

Understanding Observable Outcomes of *Nothing About Us, Without Us!*, A Youth Participatory Action Research Program at the Education Centre in Chilliwack, B.C.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lower student school completion rates for alternative school students in Chilliwack have resulted in a number of concerns raised by the public, the BC Ministry of Education and the Chilliwack School District regarding the issues preventing alternative school students from engaging and completing school. The Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC) implemented a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) initiative called *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* (hereafter, called the Youth Program) at the Education Centre in Chilliwack in response to the identified problem of poor student engagement and academic success by alternative school students. The Education Centre is one of four alternative school programs in Chilliwack. The Youth Program was implemented at the Education Centre from October 2012 to June 2013 with the intended outcome to increase student engagement and academic success among the youth involved in the Youth Program as program co-researchers.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC), the client, with an evaluation of whether the observed outcomes from the Youth Program match its intended short-term outcomes. The overarching goal of this evaluation is to inform CSRPC of whether the Youth Program increased student engagement and academic success among program co-researchers. This evaluation makes recommendations based on the qualitative data collected and evaluated as to how to improve school engagement and academic success among program co-researchers at the Education Centre.

This report begins by providing a brief background of the Youth Program and alternative education in BC including the Education Centre. This background section briefly examines provincial policies for alternative school programs, accountability structures and programs offered at the Education Centre. The background section is followed by a literature review that seeks to understand YPAR-oriented programs and their implementation in different school settings to increase student engagement and academic success. The literature review provides an overall YPAR conceptual framework. The literature review outlines YPAR overall intended outcomes and implementation challenges.

The two Youth Program conceptual frameworks presented in this evaluation (current and future state) are based on the literature review and observed outcomes seen at the end of this evaluation. The conceptual framework at the end of this report is guided by the main research question: *how effective is the Youth Program in meeting its intended outcomes?*

The findings section in this report analyzes the data collected from interviews with program co-researchers, program-involved teachers and program administrators. This qualitative data highlights information regarding the steps that took place during the Youth Program implementation and how these steps are connected to the intended Youth Program outcomes. The discussion of research section is based on the subjective opinions of the individuals interviewed. The analysis of these interviews led to the following key conclusions:

- Program co-researchers' engagement, attendance and participation in the Youth Program was high; however, program co-researchers' engagement and academic success at the Education Centre did not increase as a result of their participation in the Youth Program;

- The Youth Program created a feedback loop between students and the Education Centre; however, the Youth Program did not establish a continuous feedback loop between students and the Education Centre;
- The Youth Program team successfully identified seven recommendations of how the Chilliwack School District can address challenges alternative school students experience with the education system;
- The Youth Program increased community connections for program co-researchers;
- Program co-researchers increased their knowledge regarding their communication skills, as well as the challenges faced by alternative school students;
- The Youth Program achieved all of the intended outcomes for program co-researchers outlined by the literature review.

This evaluation provides the following nine recommendations to the client based on the literature review and observed outcomes seen at the end of this evaluation:

1. Future YPAR programs implemented at the Education Centre should actively involve teachers as team members;
2. The Education Centre should provide support to program-involved teachers in order to participate in YPAR programs while fulfilling other educational requirements;
3. School decision makers should clearly communicate how the Youth Program recommendations will be implemented before YPAR programs come to an end;
4. Youth Program recommendations that have been implemented should be advertised at the Education Centre;
5. In order for YPAR to become an established feedback process between students and school decision makers, school decision makers should commit to support the implementation of YPAR programs at the Education Centre into their standard curriculum;
6. Any YPAR program implemented at the Education Centre should take into account the work required to complete all of the YPAR program research stages and adjust the YPAR program implementation accordingly;
7. The Education Centre should create ongoing partnerships with universities to assist with the implementation of future YPAR program initiatives at the Education Centre;
8. The client should track changes in engagement and academic success of program co-researchers; and
9. For every YPAR program implemented at the Education Centre, an evaluation of the YPAR program observed outcomes should be completed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSRPC: Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council

BC: British Columbia

YPAR: Youth Participatory Action Research

OCAI: Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

MCFD: Ministry of Children and Family Development

PAR: Participatory Action Research

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1. INTRODUCTION

The BC Ministry of Education defines student completion rate for high school students as the percentage of students obtaining “a Dogwood Diploma or an Adult Dogwood within six years of starting grade 8 for the first time in a BC public or independent school” (2013, p. 26). The BC Ministry of Education uses school completion rate as a measure of student academic success.

School districts across BC have voiced their concerns regarding the use of school completion rate as the only measure for student academic success (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). D. Manuel (personal communication, May 8, 2003), Fraser Valley Distant Education Chilliwack School District Principal states that the BC Ministry of Education yearly-compiled school completion rates do not reflect academic success for alternative school students as alternative school students in Chilliwack take more than six years to complete high school due to a number of academic and non-academic barriers (i.e. poverty, lack of family support, homelessness, alcohol and drug problems, untreated mental health, pregnancy, abuse, and criminal) faced by these students.

As a result of the concerns brought about completion rates, the BC Ministry of Education is in the process of exploring new measures for student academic success (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). Although no new measures parameters have been established, the BC Ministry of Education is supporting school districts across BC to develop “new measures to increase student engagement through personalized learning” that may lead to increased student academic success (BC Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 26). These new measure for student academic success need to focus on assessing comprehensively “the personalized learning for every student” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 26).

