have potential to improve. Individual attention in these cases instills confidence in students, as they perceive their teacher’s belief that they can do better. Student 1 recognized that the teacher coaching badminton “helped me toward that through practices by giving me tips and pointers. I think he saw that there was potential in me”. Again,

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students recognize that individual attention is a thing that multiple students should receive during their activities, as Student 8 that “I wouldn’t be the only one to get one-to-one; other people who have the potential would also get one-to-one coaching”. Students also perceive that time spent together is a key factor in a teacher determining what their potential is. Student 10 feels that:

Because they know what my potential is more and they spend a lot of time with me. Its also more that it’s a caring thing but they care enough to be more involved with my personal life or school life they just genuinely care about what’s going on in my life.

In discussing how a teacher has recognized their students potential, they feel their teacher has a genuine interest in their life both inside and outside of school. Individual attention during an extra-curricular activity has an impact on students that is unparalleled by regular classroom interaction.

### **Teacher Responses**

As the format for the interview questions remained the same for teachers, the second question asked them to think about a time that you worked with an individual for your extra-curricular activity and posed the following question: what do you believe was the student’s reaction to you providing that individual attention? The following three themes emerged from their responses:

- appreciation of attention;
- trusting the teacher;
- reciprocal benefits.

A discussion of each theme follows.

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### **4.4.4 Appreciation of Attention**

Teachers answered this question by alluding to the students appreciate for their assistance when they get to provide some individual attention. In many cases, individual attention is hard for teachers to provide in a regular classroom. Teacher 5 points out that students “appreciate knowing that someone is giving that attention that sometimes is lacking when you have a class of 30 people and that’s the goal there”. While at an extra-curricular activity, Teacher 1 observes that students “welcome the help. They are happy to have me come and pay attention to them. They are welcoming of the advice”. Students appreciate that the teacher is willing to help them with an activity that they have chosen to take part in. This is in stark contrast to the help they receive in the classroom, which is provided for a curriculum that they have no say in. Receiving that help for their personal interest makes them more receptive to assistance in the classroom as well. Teacher 2 refers to this saying “I appreciate the benefit of the relationship”. In many cases, students who are participating in an activity and seeking help from their teacher there have a strong relationship with their teacher. Teacher 4 believes this is the case most of the time: “Usually it would be those kids that I have a pretty good relationship with. I find their reactions usually very receiving to what I have to say”. As students receive the individual attention in the extra-curricular setting, it creates a habit of receiving assistance from the teacher who provides it. This makes it easier for the teacher to provide the same assistance to those students in the classroom.

### **4.4.5 Trusting the Teacher**

Teachers also observed that in order for students to be receptive of what the teacher is attempting to help them with, the student must have a level of trust with that

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teacher. In many cases, these students will hold their teacher's opinion in a higher regard than they will a teacher who does not offer an extra-curricular for them. Teacher 4 notes that, "kids who come to me on a one to one basis are kids who trust me. I think they value my opinion, and what I would have to say". The heightened level of trust that is required for these individual interactions is developed through participation in extra-curricular activities. As Teacher 2 points out, "Both student and teacher benefit from a coaching and teaching relationship. Because [it develops] your depth of trust in each other". Teacher 1 elaborates on the benefit that exists by saying:

I guess it comes back to the understanding that in those moments, when it comes back to the classroom and I'm teaching them, that they usually are better behaved, perform a little better, there's more trust and that helps me as an educator.

The increased level of trust that these students have allows them to work with and for the teacher in their classroom with a higher level of success.

### **4.4.6 Reciprocal Benefits**

Some of the teachers interviewed referred to providing individual attention as a mutually beneficial act. Students who receive individual attention at an extra-curricular activity appreciate that assistance and perform the measures within their control to reciprocate their appreciation. Teachers enjoy providing assistance to their students both inside and outside of the classroom. Teacher 3 believes providing individual attention to a student at an activity is beneficial to both parties:

It's a reciprocal thing. Myself I feel like I've gone above and beyond so that's a personally gratifying thing. I think anytime you can try to give a different perspective from someone who has a little more life experience you're helping them out.

Not all students will tend to outwardly express their appreciation for the individual attention, however teachers still believe their work with students is appreciated. Teacher

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1 notes that students “appreciate [the help] and reciprocate it if the student has the social and cognitive ability to make the connection and understanding”.

### **4.4.7 Common Themes and Contradictions**

After analyzing the themes derived from all participant data in this question, some similarities emerge between teacher and student responses. Student expressed an appreciation for the help that their teachers provide them. Teachers mention this same appreciation from their students, and continue to speak about how this appreciation impacts their relationship in the classroom. Similarly, students mention the positive impact that receiving this assistance has on their relationship with their teachers. Teachers again acknowledge this, but their focus shifts to detailing how this increased relationship impacts their work with students in the classroom.

Multiple teachers commented on the trust student’s display for them in accepting their assistance while students do not focus on this aspect of the relationship. Teachers believe that students accept their assistance in the individual context because they trust them. Student meanwhile, are more focused on why their teachers are trying to help them. They display the belief that their teachers are trying to improve their proficiency in whatever activity they are doing; they perceive this as teachers helping them fulfill their potential.

## **4.5 Teacher Motivations**

### **Student Responses**

The third question in the interview detailed to students that teachers volunteer their personal time away from school to offer extra-curricular activities. This was followed by the following question: Why do you believe that your teacher provided this

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opportunity to you? Student responses to this questions yielded a variety of opinions, however 4 themes became evident in the data. The themes from this question are as follows:

- giving back;
- teacher rapport;
- conversations with teachers;
- common interests.

A discussion of each theme follows.

### **4.5.1 Giving Back**

The majority of students recognized that many of their teachers had an interest in the extra-curricular activity that they ran stemming from past experiences. Students felt that when their teachers “were younger, they had coaches and they would have appreciated what they did. And they would want to give back the same thing to us” (Student 4). Students also believe that teachers provide the activities to appease their students. Student 1 stated, “they know what the kids want. They know we want to participate in extra-curricular activities”. Students appreciate that their teachers are willing to offer activities for them to participate in. They recognize that this improves the school climate in general and for their own personal gain. Student 6 describes the following scenario:

I think it’s for the students so they can have a better experience at school. I think there is a connection between extra-curricular and performance in school. You get more engaged and have more reason to go to school. If you don’t excel in the classroom you can’t do those extra things. ... I think they do it to give students options outside of school. So they can do sports or do band or stuff like that.

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Student 10 goes on to say, “when I’m older I want to be able to do the same thing so I’m thinking that’s how it was for them and they want to give back”. Students feel as though they are part of a tradition and have a sense of belonging with their teacher who chooses to give back.

Giving back to the school community is not something that is exclusive to teachers. Students feel that their teachers would give back by organizing extra-curricular activities regardless of their profession. Student 3 feels that teachers give back because:

Teachers are nice and they want us to try new things and experience new things. I think [if they weren’t a teacher] they would do it if they had the time to do it. I think even if they weren’t hired to do this they would do it if they had the time and money.

Student 8 continues to suggest that it is the interest of the teacher that is their motivation to offer an activity.

It is something they love to do and want to teach other kids how to do. I think it is something they would want to do on their personal time even if they weren’t a teacher. Just that they have that interest.

Students feel that one of the reasons teachers provide the extra-curricular activities that they do is to continue a tradition.

### **4.5.2 Teacher Rapport**

Multiple students responded to this question by referring to the improvement that participating in an activity with their teacher has on their relationship. Some focused on how it allows a teacher to get to know their students better while others made that connection to their relationship outside of the classroom. Student 2 believed that the teacher “wants to better know his students”. Students appreciate that their teachers want to get to know them rather than just teach them in the academic setting. Student 1 recognizes that participation in their activities allowed a better connection to the teacher,

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but also noted the impact that can have saying: “I get to know him better so we can talk about more stuff going on outside of school. I can have a personal conversation with him”. Seeing the willingness of the teacher to get to know their students also allows the students to have a willingness to get to know the teacher, through the extra-curricular activity and through the academic setting.

Students also made connection to how the improved rapport with their teachers would translate to their life outside of the classroom. Student 8 talked about potentially seeing their teacher outside of school, saying “I wouldn’t talk to my regular teachers as much as a coach because I don’t know them as well”. Student 9 also spoke about seeing their teacher in a public setting, stating: “If it’s a teacher that I’m not that close with I wouldn’t approach them the same as I would a coach because I feel a lot closer and I’d talk to the coach more”. They feel as though because their teacher has invested time outside of the classroom that it can allow their relationship to continually exist outside of the classroom. This is in stark contrast to teachers who do not organize an extra-curricular activity that they would not approach with the same confidence. Students believe that their teachers do offer an activity to improve the relationship, as evidenced by Student 10’s comments comparing teachers who do offer an activity to those who do not:

It’s the same thing with the teacher but then if you’re playing sports or in band with them as well it’s going to build [the relationship] so much stronger because you spend time with those people. I think the time together outside the classroom builds a stronger relationship. I’ve had teachers for three years that I wouldn’t consider myself close with them but I’ve had teachers coach me before they taught me and as soon as I was taught by them I already felt more comfortable [in their class] because I’ve seen a more fun side of them just other than professionally.