The Chilliwack School District and other community partners came together and created a working group, the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC), to find ways to increase student engagement and academic success for alternative school students in Chilliwack. The goal of finding new student engagement strategies is to create personalized learning for students that may serve as new measures of student academic success. The Chilliwack School District, the Chilliwack Ministry of Children and Family Development, the University of the Fraser Valley, Fraser Health, the City of Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Community Services form CSRPC. CSRPC identified lack of student engagement as one of the problems impacting alternative school students in Chilliwack from increasing their academic achievement. To address the identified problem, CSRPC selected *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Program (Youth Program), a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) as the student engagement initiative.

For the purpose of this report, student engagement is defined as the “meaningful participation in the life of the school”, “active participation in the requirements for school success”, and “serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning” students demonstrate at school (Dunleavy, Willms, Milton, & Friesen, 2012, p. 2). Student engagement is measured by a student’s “sense of belonging, positive friendships at school, attendance, positive homework behaviour, interest and motivation, and effort” (Dunleavy, Willms, Milton, & Friesen, 2012, p. 3). Student engagement seeks to understand a student’s demonstrated effort and motivation in their academic learning. Therefore, student engagement is linked to “students’ sense of belonging or attachment to

school, which has to do with the feelings of being accepted and valued by their peers, and by others at their school” (Willms, 2000, p. 8).

For the purpose of this report, academic success is defined as the progress students make “towards the completion of a course, according to the standards of the institution and the course requirements in which the student is enrolled” (Institute of Health & Nursing Australia, 2013, p. 1). Academic success is measured by a student’s classroom performance towards meeting learning outcomes such as graduation.

1.1 Youth Program Overview

The Youth Program was implemented at the Education Centre from October 2012 to June 2013. The Youth Program used YPAR practices to increase student engagement and academic success among youth involved as program co-researchers. Two university students from Trinity Western University working on their master’s degree implemented the Youth Program at the Education Centre. These two university students are referred to as the *program administrators* in this report. For the purpose of this program evaluation, *program co-researchers* are defined as the students from the Education Centre who volunteered to participate and were involved in the Youth Program. Three teachers from the Education Centre were identified as teachers participating in the implementation of the Youth Program. These three teachers are referred to as the *program-involved teachers* in this report.

The Youth Program was implemented in five steps. The first step of the Youth Program involved the recruitment and training of program co-researchers. The second step of the Youth Program involved the recruitment of students from the Education Centre to be interviewed as part of the Youth Program research initiative. Program co-researchers completed a total of eighteen interviews with students from the Education Centre. Program co-researchers asked the eighteen interviewees about factors that helped or hindered students’ engagement with their educational programs. The third step of the Youth Program involved data coding and analysis. Program administrators and program co-researchers coded and analyzed the data collected from the eighteen interviews conducted by the program co-researchers. The fourth step of the Youth Program involved the presentation of the findings and recommendations by the Youth Program team to the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC) and community partners. The final step of the Youth Program involved the implementation of one of the recommendations that came out of the Youth Program by the Chilliwack School Board. The Youth Program at the Education Centre concluded in June 2013.

The purpose of this report is to provide CSRPC, the client, with an evaluation of whether the observed outcomes from the Youth Program match the intended short-term outcomes identified in the in the program logic model developed by the client (Appendix A). More specifically, this evaluation is to inform the client as to whether the Youth Program increased student engagement and academic success among the youth involved as program co-researchers at the Education Centre. This evaluation makes nine recommendations to the client based on the information collected and evaluated as to how to increase youth engagement at the Education Centre.

This report only focuses on the short-term observed outcomes of the Youth Program. The evaluation of long-term observable outcomes is beyond the scope of this evaluation. The evaluation is qualitative and based on the opinions and perceptions of interviewed program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved

teachers.

The literature review conducted as part of this evaluation drew from a wide range of sources, including government and academic, that address issues related to school completion, YPAR programs and student engagement. The sources included in the literature review met two requirements. First, the sources discussed YPAR programs implemented to increase youth engagement. Second, the sources outlined implementation challenges of YPAR programs. The majority of sources consulted for this literature review were from Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. The literature review found limited information on YPAR programs in general.

The remainder of this report is organized in different sections. The Methodology section describes the tools used to gather information from program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers about the observed outcomes of the Youth Program. The Literature Review section defines YPAR, provides an overview of the YPAR conceptual framework and the challenges faced by YPAR programs. The Youth Program Conceptual Framework- Current State section provides an overview of how the Youth Program was implemented at the Education Centre. The Findings and Organizational Culture Profile sections provide the results of the interviews and surveys conducted with program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers. The Discussion of Research section provides an analysis of the themes, trends and implementation challenges of the Youth Program. The final section concludes with nine recommendations to the client based on the literature review and the interviews and surveys conducted as part of this evaluation to ensure the successful implementation of future YPAR programs at the Education Centre.

1.2 Client Background – The Education Centre

In BC, alternative school programs were introduced in the 1960s; these programs were created “to assist youth who were struggling in mainstream school settings” (The McCreary Centre Society, 2008, p. 7). Alternative school programs were to provide youth with a supportive environment where they could receive an education (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.).

The BC Ministry of Education and school districts are both responsible for the delivery and administration of education from kindergarten to grade 12 (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.). The Education Centre is one of four alternative school programs in Chilliwack and is administered by the Chilliwack School District 33. *C.H.A.N.C.E. Alternate*, *Fraser Valley Distance Education School*, and *Shxwetilthet: Sto:Lo* are the other three alternative school programs in Chilliwack. The Education Centre focuses on the educational, social and emotional needs of students that cannot be met through regular school programs (BC Ministry of Education, 2009).

The Education Centre is a secondary alternative school program with approximately 200 students. Student completion rate at the Education Centre according to the BC Ministry of Education assessment is 10%. Approximately 3% of students transfer back from the Education Centre to mainstream high schools (C. Cyrull, personal communication, April 18, 2013). The main reasons students register at the Education Centre are poor school attendance, poor academic achievement, substance abuse, mental health and medical issues (C. Cyrull, personal communication, April 18, 2013). Based on this information, students that register at the Education Centre may experience poor school engagement and academic success in their academic school programs.

The Education Centre offers “a flexible learning environment” and extra supports that “are beyond what is normally offered in a mainstream school” (Chilliwack School District, 2012, para. 1). The long-term goals at the Education Centre are for students to transition back to mainstream schools, complete school and transition to post-secondary and trade programs after school (Chilliwack School District, 2012). Student referrals to the Education Centre are conducted through mainstream schools or other alternative school programs within Chilliwack (Chilliwack School District, 2012).

In addition to its education program, the Education Centre provides students with academic testing, learning assistance, education assistance, Aboriginal support workers, counseling services, child and youth care workers, group sessions and drug and alcohol counseling services (Chilliwack School District, 2012).

1.3 BC Education Policies Directly Impacting Alternative School Programs

The *BC School Act* (1996) provides guidelines, powers and responsibilities to the BC Ministry of Education and school districts for the administration and delivery of education programs from kindergarten to grade 12. Section 3(1)(b) of the *BC School Act* (1996) states that anyone who is a resident of BC must attend an education program until they reach “the age of 16 years” (p. c-18). The BC Ministry of Education and sixty school districts across BC share the responsibility for delivering primary and secondary education to children and youth.

The BC Alternate Education School Program Policy (BC Ministry of Education, 2009) outlines the rationale, regulations, procedures and funding for alternative education programs in BC. The goal of alternative school programs is to “focus on the educational, social and emotional issues for those students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school program” (BC Ministry of Education, 2009, para. 1). This is consistent with the goal alternative education programs have had in BC since their creation forty years ago (The McCreary Centre Society, 2008).

The intended outcome of the BC school system is “to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy” (BC Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. D-90). The Education Centre hopes to achieve these intended outcomes by providing a more individualized learning program to those students unable to meet their educational needs in the traditional school program. In order to achieve these goals, the Education Centre provides students with programs that meet their individual needs while promoting academic, social and life skill development (Chilliwack School District, 2012).

Alternative school students face individual and social barriers directly impacting their ability to engage and complete their education programs (Ozer & Wright, 2012). Social barriers include lack of financial and social resources outside of school (Strovall & Delgado, 2009). Individual barriers include behavioral, cognitive and communication problems (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011). As a result of these, alternative school students in BC likely struggle with mental health problems, involvement with the justice system, poverty, drug addiction and learning challenges (The McCreary Centre Society, 2008). The Education Centre students may face these barriers (C. Cyrull, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

1.4 Problem Definition and Research Question

The Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC) identified lack of student engagement as the problem preventing alternative school students from engaging with their school programs and increasing their academic success. The Chilliwack alternative school student completion rate for high school was assessed as low for the 2011/2012 academic year (BC Ministry of Education, 2012b). Poor student engagement and academic participation are strong predictors of academic success (Dunleavy, Willms, Milton, & Friesen, 2012). CSRPC explored different solutions to increase student engagement and academic success for alternative school students in Chilliwack. After exploring possible solutions to the identified problem, CSRPC implemented the YPAR program called *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* (Youth Program) at the Education Centre. The purpose of the Youth Program initiative was to increase student engagement and academic success among program co-researchers at the Education Centre.

The research for the evaluation of the Youth Program was guided by one main and two secondary questions. The main research question was: *how effective is the Youth Program in meeting its intended outcomes?* The two secondary questions were: *does the current organizational culture at the Education Centre support the YPAR process; and, can the observable outcomes of the Youth Program be duplicated at the Centre after the Youth Program is completed (i.e. established feedback loop)?*

The evaluation of the Youth Program observed outcomes will inform the client as to whether the YPAR initiative, as it existed, was an appropriate solution to their identified problem. Furthermore, this evaluation will provide information that can be used in developing and implementing YPAR programs with the goal of increasing student engagement and academic success. Schools implementing YPAR programs to increase student engagement and academic success might use the qualitative data obtained from this program evaluation to revise the implementation of their YPAR programs to enhance their understanding of student engagement and academic success.