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Students associated teacher's motivation with providing some form of extra-curricular activity with the impact that it had on their relationship. They do not limit this relationship to the confines of the classroom; rather they tend to appreciate this improved relationship in all possible areas.

### **4.5.3 Conversations with Teachers**

Multiple participants mentioned the many conversations they would have with their teachers through extra-curricular activities. They described having casual conversations with their teachers while participating in their activities. Student 8 compares those conversations to those had in the classroom by stating "they are constantly talking to you and giving you advice and helping you with things. And teachers do that but it is not constant, they teach you lessons and focus on giving you information". Student 7 notes that "when you get to talking, you get that bond and you understand what they are interested in and if you have the same interest then you could talk about that". The students find that having more opportunities to talk to their teachers in a non-academic setting allows them to better know and understand their teachers. While these conversations can be very informal, they provide students and teachers useful insight into each others lives. Student 10 talked about "getting into conversations with people if they're coaching you. It's not always them telling you what to do but you're talking to them and its collaborative and I find that I find a lot more about teachers". As this student points out, these conversations are less teacher-directed and are a more casual conversation for teacher and student to get to know one another. These interactions during the activity can lead to further conversations during the school day, as Student 9 mentions that "I talk to my gym teacher a lot just in the gym and about life and

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stuff, its not just about sports”. Ultimately, these conversations lead to a person connection between teacher and student. In one particular case, Student 1 describes how the relationship with a teacher has grown through conversations:

We kind of had conversations about different sports and we have more conversations about unrelated school and extra-curricular topics because I get to know him better so we can talk about more stuff going on outside of school. I can have a personal conversation with him.

In this case, the student’s relationship with the teacher has slowly grown through casual conversations. Students enjoy getting to know their teacher on a personal level and they perceive their teachers as having similar feelings. Students also believe that part of the reason that their teachers offer extra-curricular is for the purpose of getting to develop a personal relationship together.

### **4.5.4 Common Interests**

Through discussion of a teacher’s motivation to provide an extra-curricular activity, many students commented on the teacher’s interest in the activity. Some students elaborated on the additional interests they discovered they shared with their teachers. Student 5 felt as though teachers offer their activities because “it’s something they like, they get to do it with you and enjoy it”. Students also recognize that teachers, like students, have a diverse array of interests. They appreciate that in participating in an activity with a teacher, they may have already identified that they have a common interest through the activity. Student 7 recognizes this diversity, stating:

Some people have different interests and that sort of thing. Some things one teacher provides and that could be an interest to someone. ... I think they choose to do it because they also have an interest in it and they enjoy coaching it as well as I enjoy playing it.

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By participating in these activities, students not only recognize that they share a common interest in their activity, rather they learn about other facets of the teachers life that they have common interests in. Student 3 points out these things saying, “we have talked about some movies and stuff like that. . . . we have discovered some additional things to talk about”. Discovering these common interests through extra-curricular interaction allows both student and teacher to gain previously unknown knowledge about each other back into the classroom.

### **Teacher Responses**

The third question asked to teachers during their interview stated: You (teachers) volunteer your personal time away from school to offer extra-curricular activities. The following question was then asked: why do you provide this opportunity to your students? A similar question was asked to students, however it called for them to speculate why their teachers volunteered their time. The question posed to teachers seeks a first-hand account of why they offer the activities that they do to students. In their responses, the following three themes emerged:

- teaching life skills;
- enjoyment in the activity;
- giving back.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.5.6 Teaching Life Skills**

The first theme that emerged in this question was the teacher’s interest in continuing to teach students outside of the classroom. Through extra-curricular activities

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teachers can teach students a whole host of important life skills that are not found in any curriculum. Teachers describe these lessons as being enjoyable to teach to their students:

I like to work with and help kids in other environments outside of the classroom. Athletics is one way to do that and teach the life skills and to help them succeed in other avenues outside of the classroom. Sports is an easy way for me to do that because I have the knowledge. I like to help kids. I like to grow the student (Student 1).

The main focus of teachers that organize activities for their students is to help students grow as individuals. Teacher 4 details this mindset by saying:

I do it because I got into this profession to help kids. And also sport was my life and I think I can teach values, morale's and discipline through sport. I like it. I wouldn't give up all of my time if I didn't think there was a gain to teaching a kid how to play a sport or how to teach a kid to be a better person through sport.

Teachers speak very passionately about the things they can teach students through an extra-curricular activity. When not being confined to a classroom or by a curriculum, teachers can respond to any student need and assist the student in their personal growth.

Teacher 5 compares the way these lessons are learned to their perceived importance in the classroom at their school:

You get to see kids push themselves to their limits to overcome adversity and to persevere and in coaching you see that. It's a select group of kids who are trying to reach that goal. Sometimes in the classroom you don't have to persevere because you are going to reach the next grade anyways.

Teachers take great pride in the personal skills and life lessons they can teach their students in the extra-curricular setting. They can teach these skills in a manner that cannot be paralleled by the regular classroom.

### **4.5.7 Enjoyment in the Activity**

Another reason teachers gave for volunteering their time was their own enjoyment in the activity. Teachers are able to engage with their students at the activities they

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organize in a way that is fun for both parties. Teachers enjoy the activity which is their initial motivation for offering the activity, however as students learn to enjoy the activity as well the enjoyment teachers derive from the activity increases. Teacher 5 gives their reason for offering activities to students by saying “they are fun. I get enjoyment out of seeing kids have fun”. Teachers recall participating in extra-curricular activities as a youth and memories of the enjoyment they took out of them as a student. Teacher 3 details their enjoyment, as well as how the positive experience also impacts students and teachers in the classroom:

I enjoyed that time when I was involved and this is a way to stay involved in it. I can pass on a bit of the experience and the knowledge that I gained. Its fun to feel that competitive nature and make those connections with kids outside of school. You know it’s going to benefit you in other avenues within your classroom.

The shared enjoyment that teachers and students have together allows them to build their relationship in a positive context. Teachers use that positive experience and connect with their students in the classroom through their shared experiences.

### **4.5.8 Giving Back**

The final theme that some teachers discuss was the concept of giving back to their school and community. Teachers recall the impact that participating in extra-curricular activities as a youth had in their lives. Teachers are well aware of the time and commitment that someone else made to that activity, and they use their position in their schools to continue that experience. Teacher 3 notes that “first and foremost, people did it for me and this is my way to pay that [back]”. Teacher 2 states “outside of school I volunteer for the sports that I love. I volunteer because people have given to me and I want youth to have that experience”. Teachers feel that there is an important need for

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their activities to exist, a feeling that is rooted in the experience they would have initially had in the activities.

### **4.5.9 Common Themes and Contradictions**

A comparison of the common themes for this question begins with the notion of giving back. Students and teacher both identified this as a motivation for teachers to volunteer their time. Students either presumed that someone had volunteered to offer a similar activity to their teacher or discussed a desire to eventually give back themselves. Teachers reflected on the positive impact their past experiences had in their lives, and coupled that with their desire to pass on the same opportunity to the students that they teach. Students and teachers develop a bond through this concept, as they feel a sense of belonging to the activity and the culture that surrounds it. In addition to this theme, several other themes emerged from all participants. While no two other themes identified by students and teachers parallel to the same extent as the aforementioned idea of giving back, no themes are in any contradiction of each other. In all cases, students and teacher speak in positive terms about their enjoyment in the activity and that they enjoy getting to know the people on the other side of the activity.

## **4.6 Teacher Interactions**

### **Student Responses**

The fourth question in the interview again distinguished between teachers personal and professional time, and was followed with the question: Do you perceive any difference in your interactions with your teacher during their personal time versus during their professional time? After providing an answer to this question, students were posed a follow up question to compare their teacher's behaviour between the two settings as

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being friendly or angry, patient or strict, and confident or dissatisfied. After analyzing student responses, three themes emerged in the data:

- communication with teachers;
- level of strictness;
- fun interactions.

A discussion of each theme follows.

### **4.6.1 Communication with Teachers**

Students and teachers communicate differently during an extra-curricular activity than they do in a classroom. Students find that during their activity they get to see a more personal side of their teacher, and even offer a more personal version of themselves.

Student 5 notes this difference by saying “Inside the classroom they don’t talk about much of their personal life but outside the classroom they are more willing”. There is a noted difference in the way teachers engage with their students outside of the classroom.

Student 6 believes that this occurs because the teachers at an activity are “more connected with the students. I think they know what they can do so they can joke with them and stuff and know what to say and what not to say”. Teachers learn the boundaries of their students very quickly through interaction outside of the classroom. As teachers learn the boundaries and interest of the students at an activity, they will use this to connect with students in a way that is more personal for the student. Student 4 states that not only do teachers interact with students on a personal level; students too will interact in a more personal sense.

At practice is more that we can say things that are less appropriate I suppose. I don’t have to watch my mouth as much. ... I think they talk much more openly at sports than in the classroom. Well, with my hockey coach, we never really talked

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about outside stuff in class, like about his friends, but at sports and stuff we would. He would share more about his personal life.

The manner in which students and teachers interact at an extra-curricular is different, as is the content that is discussed. Teachers are more willing to share things about their personal life, which allows students to feel more connected to the person that teacher is. Student 9 also shared a conversation with a coach, where “my coach and I were talking about her nephews – that’s something we definitely wouldn’t talk about if we were at school”. Students are aware of the difference they see in their teachers at extra-curricular activities. They also acknowledge that the personal side of the teacher that they see at their activities would not be present in the classroom. They are aware of the personal connection they can make with their teachers while also maintaining an awareness of the professional responsibilities of the teacher while they are in the classroom.

### **4.6.2 Level of Strictness**

In the follow up question relating different personality traits, students generally described their teachers using the same terms with the exception of their level of strictness. The majority of students felt that the level of strictness the teacher brings to the classroom or the extra-curricular activity is different. These students feel that their teachers “are a bit more strict in school and then outside of school a little more patient” (Student 5). While students enjoy the patient aspects of their teachers, they understand that in the classroom they must also manage the behaviours of all the students in the class. Student 1 notes that “in the classroom teachers have to be more strict because they have to follow classroom rules and everything like that but at the extracurricular activities you have a little bit more leeway”. Students do not feel as though their teacher is imposing more strict classroom requirements on them personally, rather they understand

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that the classroom is a place where all students should be treated fairly. Student 7 acknowledges that “in the classroom they have to have strict rules for everybody”. Students expressed an appreciation for the reduced level of strictness at their activities, however they also acknowledge its importance in the classroom.

### **4.6.3 Fun Interactions**

Some of the students spoke highly of the amount of fun they have with their teachers at their extra-curricular activities. Students feel more connected to their teacher when they get to know their sense of humour. Students are also aware that some aspects of their participation in the activity would not belong in the classroom. Student 6 suggested that “sometimes they are more like having more fun and more laid back compared to in the classroom, ... maybe they make some jokes that they wouldn't make in the classroom”. Student 7 spoke about the intense side of their teacher that might not show up in the classroom in saying “you can see a more intense side at practice. You can also see more of a fun side, they can be more relaxed and do certain things when things are going well”. Teachers learn the dynamics of the group participating in the activity in an effort to discover how they can interact in a fun during the activity way while maintaining their professionalism. Students are able to distinguish between a time to have that fun at their activity and when that is less appropriate in the classroom.

It depends on the person because some people act more professional than others during school but I would say that it does differ for the most part. I think that when they're coaching me that it's more fun and that there's more getting to know them and then in class there is still that bond but you don't talk about it as much or its not as common (Student 10).

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### **Teacher Responses**

The fourth question in the interview again distinguished between teachers personal and professional time, and was followed with the question: Do you perceive any difference in your interactions with your students during this personal time versus during professional time? In analyzing teacher responses, two predominant themes emerged:

- teacher's personal standards for student interaction;
- constant teaching.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.6.4 Teacher's Personal Standard for Student Interaction**

Teachers hold themselves accountable to a high standard for the level of professionalism they conduct themselves with in their interactions with students in all contexts. While they acknowledge that during an extra-curricular activity they do conduct themselves in a different manner, and interact with students in a different way, they do not deviate from their own personal standard for interacting with students. Teacher 2 notes that their professionalism changes, and compares two types: "coaching professionalism and teaching professionalism are two different things even though they are related. Both are full of trust and a position of authority but I think the professionalism varies". Teacher 3 compares their coaching and teaching behaviour, stating that during extra-curricular activities "I become a little bit more of myself. Not that I'm not myself in the classroom but you kind of have that teacher version of yourself". Teachers are able to relate to their students more easily when they are able to step away from the rigors and demands of their classroom. Teacher 4 notices the following about themselves: "I might get a little looser in my personal time. By looser I

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mean I might joke around a little more or say things that I wouldn't necessarily say during the school day". Teachers relax from their normal teacher behaviours and make personal connections in the extra-curricular setting. Students can enjoy the things that are being taught to them more when they are taught in the relaxed setting of an extra-curricular activity. Teacher 1 summarizes this notion with the following:

In personal time with coaching, its almost less rigid it's a bit more that you have more flexibility with how the students are acting and behaving and understanding. Whereas in the classroom you have learning goals, you have in general a much different dynamic in your classroom with different kids. The context outside of the classroom I get to wear a different hat and almost hold myself to a different behaviour standard. I think [students] act differently too. I think the environment isn't as rigid, not as controlled; their learning is more enjoyed.

### **4.6.5 Constant Teaching**

The other theme to emerge from teachers is their desire to always be teaching their students. They enjoy working with students in the extra-curricular setting, however they still feel it is important and have a desire to teach their students. Teachers find it easier and more enjoyable to teach their students in the extra-curricular setting. Teacher 1 states that this is due to the fact that "you're trying to teach them something that is not as traditional as the classroom outcomes. So they're a bit more at ease and willing to learn and a little less kind of tired". Teachers build their relationship dynamic with students in this setting and are able to transfer the willingness to teach and learn into the classroom with the student. Teacher 5 takes great pride in the things being taught through extra-curricular activities:

I try to be consistent with students in every platform that I'm with them. I'm not trying to be their friend, I'm trying to be their teacher and I think coaching is teaching. There are times that I pump their tires and times that I take the air out of their tires and I think I'm doing the same thing in the classroom.

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Approaching coaching as teaching and vice versa allows the transfer of the teaching and learning dynamic from one setting to the other to be seamless. Students are more receptive to the teaching when it comes from a teacher who they interact with both inside and outside the classroom.

### **4.6.6 Common Themes and Contradictions**

In analyzing the responses for this question, it is apparent that teachers and students interact differently during an extra-curricular activity than they do within a classroom. Students allude to teachers reducing their level of strictness during activities, which is a theme that is in line with teachers adjusting their behaviour while maintaining their standards for student interaction. Again, the remaining themes that emerged in the data are not as closely tied together, however they are not in contradiction of each other. Teachers attempt to continue teaching in all settings, while students note that they have increased personal communication with their teachers. Students also discuss the amount of fun they have at their activities. These discussion points focus on different themes but do not contradict each other.

## **4.7 Discipline**

### **Student Responses**

The fifth question in the interview was concerned with a negative influence on the teacher-student relationship. Students were asked: Was there ever a time during your activity that your teacher had to discipline an individual or group for their performance or behaviour? All of the students responded by indicating they had either been the subject of discipline or that they had witnessed another person or group be disciplined. In analyzing the data, four themes emerged in the responses:

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- quality of relationship;
- discussions with the teacher;
- future fears;
- appreciation.

A discussion of each theme follows.

### **4.7.1 Quality of Relationship**

The majority of students responded to this question by mentioning a level of respect that they had for their teacher. Students are very willing to listen to their teacher in the extra-curricular setting due to this factor. Student 2 suggests that the reason students listen to their teacher in that setting is due to the fact that “they respect him and most times people will listen to authority”. Spending time with students outside the classroom impacts this level of respect. If students are not particularly fond of a teacher, participating in the extra-curricular activity can build the relationship in ways that spending time in the classroom cannot. Student 3 notes a change in other students attitude stating that “most people listen because I think that now they are starting to respect him the way I do. I respect him a lot”. Students develop a relationship of respect through participation in an activity with their teachers. This level of respect follows the students and teachers into the classroom and has an impact on the relationship in both contexts.

After participating in an extra-curricular activity with their teacher, students are motivated to oblige their teacher’s requests, especially if they are being reprimanded for a behavioural concern. Student 7 states that this is because “they don’t want to ruin any relationship with the teacher or what they think of that person. I don’t think they want to make things any worse”. Students are generally aware when their behaviour is deemed

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unacceptable, but are willing to work to repair that relationship when this happens at an activity more so than in the classroom. Student 6 notes:

I would probably care more if I disappointed my coach. I just the way I am. I know the coach doesn't have to be there, but teachers do. It's more like the coaches are volunteering their time to help us, and they do and I appreciate that.

Student 1 elaborates on this thought to say that students will accept discipline from their teacher "if you have respect for each other, like you do, then I think they'll respect what the person is saying". Students are not only aware of their misbehaviour, and willing to accept some measure of discipline from their teacher, but they are also aware that such an action and reaction does not need to impact their relationship.

A group of people I was hanging out with and one of my teachers [who coaches all of us] yelled at the person for what they were doing. Everyone understood that the teacher likes that person but he was being a fool so it didn't make anyone like the teacher any less.... Since they have respect for that teacher and they have a good relationship with that teacher then they stop because they want to (Student 10).

This scenario shows that students build their relationship with their teacher through extra-curricular activities and that level of respect maintains itself in all contexts. Students are able to accept consequences from their teachers when they have a strong relationship, without fearing that it will damage their relationship.