This evaluation may clarify perceptions held by policy makers and education program administrators regarding the effectiveness of YPAR programs in addressing lack of student engagement and poor academic achievement for alternative school students. Increasing understanding as to how YPAR practices may increase student engagement and academic success can enhance the work alternative school programs currently do. The evaluation of the Youth Program may provide assistance to education program administrators in developing student engagement and academic success strategies to meet specific student school completion goals.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this report involves three components. First, a literature review was conducted to identify trends and themes related to the implementation of YPAR programs. Second, interviews were conducted with program co-researchers, program-involved teachers and program administrators to gather information regarding the Youth Program observed outcomes. Finally, program-involved teachers were asked to complete an organizational culture assessment survey to assess the Education Centre current and preferred culture. The purpose of this survey was to assess whether the Education Centre has an organizational culture that supports the implementation of new initiatives like the Youth Program. The findings from this assessment are used to inform the client whether the Education Centre's current organizational culture supports student engagement initiatives like YPAR.

2.1 Interviews

Structured in-person and telephone interviews were conducted with a total of three program co-researchers, three program-involved teachers and two program administrators. Out of the eight program co-researchers trained on research methods, three were interviewed. This means that 37% of program co-researchers were interviewed as part of this evaluation. In order to increase the sample size of interviewed program co-researchers, the evaluator contacted program co-researchers that attended an information session provided at the Education prior to interviews. This proved unfruitful. One program co-researchers cancelled three scheduled interview appointments. All of the program-involved teachers and program administrators involved in the Youth Program were interviewed.

The interview questions for these three different groups are included in Appendix B. The questions asked to program co-researchers explored their engagement and academic participation levels at the Education Centre before and after their involvement with the Youth Program. Program co-researchers were asked to describe the different stages involved in the Youth Program and their role, participation and engagement level throughout these stages. In addition, program co-researchers were asked to describe any changes or skills they developed as a result of their participation in the Youth Program. The questions asked to program-involved teachers explored their understanding, views and knowledge of YPAR as well as their involvement in the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers were asked to describe the school engagement and academic success demonstrated by their students involved as program co-researchers. The questions asked to program administrators explored their knowledge and experience with YPAR, the Youth Program implementation stages, the involvement of program co-researchers during each stage and implementation challenges they encountered. Program administrators were asked to describe the observed outcomes at the end of the Youth Program and the measures they used to base their observations.

Information sessions were provided to program co-researchers, program-involved teachers and program administrators regarding the evaluation of the Youth Program (Appendix C). Program co-researchers (Appendix D) and program administrators and program-involved teachers (Appendix E) were asked to review and complete signed consent forms.

2.2 Organizational Culture Assessment Survey

Program-involved teachers were asked to complete the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) based on their perception regarding the culture at the Education Centre (Appendix F). The combine OCAI results provided an analysis of the current and preferred culture at the Education Centre.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines the philosophy behind YPAR, YPAR stages, intended outcomes, and challenges associated with YPAR implementation. This sets the context for the subsequent analysis and recommendations in this report.

3.1. YPAR Philosophy

Schensul and Berg (2004) describe YPAR as a process that brings together “critical theory, research paradigms”, “interactive methods, and hands-on learning” from the community members’ perspective when research projects involve the affected community (p. 76). Powers and Tiffany (2006) describe YPAR as a process that “promotes critical thinking and the exploration of the social circumstances” related to the youth’s lives through research questions (p. S79). According to Rodriguez and Brown (2009), YPAR addresses how social values and constructs are argued and viewed by those directly affected by issues, and how through this process, youth that struggle academically are able to generate knowledge through deductive and inductive approaches to make sense of information collected.

YPAR is built on the principles of *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) (Smith, Bratini, Chamber, Jensen, & Romero, 2010). PAR is a research process that seeks to understand and address issues through actively collaborating and participating with those directly affected (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). PAR focuses on involving those directly affected by an issue in all of the action inquiry process. Figure 3 shows the YPAR inquiry research process for youth where as a result of reflecting on issues directly affecting them, youth connect with their own identify. This YPAR inquiry research process promotes youth to be active participants in finding solutions to problems directly affecting them through research (Chen, Poland, Skinner, 2007; Power & Tiffany, 2006). In YPAR, youth and teachers that are trained in research methods and take an active role in the implementation of YPAR programs are defined as *program co-researchers* and *YPAR involved teachers* respectively (Ozer & Wright, 2012).

As a school engagement tool, YPAR relies on equal participation of both program co-researchers and YPAR involved teachers (Power & Tiffany, 2006). This allows for meaningful changes in the student-teacher dynamics at school and for the YPAR project “to continue identifying and addressing community concerns” (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007, p. 129). YPAR is based on shared power and control dynamics in the decision-making process between all participants during the different action inquiry stages based “on negotiation, consensus, commitment, and collaboration of all involved” (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007, p.127). The engagement process that takes place between program co-researchers and YPAR involved teachers promotes continuity of YPAR practices in schools between students and teachers after YPAR programs conclude.

YPAR provides alternative school students with the opportunity to develop knowledge about areas directly affecting them through means that are unconventional in regular school settings. It provides youth the opportunity to develop a sense of agency (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009) and develop knowledge about research methods. Jeannerod (2003) defines sense of agency as the subjective awareness a person has regarding his or her ideas, plans and actions that are self-driven and independent from their external environment. YPAR recognizes the voices of youth as “valuable and valid” and redefines “how young people are being understood, viewed, and engaged [by] shifting the youth services paradigm from a deficit model in which youth are seen as problems, to a

strength-based model that views young people as having assets to be nurtured within communities” (Powers & Tiffany, 2006, p. S80). In order for YPAR to be effective, buy-in is needed from all participants to achieve intended outcomes (Phillips, Beg, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010; Schensul & Berg, 2004; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009).