### **4.7.2 Discussions with Teacher**

Some students indicated that discipline is often dealt with through a conversation with a student. While the type of conversation varies, ranging from a calm one-to-one conversation to a teacher yelling at students, they do not refer to this conversation as a detriment to the relationship. Student 3 describes their teacher having to speak to a group of students, who then began to change their approach. "Most people after he did that they grumbled a lot after class but after that, it got a bit quieter during the band and people

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started listening to him quicker and easier”. Students make a choice to attend the extra-curricular activities they are interested in. Student 1 recounts a scenario where their teacher used this fact in their conversation with a student who was misbehaving; by saying “if you do this again you might have to leave because they want to focus on the practice”. Teachers and students alike want to engage in the activity that they participating in. Not all discipline that is dealt with at an activity is for simple misbehaviour. Student 7 described a scenario where their basketball team damaged property at a school they were visiting: “In basketball we were talked to for a stool. And we ran suicides”. While running suicides are a part of conditioning for basketball, students do not enjoy running them so teachers can use this type of discipline when dealing with students. Students recognize that this is a form a discipline that is acceptable for a teacher to use when coaching a team, and that it does not impact the quality of their relationship. Student 8 notes that if people were misbehaving with their teacher, “They would yell at those people and we would run as a team and continue with practice”. There is no indication given by students that they would respect their teacher any less in instances where they are instructed to run suicides. Students indicated that they believed in all cases, students would agree to this form of discipline so as not to damage their relationship with their teacher.

### **4.7.3 Future Fear**

Students recognize when they have made some sort of mistake and created a need to be disciplined. When they find themselves in this scenario at an extra-curricular activity the feel remorseful and do not want to cause any additional undue stress. Student 7 states that “ they don’t want to ruin any relationship with the teacher or what they think

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of that person. I don't think they want to make things any worse". Students recognize that some element of damage control must be done to maintain their positive relationship with their teacher. They also do not want to create future problems, being aware that their ability to participate in the activity could be revoked by the school or teacher due to negative behaviour. Student 6, who was also involved in the school basketball team that damaged a visiting schools property, describes why the team agreed to the discipline administered by the teacher: "Yes we did what we had to do and we apologized to the person who's stool was broken. Probably because there are more consequences in an extra-curricular where you can get kicked off a team or benched". While they do not want to harm their relationship with their teacher, students are also aware that their participation in the activity is a privilege for them. In general, although students could refuse to do any discipline suggested by their teacher, "people don't say 'no I'm not going to do that'. They could choose not to but you don't really do that. You could get kicked off the team, you don't talk back to your coach – not in that way" (Student 8). Students know that future additional discipline could come to them should they refuse to a measure given by their teacher, but they also are aware that they have a level of respect for their teacher that runs their activity, so they will agree to their discipline to maintain their relationship.

### **4.7.4 Appreciation**

The fourth theme to emerge in this question is the student's appreciation for their teacher running their extra-curricular activity. They still view their teacher as a teacher, and acknowledge that in the extra-curricular context their teachers will teach them different things than in the classroom. Student 5 discusses how their peers feel about

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receiving some discipline from their teacher at their activity, stating “I think it’s basically a life lesson. They kind of appreciate it”. Students show awareness to the fact that their teachers are volunteering their time to provide their activities. Student 6 compared the notion of upsetting a teacher at an activity to the same scenario with a regular classroom teacher:

I would probably care more if I disappointed my coach. I just the way I am. I know the coach doesn’t have to be there, but teachers do, it’s more like the coaches are volunteering their time to help us, and they do and I appreciate that.

Students do not want to find themselves in scenarios where discipline is necessary from their coach, however when they find themselves in that scenario they recognize that they have a strong relationship with that teacher and begin work immediately to repair and strife they have caused.

### **Teacher Responses**

The fifth question posed to teachers asked: Was there ever a time during your activity that you had to discipline an individual or group for their performance or behaviour? All teachers interviewed had experienced a need to discipline students while taking part in their extra-curricular activity. In analyzing their reactions to this experience, two themes emerged:

- conversations with students;
- adolescent development.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.7.5 Conversations with Students**

The initial theme that emerged from teacher responses was the method that they use to enact discipline in the extra-curricular setting. In the classroom, it would be a

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regular occurrence that students get removed from the room if they are disrupting the learning of those around them. At an extra-curricular activity, student behaviour rarely escalates to a level where students need to be removed. Teachers indicate their primary form of discipline is carried out through personal conversations with their students.

Teacher 1 describes their initial intervention with a student whose behaviour was becoming an issue. “I had to pull a student aside and try to figure out why he was being a behaviour concern at school and had to try to reinforce that there would be some consequences if his behaviour continued”. In most cases, a simple conversation from teachers creates a change in behaviour from students. Teacher 2 describes a similar approach, taking place outside of the classroom, where they remind students of their expectations for their actions. “I think about appropriate behaviour before games and watching other teams play. People’s actions in a restaurant. I’ve had conversations to discipline people like that”. In rare instances, teachers do need to remove students as a measure of discipline, but as Teacher 4 describes, this does not happen without first having a discussion about the behaviour: “I didn’t want that to happen, so I gave a warning to the group and then pulled the two aside [to talk] and it continued. I had to ask them to leave the gym”. Teachers have expectations for what type of behaviour is appropriate in their extra-curricular setting and although they do occasionally need to discipline students during an activity, they do not feel that the discipline has a negative impact on their relationship. If a teacher is concerned that this may be the case, they will take necessary steps to repair their relationship, or allow the student to do the same.

Teacher 3 outlines how this process tends to look:

I’ve disciplined a student and the next day or the next time you can tell that they’re doing everything they can to repair that rapport. And vice versa. If I’m

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hard on a student and hold them accountable to an action and provide some level of discipline I might try to repair that. We could have a follow up conversation. I don't know if they would initiate it as a verbal thing where they come and say sorry but you can get that feeling where there is a change and they want to be more positive.

Adolescent teens may not always have the courage to approach a teacher and apologize for their behaviour, but as Teacher 3 points out, they apologize through their actions in an attempt to make up for a previous incident. In all cases, students and teachers do not harbour any ill will toward the other party after a behavioural incident.

### **4.7.6 Adolescent Development**

Teachers are aware of the cause of most inappropriate behaviour that occurs at their extra-curricular activities. While they may recognize that some middle school students have difficulty coping with stress in real world scenarios, they do not allow that explanation of behaviour to excuse it. Teachers view these encounters as opportunities to teach the student to better handle these scenarios in the future. Teacher 5 notes that at extra-curricular activities, teachers “are trying to teach life skills”. Teacher 3 describes this as a lack of forethought from students:

I think in most of my experience with middle school, most of the time they act and react without thinking of consequences. When you do provide them some time to reflect on it. They're at the age where they know right and wrong so whether or not they will admit it at the time or afterwards, they know that what they were doing was unacceptable.

Teacher 1 continues to note that students have a desire to display the behaviour that is expected from them and they are willing to make the necessary changes they need to in order to please their teacher.

I think they do because, usually in these behaviour cases, they aren't deciding to make their choices to be mean or be bad. A lot of them are doing it just because they don't have the skills to cope with the everyday problems in a classroom or

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school. It's less of a choice and more of a lack of skills. A lot of them do want to make a change but don't have the skills to do it.

As students learn the ability to consistently behave in an appropriate manner in their extra-curricular activity, they are able to put that new skillset into practice in their regular classroom.

### **4.7.7 Common Themes and Contradictions**

The majority of participants from both students and teachers believe that the most common form of discipline that occurs in an extra-curricular activity is through conversations between teachers and students. The extent of the conversation depends on the individuals involved, as well as the circumstances. Teachers speak about discipline as a short-term problem while students consider the consequences and possible repercussions if inappropriate behaviour continues. Through their larger bank of experiences in the extra-curricular setting, teachers possess confidence that they can discipline students in a way that will assist in their adolescent development; their motivation is to help their students. Conversely, students view the discipline as a punishment for poor behaviour. Despite viewing the discipline action through a negative lens, students acknowledge that the teacher administering the discipline is trying to help them, and they appreciate that. Students also agree to whatever discipline action their teacher asks of them as they do not want to damage the relationship they have developed outside of the classroom.

## **4.8 Teacher/Student Impact on the Experience**

### **Student Responses**

Question six during the interview posed the question: Would you consider your experience in this activity positive or negative? How did the teacher in charge of the

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activity affect that experience? Students unanimously responded by describing their experiences in all of their extra-curricular activities as being positive. In analyzing the conversation in the follow up questions that ensued, three themes emerged in the data:

- teacher setting vs. coach setting;
- student approach and teacher approach;
- classroom dynamics.

A discussion of each theme follows.