Figure 1. EIPARS Model of the Youth Voices Project (Chen, Poland, Skinner, 2007, p. 130).

Higher levels of youth and teacher participation in YPAR projects likely lead to the achievement of YPAR intended outcomes (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). The validity and credibility of the YPAR program results increase when program co-researchers engage in a meaningful discussion and disseminate research results with other research participants (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). This is achieved by having program co-researchers actively engage with their school and community regarding their YPAR program findings through presentations or other activities.

Chen, Poland, and Skinner (2007) emphasize that YPAR needs to provide youth with “time-limited and specific” tasks consistent with the youth’s developmental stage to increase the likelihood of achieving YPAR intended outcomes (p. 140). Therefore, YPAR program stages need to be designed in ways that take into consideration the youth’s developmental and cognitive capacity. For example, a YPAR program that requires youth to collect and interpret data that is beyond the youth’s cognitive capacity will likely generate confusion and disengagement among program co-researchers defeating the purpose of utilizing YPAR as a youth engagement process.

Developmentally, program co-researchers go through an improved sense of individuality and views about themselves and their environment during the YPAR process (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). The limited self-insight program co-researchers have regarding their own views, perceptions, and experiences affects the way they approach research (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007), and program co-researchers

bias needs to be addressed during the different YPAR stages. Program co-researchers biases in YPAR can be addressed by allowing youth “more time to role-play potentially uncomfortable scenarios and learn how to reduce personal biases, recognize their own values, and strengthen their interviewing skills” (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007, p. 141). By building team discussions within the YPAR stages where program co-researchers can reflect, discuss results, revise project recommendations, and analyze their own biases during the YPAR process, program co-researchers develop “a more balanced view of the project” (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007, p. 143).

3.2 YPAR Cycle Stages

Figure 4 illustrates YPAR’s well-defined research stages. Each research stage provides YPAR program administrators with an opportunity to adjust its methods to take into account the youth’s current developmental capacity. YPAR research stages should be designed to “promote youth’s reflective and inductive skills” (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010, p. 68). By the end of the YPAR program, youth need to be able to clearly articulate their understanding as to why the YPAR project took place (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010). Program co-researchers that clearly understand, relate and take ownership of the YPAR program increase their engagement with the problem addressed by the YPAR program (Ozer & Wright, 2012; Hamby, Pierce, Daniloski, & Brinberg, 2011; Powers & Tiffany, 2006). Having program co-researchers provide presentations about YPAR program results demonstrate that program co-researchers have moved “beyond a simple description of a problem or current community condition and consider the underlying meaning of an issue, its root causes and potential solutions” (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010, p. 71). Identifying and defining issues, designing and conducting research on these issues, critically analyzing their findings, working to resolve social problems affecting youth, peers and community, addressing policies that affect them and their communities, and reflecting on the results and process in an interactive fashion are the YPAR program research stages identified by the literature review. These combined research stages provide an overall YPAR conceptual framework.

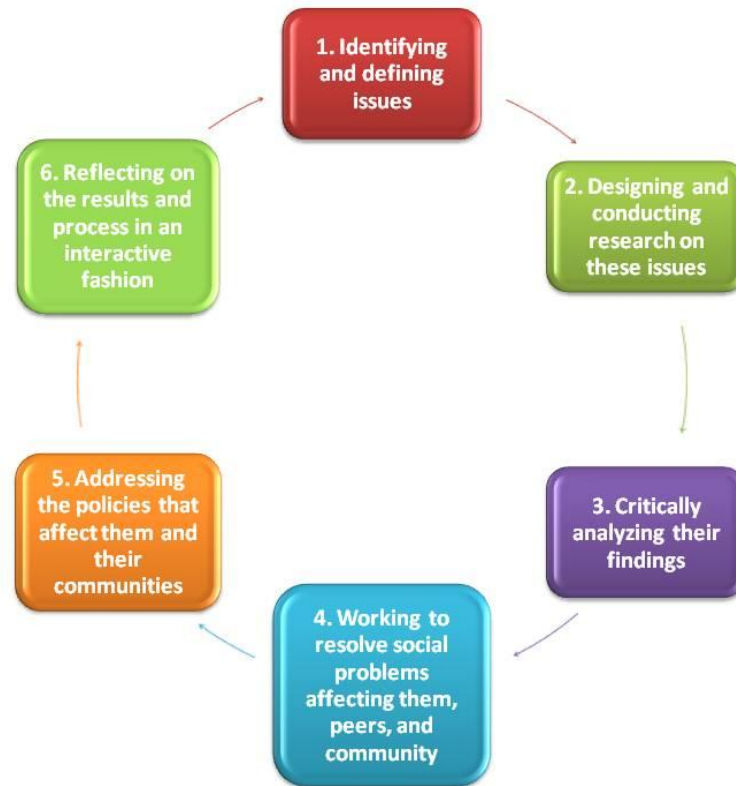


Figure 2. YPAR Cycle Stages (Phillips, Bert, Rodriguez, Morgan, 2010, p. 180).

1. Identifying and Defining Issues

YPAR program administrators facilitate discussions among youth-co-researchers about issues directly affecting them. This is a process where program co-researchers collectively “look critically at their social and environmental context and develop proposals to address the problems raised by the research” (Stroval & Delgado, 2009, p. 68). This process recognizes the life experience program co-researchers bring to the “research as a vehicle for social change” (Stroval & Delgado, 2009, p. 68). It allows youth directly affected by an issue to discover, develop insight in and design solutions that are applicable to their own reality (Maglajlic & Tiffany, 2006).

2. Designing and Conducting Research on these Issues

YPAR differs from other youth engagement methods in that it provides program co-researchers with the opportunity to be trained in research methods while creating partnerships and building on their expertise to achieve a shared goal with school partners (Ozer & Wright, 2012). Through the YPAR process, program co-researchers develop insight as to what it is required to answer a research question and work needed to address an identified problem (Ozer & Wright, 2012). By using research methods that they have been trained in, program co-researchers develop a sense of mastery. Program co-researchers also develop critical thinking in the data they gather and, as a result, “the critical consciousness of the youth and the broader community is enhanced” (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun,

2010, p. 82). This stage allows program co-researchers to meaningfully engage in exploring problems from their own perspective (Smith, Bratini, Chambers, Jensen, & Romero, 2010). The basic philosophy under YPAR is to provide youth “the opportunity of knowing self, seeking connections, grounding in context, and focusing on fundamental human needs” (Schensul & Berg, 2004, p. 81).

3. Critically Analyzing Their Findings

YPAR uses narrative to gather, disseminate and present information collected. Narrative proves powerful when it is linked to the beliefs and emotions of those directly affected. The more the audience can identify with the narrative, the more influenced the audience is by the story (Hamby, Pierce, Daniloski, & Brinberg, 2011). As a narrative exploratory process, YPAR accomplishes this. Given program co-researchers use their beliefs and emotions through YPAR, youth develop a higher level of learning, understanding, and mastery of the studied YPAR problem (Hamby, Pierce, Daniloski, & Brinberg, 2011). Peer facilitated discussion among program co-researchers is critical at this stage. This discussion promotes critical analysis of the data and findings collected by the group of co-researchers and helps challenge their biases (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011). In this cycle stage, program co-researchers and YPAR program administrators come together to generate consensus about their findings based on the information collected.

4. Working to Resolve Social Problems Affecting Youth, Peers and Community

One of the purposes of YPAR is for youth to influence policies and practices directly affecting them (Stovall & Delgado, 2009). After program co-researchers have critically analyzed their data and generated findings regarding identified problems, program co-researchers as experts work collaboratively with YPAR involved teachers, peers and community at large to address the identified problems. When students are provided with a voice in the decision-making process of their schools, their engagement is likely to increase (Schensul & Berg, 2004; Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez & Morgan, 2010; Ozer & Wright, 2012).

5. Addressing the Policies that Affect Them and Their Communities

Program co-researchers, schools and communities address policies directly affecting them by implementing the recommendations and findings of the YPAR program to create change in their communities (Powers & Tiffany, 2006).

6. Reflecting on the Results and Process in an Interactive Fashion

As a process, YPAR is a recursive system that requires evaluation and reflection to inform the next work cycle (Hamby, Pierce, Daniloski, & Brinberg, 2011). As a YPAR project cycles back to the beginning cycle, the research group comes together to determine whether the initial identified problem is still present after recommendations from the YPAR program have been implemented. If the identified problem is still present, the YPAR team starts the YPAR cycle again by reviewing the reasons why the identified problem is still present. The YPAR systemic cycle resembles that of a policy cycle whereby the final stage involves evaluation and critical analysis of observed outcomes, externalities created by implemented solutions and re-grouping about the problem definition and possible solutions (Rochefort & Cobb, 1993).

3.3. YPAR Intended Outcomes

YPAR allows youth to critically analyze their own position, their peers, and their community through a transformative process whereby youth are provided the opportunity to question norms, policies, and their environment and how they are affected and influenced by the systems around them (Schensul & Berg, 2004). Through the YPAR search process, youth are empowered “to raise questions about adult beliefs, decisions, and actions” (Schensul & Berg, 2004, p. 81). As an engagement tool, YPAR connects program co-researchers with the voices of other youth directly affected by the identified problem in their communities, organizes and develops solutions to address identified problems and networks with community partners on how to implement solutions. YPAR intended outcomes for program co-researchers (Powers & Tiffany, 2006, p. S80; Ozer & Wright, 2012) include:

- Increased “leadership skills as change agents”;
- Increased “critical thinking ability”;
- Enhanced “diverse social network and broad sense of knowledge”;
- Enhanced “writing, analysis, presentation, and advocacy” skills;
- Increased “decision making” abilities;
- Increased connections “with adults and members of the broader community” such as teachers, students, school district, and stakeholders;
- Established position as role models “to other youth and experts possessing local knowledge about issues that affect youth”; and
- Increased participation in previously excluded decision-making school settings.

Students’ sense of engagement is increased when students experience meaningful involvement in the decision-making process of decisions that directly affect them at school (Schensul & Berg, 2004; Ozer & Wright, 2012). When students’ sense of engagement is increased, students are likely to attend school and complete their academic programs (Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez & Morgan, 2010). Although not all students have the capacity and/or ability to complete an academic program, students that feel engaged and connected to their school are more likely to attend school (Ozer & Wright, 2012).