### **4.8.1 Teacher Setting vs. Coach Setting**

The majority of students responded by describing a difference between their teacher in the classroom and in the extra-curricular activity. They feel that any teacher who ran an activity would yield a positive result, and that the experience generally brings out a positive side of the teacher. Students are willing to participate in more activities if they know who the teacher is before the activity begins. According to Student 5, this is due to “knowing them more because they are your teacher and you spend most of your day with them”. This is an initial hurdle in getting students to participate, but once they begin the activity, if they discover that they like the coach or extra-curricular version of their teacher, it can enhance their experience. “If you get to know the teacher and know each other very well then its easier for you to take part in the activity and enjoy it” (Student 1). Students demonstrate awareness that their teacher can act different in the extra-curricular environment, and this can also influence how much they enjoy the activity. Student 2 believes that the level of enjoyment that they get from their activity “depends on how they acted during that environment. If they were more easy going then it would still be fine but if they were maybe very strict in both places it would give a less

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positive experience”. Students believe that if their teacher brings a positive attitude to their extra-curricular activity that it will be more enjoyable.

Students also indicated a difference between their teachers who only teach them in the classroom and those who offer some form of extra-curricular activity. Student 10 states that:

I wouldn't consider just my teachers as friends because I think that is kind of weird. But I totally think that some of my coaches that have taught me in the past, that when I'm older, I'll be able to talk to them and consider ourselves not just as acquaintances but as friends because we've had a good past.

This student demonstrates that the personal connection developed in an activity does impact the relationship outside of the activity. Some students don't consider their teachers as friends, but do communicate better with teachers that they have spent time with in an extra-curricular setting. Student 4 speaks to this in saying, “I don't feel as open talking to my teachers personally I guess. My hockey coach I'm fine with I suppose but my teachers it feels weird because I see them everyday”. Students enjoy seeing their coaches in the extra-curricular setting and they find that the impact that time together has on their relationship does follow them back into the classroom.

I enjoy doing sports and I enjoy being around it and I enjoy the environment. I found that it does help my relationship with my teachers. If they didn't care I think it would be kind of boring but I think all the teachers I've had cared and they want me to succeed and have fun. So that comes off on me and I want to have fun (Student 7).

### **4.8.2 Student Approach and Teacher Approach**

The majority of students found that the level at which they enjoyed their activity depended on the approach that they brought to the activity as well as the approach of the teacher. If students approach an activity or teacher expecting it to be a negative experience, then they have a stronger chance of having a negative experience. Student 3

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describes the experience as “depending on me and how I make it”. The students have the ability to focus on the positive aspects of being involved in an activity, as Student 5 points out that “the teacher has no real effect on the activity. But then you start to like them more because you realize you have something in common with the shared interests”. Ultimately the student can control how much enjoyment they derive from the activity. Students bring an attitude to their activities where they are willing to get to know their teacher in a personal sense and build their relationship.

While the student approach is critical, students also perceive if their teacher brings a negative approach to their activity. Student 4 believes that the teacher in charge of the activity can have an impact on how much enjoyment they derive from participating. This student describes a scenario where “I like the coach but I don’t like his coaching philosophy”. When following up with this comment, the student continues to say that outside of the sport, “we like each other. Our relationship is good”. This demonstrates that the teacher-student relationship is influenced positively by participating in activities, even in cases where the student and teacher approach to the activity is different. While students may be negatively impacted by the teacher approach to the activity, they still enjoy the activity and build a positive relationship with the teacher. Student 9 notes “if I didn’t like the way that they coached and if I didn’t like their practices and stuff then I wouldn’t like it as much”. In cases where the approach of the teacher is not aligned with the student’s, the level of enjoyment is lower, but students still speak in a positive tone, indicating that they still enjoy the activity.

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### 4.8.3 Classroom Dynamics

The third theme that this question revealed was the impact that participation in the activity has on the classroom dynamic with the teacher. Student 6 alluded to the difference that they notice between their interactions with the teacher at the activity and their interactions in the classroom. “They are more active than they are in the classroom. We see a different side of them; they are more fun with us and give us more leeway [during an extra-curricular]”. When students engage in an extra-curricular activity they have a pre-existing relationship with the teacher who is organizing the activity. Students notice that while they at their activities:

It’s positive and when you go on road trips it’s a lot of fun. People are always joking and its fun, ... if they’re a lot of fun to be around and they like to talk and hang out then its more fun than if they’re super strict.

Seeing this fun side of their teacher has an impact on the dynamic between teacher and student when they return to the classroom. Student 5 describes how this can change the classroom dynamic is saying that after students have had a chance to get to know their teachers outside of the classroom, “it’s easier to learn because you understand where he’s coming from now. You get to see the person behind the teacher and it just gets easier”. Having the personal connection to the teacher allows students to have an easier time engaging in and learning the material that is being taught.

### Teacher Responses

Question six of the interview asked teachers: would you consider your experience in this activity positive or negative? How did the students who participated in the activity affect that experience? In this question, only one theme emerged in the data:

- navigating difficult group dynamics.

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A discussion of this theme follows.

### 4.8.4 Navigating Difficult Group Dynamics

Teachers responded to this question by unanimously saying that they consider their experience in extra-curricular activities to be positive. The majority of teachers continued to state that the positive experience is not automatic, and that sometimes there is a bit of turbulence that they need to navigate. Some students that come together in an extra-curricular activity create a challenging group dynamic for teachers. As Teacher 2 points out, “the students are the experience so they have a huge effect on how I feel about it. The majority of students are good”. A difficult group to manage will cause the quality of the experience to change for the teacher, but Teacher 2 does point out that the majority of these experiences are good. Teacher 4 states that “there will be situations that arise and you have to navigate through those. I think it has been very positive and I wouldn’t give this much of my time if I didn’t think so”. While teachers detail the occasional difficulty in their experiences, they continue to ensure the researcher that their experience has been positive. In the time following a difficult situation, Teacher 3 outlines how teachers go about ensuring their relationship with students remains strong and that the experience remains positive:

I think anytime you are working with any group of people, let alone middle school students – in my experience is primarily with middle school boys – you will have some negative experiences. It is all in the reflection afterwards, whatever it is to repair it – could be some small game – some positive experience after. Almost always positive experience, but even in the few negative, there is usually a positive follow up.

In the isolated incidents where the extra-curricular activity could be considered as a negative, teachers make an effort to get the experience and their relationship back to a

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positive place with their students. Teacher 5 discusses some reasons why so many teachers felt the need to express that they have had some negative experiences:

It's one of those situations where there are many more positives than negatives. But it always takes that one negative that people seem to dwell on. Its like if someone says all these compliments about you then they sort of run off. But if someone says something negative about you that's the one that sticks in your head. I would say in general, if I were to really think about it, it has been far more positive experiences with coaching and interactions with those student-athletes. But there have been negatives; it is not always black and white.

When asked to determine a predictor for what causes a negative experience in the extra-curricular setting, the teacher was not able to pinpoint the origin, stating, "I think that is random". Teacher 1 elaborates, when asked if they were starting a season of play with a challenging group, would it still become a positive experience: "Absolutely. I would say that given my ability as a mentor and coach I think it works. It has happened. At the end of the season there is definitely a gain from both student and teacher". Teachers are confident in their ability to foster the positive aspects of their extra-curricular activities and create a personal relationship and a positive experience for both student and teacher.

### **4.8.5 Common Themes and Contradictions**

All participants responded to this question by stating that they believe their experiences have been positive. In describing how the student/teacher affects their experience, students and teachers developed different results. Teachers focused on how they have had negative experiences, but focused on discussing how they have been able to still find a way to make those experiences positive. Students meanwhile, focused on their positive experiences almost exclusively, and discussed how their approach to the activity impacts its outcome. Students discussed the difference they notice in the way their teachers interact with them at an extra-curricular activity compared to the

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classroom. Teachers did not address the concept of having a different standard for interactions with their students for this question.

### **4.9 Changing Relationships**

#### **Students Responses**

The seventh question in the interview asked students to consider their relationship with their teacher before the extra-curricular activity began and compare it to after it ended (i.e. before and after season or duration of event). The research then posed the following question: did your relationship change? If yes, in what ways? In responding to this question, student responses formed three themes:

- comfort level;
- knowing the teacher;
- motivation level.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.9.1 Comfort Level**

The first theme that emerged in this question during the interview was the student's reference to their level of comfort with their teachers. The majority of students alluded to their comfort level with the teacher increasing throughout the duration of their activity. Student 5 described this change and its effect as "having your guard down. You can take in more of what they have to say". Compared to other students in the class, those who participate in the extra-curricular activity are closer to their teacher. Student 8 describes this comparison:

You've spent this season with them doing practices. You've spent that time with them. That time with them is time that other students in your class haven't had with them so it make you have more of a connection than the rest of the students in the class.

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Students who feel as though they have a better connection to their teacher than their peers are willing to engage in the class material more easily. Time spent in the personal context allows students to learn more about their teacher, where “you might even drive with them if you need a drive and I think that just makes you feel a lot more comfortable and that you know them better than the other students in the class” (Student 8). Students typically begin an extra-curricular activity with some expectation of the personality of their teacher. As Student 10 observes, this opinion can change throughout the course of the season or duration of the activity:

At the beginning of the season you obviously know stuff about them already because you hear from your friends about what their coaching style is. Everybody is different, but at the end of a season you kind of have found out what kind of coach they are and you understand them better. It’s not just them understanding you but it’s an all around sense of comfort that everybody has become closer.