YPAR allows program co-researchers to gain knowledge through different types of learning. For example, YPAR uses narrative and discussion among program co-researchers during the different YPAR research stages. This participatory learning style allows visual, auditory and process learners to become engaged in their learning and issues directly impacting them in an interactive way (Hamby, Pierce, Daniloski, & Brinberg, 2011). Partnerships between students, teachers, schools and their communities through YPAR help program co-researchers establish themselves as experts in the areas that directly affect them. Like student engagement, YPAR is a process more than an outcome. YPAR is a developmental process where the process should be the focus of the work (Stovall & Delgado, 2009).

3.4. YPAR Implementation Challenges- Overview

The following is a summary of the YPAR implementation challenges identified by the literature review. The literature review outlines school’s organizational culture, ineffective school policies, lack of youth participation in all YPAR program stages and program co-researcher bias as the main YPAR implementation challenges.

3.4.1 School's Organizational Culture

YPAR challenges school culture in that program co-researchers share equal roles with teachers and professionals. YPAR shifts the power paradigm between the education system and students. Program co-researchers are experts and partners in the YPAR process. This is a “major departure from the usual ways in which students and adult staff interact” (Ozer & Wright, 2012, p. 277). A school organization culture that is not open to treating program co-researchers as leaders and partners represents an implementation barrier to the YPAR process (Ozer & Wright, 2012; Irizarry, 2009). Participatory action process can only take place if schools and communities capitalize on the knowledge and contributions youth bring forward, provide youth with different “modes of engagement and” share power with youth (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009, p. 29). Youth as partners and stakeholders have “the most to gain from the actions taken to address” educational services delivered to them (Irizarry, 2009, p. 198). Therefore, a school that is able to address its organizational culture barriers promotes youth engagement.

Some adults struggle with accepting the participatory nature of YPAR as “they resist acknowledging low-income youth of color as experts, along with further questioning whether these youth are capable of intellectually rigorous work” (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009, p. 31). Changing the interaction between students and school administrators requires ongoing commitment and proves challenging even with ongoing support (Ozer & Wright, 2012). Schools that understand student engagement is achieved when power dynamics and decision-making are shared with students are more likely to increase student engagement (Maglajlic & Tiffany, 2006). What schools do to change their organizational culture to engage youth in the decision-making process directly speaks to how inclusive, open and committed schools are to change, adapt and include youth in the administration of school resources (Maglajlic & Tiffany, 2006). The challenge youth face in influencing schools and society lies in their lack of power as a result of rigid school organization culture (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009).

3.4.2 Ineffective School Policies

School policies in the United States such as the *No Child Left Behind Policy* negatively impact on the implementation of YPAR programs. Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez and Morgan (2010) discuss a YPAR program implemented in New England, United States where despite efforts made by the YPAR program administrators to engage teachers in the YPAR process, teachers were unable to engage in the YPAR process as teachers wanted to ensure that their students scored high on their academic test. The *No Child Left Behind Policy* ties school funding with student academic success. This may not generate the intended outcome of engaging students in their education. Klem and Connell (n.d.) argue that school policies linking test results to school funding often create disengagement between students and their schools. Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez and Morgan (2010) provide an example of teachers financially motivated to work on their students' academic performance as their salaries depended on it. School policies that demand educational outcomes from schools in order to receive funding may result in lack of engagement between students and teachers. There is presently no policy in BC directly tying school funding to student academic achievement.

3.4.3 Lack of Youth Participation in All of YPAR Cycle Stages

Few YPAR projects involve youth during all of their cycle stages (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010). This presents an implementation problem in

YPAR as involving youth in all stages, in particular data analysis, could “help promote crucial awareness” and reduce program co-researchers bias (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010, p. 67; Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). Addressing this implementation barrier could lead to increased achievement of YPAR outcomes (Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). It is important that YPAR program administrators assist program co-researchers to “negotiate and decide upon research topics central to their lives, design and implement research projects on these issues, and present the results of their research studies to the community in an interactive forum” (Schensul & Berg, 2004, p. 81). YPAR programs that involve program co-researchers in all research stages are likely to increase youth engagement levels and achieve YPAR program intended “outcomes for participants” (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010, p. 67).

3.4.4 Youth Co-Research Bias

Program co-researchers bias takes place when program co-researchers are “unable to distinguish personal beliefs or pre-existing theories from evidence when analyzing data” they are collecting from other students (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011, p. 141). YPAR cognitively challenges “participants who must coordinate their emotional investment in a specific outcome with openness to unexpected or disconfirming evidence” (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011, p. 140). For example, program co-researchers might dismiss or disregard data that they are collecting from other youth that does not reflect their own views. This represents an implementation challenge as the data collected by program co-researchers is used to generate the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the YPAR program.

Program co-researchers bring their own biases when deriving solutions to problems addressed by YPAR (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011). When program co-researchers bias is not managed by promoting open discussions among program co-researchers regarding their experiences during the data collection process, program co-researchers bias impacts the findings of the YPAR program (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011). Open discussions provide program co-researchers with an opportunity to view and challenge their own views regarding the issues being addressed through the YPAR program and minimize program co-researchers bias.

An important issue to keep in mind when working with bias, however, is that researchers “must not try to do away with subjectivity, but instead to manage it” (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011, p. 142). As a communication process, the challenge with managing program co-researchers bias is that “researchers move back and forth between drawing on personal experiences and revising prior assumptions in light of the data” (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011, p. 143). YPAR program administrators may be able to address program co-researchers bias by facilitating group discussion where program co-researchers discuss their own views, values, perceptions and ways to interpret data “so that they can be explored, debated, challenged, and grouped” (Kirshner, Pozzoboni, & Jones, 2011, p. 142).