Students develop this new sense of comfort with their teacher through continued interaction with them in the personal setting outside of the classroom.

### **4.9.2 Knowing the Teacher**

Students felt that throughout the course of a season of play, or through the duration of an extra-curricular activity, they were able to get to know their teacher better than they could through regular classroom interaction. Student 3 recognizes how it became much easier to talk to their teacher after participating in some activity, “when you first meet a teacher that’s really great and the first little while you are still nervous talking about some subjects, but as time goes on it gets easier to talk about anything”. Spending the additional time together at an activity allows the bond between student and teacher to grow. Student 6 notes that this additional time together allows the student to be “closer with them and to get more trust with them too because you’re with them for

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months on end”. Student 1 goes on to explain why students might feel closer to their teacher after spending the additional time together:

If you go into an activity thinking you don’t like a teacher then once you get to know them better from outside the classroom, you get to know the *real* them, not the teacher, then your thought about them could change.

As this thought about the teacher changes for the student, it translates back into the classroom as the additional closeness allows students to be more comfortable in class.

Student 7 clarifies this by stating “I would be more timid to do things in the classroom if I didn’t know the teacher as well but the extra time makes me more at ease”.

### **4.9.3 Motivation Level**

The third theme that emerged from this question involved student motivation. Some students stated that over the course of their season of play, the bond with their teacher had a significant impact on their performance in the classroom. Student 2 stated “that our relationship in the classroom got better because of badminton. Since you get to know them better it just makes you feel more like you want to do work. A little more motivated”. Student 10 goes on to summarize every aspect of this phenomenon in their response:

In the classroom you can, not specifically relate during classwork but you are again more comfortable with them so if you weren’t certain about something you wouldn’t hold back a question. Then all of sudden, I’m not saying that because you asked a question you’re grades start going up but when you’re more confident all around and you feel comfortable to ask if you’ve done something wrong then you become more interested in the subject so everything just kind of builds up and you’re grades are going to be better. If I am comfortable with the teacher then I just ask away with whatever questions I may have because I want to do the best I can and it keeps me engaged because I’m not only interested in what we’re doing but also the person who is teaching it.

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Students find a way to connect the material they are tasked with learning to the teacher that is delivering this to them. In classes where students are more interested in their teacher, they become more interested in their classwork through association.

### **Teacher Responses**

The seventh question in the interview asked teachers to consider their relationship with students before the extra-curricular activity began and compare it to after it ended. The researcher then posed the following question: Did your relationship change? If so, in what ways? Teachers unanimously answered by saying that their relationship did change, and in analyzing their explanations for that, two themes emerged:

- improved relationship;
- dwindling after the season.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.9.4 Improved Relationship**

The first theme that is evident in teacher responses is their appreciation for the improved relationship that is built through their extra-curricular activities. Teachers appreciate getting to know the personal side of their students. Teacher 1 believes “you grow together and learn together and for the majority of students it deepens and gets more personal”. Teacher 5 continues to describe a scenario where a student displayed a sharp change in behaviour during their season of play. “I can remember situations where this kid was awesome during the season but then the rails come off after the season. Its like that season of play helped that kid in class” (Teacher 5). The increased time spent with students during the season of play has a dramatic impact on the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Teacher 4 also suggests that, “once you put in that time

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with a kid and you earn that relationship with a kid then it will continue moving forward.

... In the classroom that relationship will continue”. Teachers look to create stronger relationships in their extra-curricular activities and look for the strong relationship to carry over into the classroom. Teacher 2 describes the impact coaching soccer, beginning in the first week of the school year, has on their students in saying:

For the kids that I teach that are in soccer I, at the first of the year, get an in depth understanding of their relationships. It definitely impacts your in-class relationships and I see a big difference in the students that I teach during that time and the ones that I will teach in the future.

The personal relationships that teachers are able to build with their students in the extra-curricular environment are stronger than those that are built in the classroom alone. The stronger relationship allows teachers to engage students in the classroom more easily.

### **4.9.5 Dwindling After the Season**

Teachers note that the increased time spent with students during a season of play increases their relationship during that time. They also continue to explain that after the activity or season of play has concluded, that their relationship begins to dwindle.

Teacher 2 describes how their relationships fade after an activity ends stating “I lose their relationship faster. Once my season ends, the relationship dwindles”. Teacher 3 continues to enforce the idea that the relation can dwindle but does not return to the level it would have been at prior to the activities beginning. “You never lose that relationship but it can lessen as time goes on and regress back toward teacher-student. I don’t think it ever quite gets to that but its not as close” (Teacher 3). Teachers feel that the relationship gains made through extra-curricular activities never fade, except in rare instances. “In some situations they go back to the relationship we had before the season but in most cases it grows and stays” (Teacher 5). Not only do teacher’s relationships with their students

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become increasingly positive during their activities season, they remain stronger after the activity has concluded.

### **4.9.6 Common Themes and Contradictions**

Students and teachers reported that their relationship changed during the course of an extra-curricular activity. Both groups described the improved relationship, through knowing each other personally and developing a comfort level with each other as evidence of this. Students also reported feeling more motivated in their teacher's classroom after participating in an activity with that teacher. Students did not allude to the relationship dwindling after the activity had concluded, but teachers proposed that these relationships trend back toward where they had initially been prior to participation in the activity.

### **4.10 School Contributions**

#### **Student Responses**

In the final interview questions, students were asked: think about a teacher who organizes an extra-curricular activity that you are not involved in. Do you value their contributions to that activity even though you are not involved? In studying the data collected from students on this question, three themes emerged:

- opportunities for students;
- volunteering their time;
- student growth.

A discussion of each theme follows.

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### **4.10.1 Opportunities for Students**

The first theme that emerged in the data from students was in respect to the opportunities that teachers provide to students when they offer an extra-curricular activity. Students appreciate being able to participate in the various activities that they do, and they realize that not all students have the same interests. Student 2 recognizes that “if they weren’t doing it a lot of people wouldn’t get the opportunity to do something”. Students are aware that their teachers are instrumental in providing all of the opportunities that they have through extra-curricular activities. The availability of a variety of activities within a school enhances the school culture, as students “have more fun at school and it’s a better environment for everybody” (Student 7). Some of the students interviewed enjoy knowing that other people in the school are being provided the same opportunities they are, through activities that they are not interested in. Student 4 comments on the school band teacher, stating, “that she loves it so much it’s good for our band that she is committed to it. I think its good for other people that she does that”. Students are happy to see other programs exist for other students because they know first hand the satisfaction and enjoyment that students derive from participating in various activities.

### **4.10.2 Volunteering their Time**

Some students expressed an appreciation for the teachers in their school for volunteering their free time to provide a program. Student 1 demonstrated this awareness in saying: “I think what they’re doing for the school, giving their time away is a great thing to do”. Students believe that the contribution through extra-curricular activities that teachers make to their schools is a valuable one, and they appreciate that contribution

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even if they receive no immediate personal benefit. “[Teachers] are still putting in their time to volunteer. Even though it’s not affecting me it’s still affecting somebody else, and so they are helping somebody else with their experience” (Student 6). Students have an appreciation for these teachers in part due to the appreciation they have for the teachers who have organized activities for them in the past. Student 10 continues to explain:

Just being aware that they’re donating their time. Nobody has to do this – they don’t have to do that. And if I can be benefitted by this than anyone else can because I am no different than anybody else. So people giving their time to do that – it may be the same thing for them, that they know what its done for them – and how it can impact everybody’s lives for the better.

Students know the impact of extra-curricular participation in their life, and in many cases are comforted to know that their teachers had someone provide something similar to them in their youth.

### **4.10.3 Student Growth**

The final theme that emerged in the data pertains to students recognizing the personal growth they experience in participating in extra-curricular activities. Some students expressed that students who participate in some form of extra-curricular activity learn some skills, similar to the classroom although there is no curriculum for these activities. Student 3 discusses additional activities “helps [the school] get more people involved. . . . People learn to work with people who you don’t like and learn to work well with others, those you dislike and those you like”. This student recognized that the ability to work with others they may not normally associate with is a valuable skill to possess outside of school. Student 10 acknowledges that participation has “helped my confidence level, and those things have made me a much more confident person”. Also, Student 8 states that “kids benefit from getting out there and deciding what they like and don’t like.

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That benefits the school because kids are doing things they want to do. They're happier at school". This draws the importance of having multiple extra-curricular activities available within a school, as it allows more students to discover their interests in life while also contributing to a more positive school culture overall.

### **Teacher Responses**

The interview concluded with the following question: Think about a student who participates in an extra-curricular activity that you are not involved in. Do you value their participation in that activity even though you are not involved? In responding to this question, teacher responses gave way to two themes:

- common ground;
- student learning.

A discussion of each theme follows.

#### **4.10.4 Common Ground**

The first theme to emerge from this question was the common ground that teachers were able to find from having students involved in some form of extra-curricular activity at their school. Teachers look to make relationships inside of their classroom with their students. Teacher 5 notes that when students are involved in some other activity at school, "even though I'm not directly involved with coaching them it gives a common subject to talk and interact about". Finding common ground in the classroom can take some time for teachers in some cases. Teacher 1 notes that if students are involved in some other extra-curricular activity at school it allows them to find that ground faster. "I myself haven't built the connection with them but I know they're active and I know something about them, and that in turn make a conversations and connection" (Teacher

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1). Teacher 2 continues to explain how this can help them in the classroom compared to another teacher who does not offer an extra-curricular activity.

Especially if they know that you coach your sports or that you're interested in them then just having that talking point will give you a relationship jump. I think they will create a relationship with people who are interested in them so even if they're not involved, compared with other non-coaches or non-leaders, I think them knowing that I'm involved with another sport gives us the instant relationship start.

### **4.10.5 Student Learning**

Teachers are genuinely happy to see students involved in extra-curricular activities at school. Teacher 4 speaks about activities that they do not organize personally, saying "There is something behind it that will make them better as a person". Teachers recognize the gain and have trust in their colleagues to teach the same life skills in their activities that they do in their activities. As Teacher 5 points out, there are many lessons to be taught to children that are not part of the formal curriculum in saying "that's part of the education to be involved. There are curriculum outcomes but there are so many lessons that are taught not between the hours of 9 and 3 and those kids that I see". Teachers are not worried about what activities students get involved in, as they see gains for students who are involved in extra-curricular activities in their classroom regardless. Teacher 1 describes how student participation in any activity has a positive impact in the classroom:

Just because I'm not involved it doesn't mean that they can't get the positives and the gains and the social and emotional skills and the life experiences from someone else. Just because I'm not coaching them directly doesn't mean that they're not gaining those skills and abilities. They can in turn bring that to my classroom.

Teachers who offer extra-curricular activities at their school encourage students to get involved in some form of activity that interests them at their school. Teachers are

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interested in teaching life lessons in the extra-curricular setting. More importantly, they are interested in students learning those life lessons, regardless of whether they get to teach the skills themselves or not.

### **4.10.6 Common Themes and Contradictions**

Participants answered this question by focusing on the positive outcomes that they associate with participation in extra-curricular activities. Both students and teachers discussed the need for students to be educated in the extra-curricular environment as well as the classroom. Students focused their responses on a genuine appreciate for the activities that are offered to them at school. Teachers focused their responses on the benefits and positive outcomes for students.

### **4.11 Summary**

The researcher has presented a variety of themes that arose for each item on the questionnaire and used salient quotes to reveal participants point of view. Student responses were analyzed separate from teacher responses, and then the two sets of data were compared. As is evident from the headings, some questions shared common themes. Such themes are identified as predominant categories by the researcher since they were present in more than one instance.

## Chapter 5

### Findings and Discussion

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the impact on the teacher-student relationship for students who are involved in extra-curricular initiatives with their teachers. Specifically, the goal of the study was to qualify how participation in extra-curricular activities impacts the relationship in the classroom. By examining one area that has a direct influence on the teacher-student relationship, the results will help teachers understand factors that influence student motivation in their classroom.

The study was guided by a general research question and four subsidiary research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. Chapter 4 presented and described the themes and predominant categories that emerged from participant responses. This chapter will discuss the particular findings of the study with reference to the literature using the subsidiary research questions as a guide.

#### 5.2 Research Questions

*Do students and teachers interact differently in extra-curricular activities than they do in the classroom?*

An overwhelming majority of participants indicated that teachers and students interact differently during extra-curricular activities than they do in the classroom. Students and teachers alike refer to these interactions as more personal, where they get to know the other party on a personal level – something they would not be able to do to the same extent in the classroom. The most notable element of this interaction that participants discussed was in regard to the conversations that occur in the extra-curricular

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setting; specifically the sharing of details of ones personal life. Student 5 describes the key point, in saying “inside the classroom they don’t talk about much of their personal life but outside the classroom they are more willing”.

Students also indicated that their teachers were stricter in the classroom than they were at their activities. Students were asked to compare the level of strictness and patience of teachers both inside and outside of the classroom. These choices for the comparison were made with consideration to the MITB given in Chapter 2. Students were also asked to compare teacher’s behaviours as either friendly or angry, and confident or dissatisfied. Students unanimously reported their teachers as being friendly, and confident. These descriptions could be due to one of two possible factors: after getting to know their teacher, students felt that they were friendly and confident, only because they were leading the activity the student chose to take part in; or teachers who have these characteristics are more likely to offer extra-curricular activities to students. This study did not seek to explain why students describe their teachers as one or the other; rather the purpose was to describe the quality of the relationship that students had with their teacher in the classroom and compare it to the extra-curricular setting. In the extra-curricular setting, students described their teacher as being cooperative. In the classroom, students chose descriptors that describe their teachers as mostly cooperative, but also oppositional and dominant. The MITB uses descriptor such as: help, friendly, assist and make jokes to describe the teacher that is cooperative – students in this study used similar words to describe their teacher in the extra-curricular setting. This shows that the findings of this study are in line with the MITB.

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*Do students perceive their interactions with teachers during extra-curricular initiatives as personal or professional relationships?*

The responses from all interview questions were read together and the themes that emerged were studied to determine if students make a distinction between the types of relationship they form with their teacher. In all cases, students are able to distinguish between the teacher's role in the classroom and their role at an extra-curricular activity. In order to form a conclusion to this question, the data collected from teachers was also read to develop a clear picture of relationship development. The type of relationship that is formed between teacher and student depends on the expectations of the student and teacher combined. Teachers acknowledged that they can interact with students on a more personal level in the extra-curricular setting, so the personal input on their behalf is present in the relationship building. Teachers also describe that they must still approach the extra-curricular activity with a consistent set of professional principles for how they interact with students. During their interviews, students described their relationship in the extra-curricular setting as largely personal. Although teachers approach the extra-curricular setting with a sense of professionalism, it speaks to the strength of the findings that students still perceive their relationship as personal when it is created outside of the classroom.

One of the primary themes that emerged throughout the results pertained to students and teachers getting to know each other on a personal level during their extra-curricular activities. Student 1 alluded to the difference between the personal and professional relationship in saying:

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If you go into an activity thinking you don't like a teacher then once you get to know them better from outside the classroom, you get to know the *real* them, not the teacher, then your thought about them could change.

Teacher 4 notes that "I find when I spend time outside of school with kids they get to know me in a different way and I get to know them in a different way". This shows, from both perspectives, that the teacher-student dynamic is different in the extra-curricular setting. Another notable theme was that of student enjoyment in the extra-curricular setting. Previous research has shown that engaging in fun activities outside of school with students improves the classroom dynamic (Murray & Pianta, 2007; Alderman & Green, 2011; Fan, 2012). The current study supports this statement, with the following statement from Teacher 1 explaining how this is true:

Having a stronger connection and knowing them more, I think, allows them to trust me more when I'm teaching them and makes them want to learn from me. It's more impactful. They have more trust in me as an educator, and in turn, when it comes to the classroom it allows me to have a more successful learning environment.

Student 6 clarifies these comments from the student perspective in speaking about the teacher.

We see a different side of them; they are more fun with us and give us more leeway [during an extra-curricular]. ... I know the coach doesn't have to be there, but teachers do. It's more like the coaches are volunteering their time to help us, and they do and I appreciate that.

*With multiple meetings for an extra-curricular activity during a season of play or school year, do student perceptions of their student-teacher relationships change after the activity concludes?*

Students enter their extra-curricular activity with a set of assumptions about what their experience in the activity will be like. Students unanimously reported that their

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relationship with their teacher not only changed, but that it improved after participating in an extra-curricular activity. Students discussed the development of their personal relationship with their teachers through extra-curricular activities, and compared it to relationships with teachers who do not get involved in extra-curricular activities. Student consistently reported feeling a greater sense of comfort in the classes of teachers with whom they develop a personal relationship with outside of the classroom. Student 10 summarizes the changing dynamic that students experience, in the following:

At the beginning of the season you obviously know stuff about them already because you hear from your friends about what their coaching style is. Everybody is different, but at the end of a season you kind of have found out what kind of coach they are and you understand them better. It's not just them understanding you but it's an all around sense of comfort that everybody has become closer.

The current study also examined how a negative experience in the extra-curricular setting could impact the relationship. Responses from students indicate that this may cause a lower level of enjoyment in the activity, however the results still show that after a negative experience, both student and teacher will make an effort to repair the relationship, and a positive gain is still obtained. This study also examined whether the delivery of an extra-curricular activity would be considered as an act of caring. Noddings (2012) describes caring acts as one that students reciprocate in some fashion. Although they may not verbally express their gratitude, students may offer an extra effort to show that they appreciate the work of the teacher. Teacher 3's response outlines how students and teacher respond to a negative situation, and briefly explains how a student might reciprocate the teachers efforts, thus showing that an extra-curricular activity should be considered as an act of caring by the teacher.

I've discipline students and the next day or the next time you can tell that they're doing everything they can to repair that rapport. And vice versa. If I'm hard on a

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student and hold them accountable to an action and provide some level of discipline I might try to repair that. We could have a follow up conversation. I don't know if they would initiate it as a verbal thing where they come and say sorry but you can get that feeling where there is a change and they want to be more positive.

*With multiple meetings for an extra-curricular activity during a season of play or school year, do teacher perceptions of their student-teacher relationships change after the activity concludes?*

Teachers make use of a variety of strategies to develop relationships with students. After spending an increased amount of time with students throughout the duration of an extra-curricular activity, teacher's perception of their relationship with the students involved changes. Teachers develop a positive relationship with the students they spend time with in the extra-curricular setting. Fan (2012) notes that teachers can use humour and kindness towards students to influence the classroom climate and relationship development with students. Participants references the same factors throughout this study, suggesting that these factors also apply to relationship development in the extra-curricular setting. The positive relationships that are formed throughout the extra-curricular activity maintain their form after it has ended. Teacher 5 notes that "In some situations they go back to the relationship we had before the season but in most cases it grows and stays".

The benefit to the improved relationship has been well documented in previous research. Noddings (2012) posits that a strong caring relationship will make every aspect of the classroom become increasingly positive. It has also been shown that engaging in fun activities, spending time outside of class and discovering students' personal interest can improve the relationship and increase classroom behaviours (Murray & Pianta, 2007;

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Alderman & Green, 2011; Fan, 2012). Teacher 2 confirms these statements, when they compare students who participate in their extra-curricular activity to those who do not:

For the kids that I teach that are in soccer I, at the first of the year, get an in depth understanding of their relationships. It definitely impacts your in-class relationships and I see a big difference in the students that I teach during that time and the ones that I will teach in the future.

Teachers discuss the positive impact that the development of positive relationships with their students has. Their words echo the research conducted by We, Hughes and Kwok (2010) in stating that students perform higher academically with teachers whom they have a positive relationship compared to teachers who are less positive.

### **5.3 Limitations and Scope**

The research design used in this study is an appropriate qualitative study, however there are certain limitations that must be acknowledged:

1. The researcher did not plan to explicitly ask participants if they perceived their interactions with teachers during extra-curricular activities as personal or professional. The use of a semi-structured interview allowed for the probing of additional information when participants discussed the type of relationships that existed.
2. Extended relationships with participants were not established. One interview was conducted with each participant. It would have been ideal to interview participants multiple times over the course of a school year.
3. The study used only one approach to gather data; and
4. The skill and knowledge of the researcher in developing questions and asking appropriate follow-up questions.

This study was narrowed in scope using the following criteria:

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1. Only students in grades 8 and 9 were interviewed for the study. The teachers in this study were also grade 8 and 9 teachers. This may impact the generalizability, as they may not be applicable to older or younger students; and
2. Only students and teachers willing to participate were used for the study.

### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter presented the findings of the study as guided by the research questions. Summaries of participant responses were given along with salient quotations where necessary. Where relevant, the literature discussed in Chapter 2 was cited and discussed with respect to its relevance to the findings of this study. Comments made by the researcher were included within the summaries.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions and Implications

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the conclusions reached by the researcher as a result of the findings presented in Chapter 5. This is presented as a finding to the main research question guiding the study. The second section suggests a number of implications arising from the study, which are listed and discussed with reference to both practice and research.

#### 6.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, multiple conclusions have been reached in reference to the main research question for the study:

- Does participating in extra-curricular activities with teachers impact the teacher-student relationship in the classroom for students?

*1. Participation in extra-curricular activities has a profoundly positive impact on the teacher-student relationship in the classroom.*

The quality of the teacher-student relationship is improved. This is accredited to the development of a personal relationship between teacher and student, rather than the exclusively professional relationship that exists in the classroom. Teachers are motivated to provide extra-curricular activities to their students as they have recognized that it significantly improves their relationships within the classroom. The benefit that teachers experience is not limited to an improved relationship with the students who participate in their activities. There exists a domino effect in the classroom whereby offering an extra-

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curricular activity is associated with an improved classroom climate. The predominant factors that describe the increase in the quality of the relationship include:

- stronger level of trust;
- increased comfort in relationship;
- stronger rapport;
- increase in frequency and ease of communication in all settings.

2. *When teachers provide an extra-curricular activity, they do so with a focus on providing a student-centred experience.*

The primary focus of teacher's in providing the extra-curricular activity is to provide a positive experience for students. Students demonstrated awareness of this aspect as well. By the nature of their position within a school, teachers want to teach. They view the extra-curricular environment as another means to teach their students. Teachers enjoy providing extra-curricular activities not only for the benefits it brings to their classroom but also for the value it brings to the lives of their students. In providing extra-curricular programs, teachers are influenced by the following factors:

- teachers focus on teaching life skills;
- a focus on student growth and potential.

3. *Students genuinely appreciate teachers who provide extra-curricular activities.*

Students demonstrated a significant level of appreciation for their teachers. Not only do they appreciate the time and effort that is required of teachers to organize and provide an extra-curricular activity, they appreciate that their teachers are focused on fostering a positive experience for them. This appreciation is not limited to the teachers who provide an extra-curricular activity for which a particular student is involved. Students appreciate

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the value of an extra-curricular activity for their entire student body, and appreciate the variety of programs that are offered. The predominant factors that describe this appreciation include the following:

- appreciation of attention from teachers;
- recognition that teachers are volunteering their time;
- experiencing a sense of enjoyment in the activity.

### **6.3 Implications**

The findings and conclusions from this study present several implications that are relevant to practice and research.

#### **6.3.1 Implications for Practice**

This study examined the perspectives of teachers and students in relation to their experience in extra-curricular activities. It provided participants with the opportunity to voice their opinion about the important of extra-curricular activities within the school system. Based on the findings of this study, *it is recommended that teachers engage in extra-curricular activities and offer some form of programming outside of the regular school day.* The type of program offered should be of interest to the teacher, as like-interested students will be the ones who sign up to participate.

Teachers and student with similar interest enjoy getting to know each other on a personal level outside of the classroom. Students appreciate the extra time and care that teachers put into their lives. The benefits of offering an extra-curricular activity are well documented throughout this report, and they leave students more likely to become intrinsically motivated an autonomous learners in the classroom (Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001; Seifert, 2004). It is highly unlikely that any governing body will force teachers to

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spend additional time with their students outside of the regular school day, thus it is of importance that individual teachers recognize where the needs are within each school and begin to develop programming to fill the gaps.

### **6.3.2 Implications for Research**

It has long been accepted that spending time with students outside the classroom will build a stronger relationship faster than spending time within a classroom. This study shows that this is not merely collective wisdom, rather a known fact, however there still remain significant gaps in the research surrounding this field. Future research can work from the conclusions of this study to determine what, if any, level of impact participating in extra-curricular activities has on student achievement. Therefore, *it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to quantify the impact that participation in extra-curricular activities has in the classroom.* It is currently not possible to determine how much faster the relationship will build between teachers and students who are involved in extra-curricular activities together. *It is also recommended that future studies examine the quality of the teacher-student relationship before, during and after participation in an extra-curricular activity.*

### **6.4 Concluding Comments**

This study provides insight into an area of the school system that is undervalued in many jurisdictions. It is up to an individual school to determine what extra-curricular activities it can and wants to offer. Every school has a unique school culture; some foster the extra-curricular experience while others do not place emphasis on it. The findings presented in this study will primarily benefit students. The implementation of the recommendations for practice would mean a greater number of extra-curricular activities

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offered at more schools. As identified in this study, students are the ones who benefit the most from the extra-curricular experience.

Teachers also stand to benefit from the findings of this study. Teachers can use the knowledge of extra-curricular activities to foster the development of a positive classroom climate within their classrooms. Teachers can use the findings from this study to identify what elements of the extra-curricular experience they believe they are best suited to offer, and create programs that fit that criteria that are relevant to their own interests.

The research is also a benefactor in this process. A number of benefits are realized by the researcher:

- the development and fine-tuning of a multitude of skills related to conducting qualitative research;
- the acquisition of considerable insight into the perspectives of students and teachers involved in extra-curricular activities
- the development of an extensive network of school administrators from the teachers professional jurisdiction,
- the knowledge of the elements of extra-curricular activities that students find the most and least enjoyable – the ability to make the experience better for the researchers own extra-curricular activities, and
- the intrinsic satisfaction from knowing that the exercise was an exceptional learning experience.

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It is the researcher's hope that educators and stakeholders from across the province will use the findings of this study to help improve the school experience for students in middle school and beyond by offering more, high quality extra-curricular activities.

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