4. YOUTH PROGRAM CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, CURRENT STATE

The conceptual framework for the Youth Program was designed based on the information provided by program administrators and the client regarding the implementation plan of the Youth Program. Figure 5 shows a linear sequence of events where program co-researchers work closely with program administrators at developing research skills, conducting research with youth peers at their school, conducting data analysis, concluding on their research findings and providing presentations to community partners regarding their Youth Program research findings. The linear intended outcome of this Youth Program conceptual framework was for program co-researchers to increase their engagement and academic success at the Education Centre and develop communication, confidence and mastery skills as a result of their participation in the Youth Program.

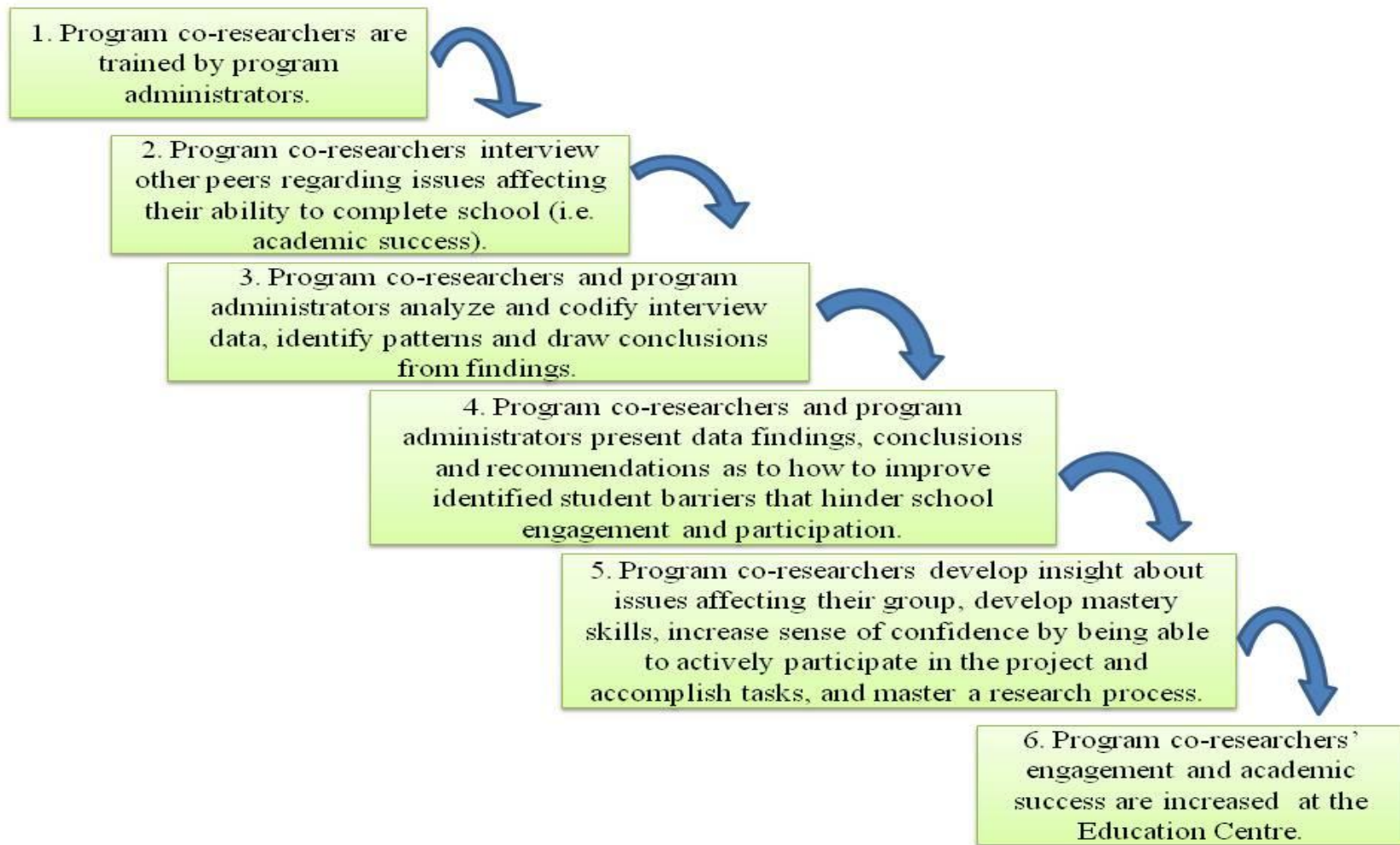


Figure 3. Youth Program Conceptual Framework

5. FINDINGS

In order to evaluate the Youth Program observed outcomes, the program evaluator analyzed the information collected through interviews with program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers using Tesch's (1990) and Trochim's (2006) guidelines to analyzing qualitative data. The interview questions used with participants for this Youth Program evaluation were structured using different categories and themes identified by previous YPAR program evaluations discussed in the literature review section (Appendix B). This structure provided the program evaluator with a map to interpret and classify the data accordingly into different themes (Tesch, 1990; Trochim, 2006).

Findings are organized into the following themes: background; purpose and intended outcomes; activities, outputs and linkages to intended outcomes; short-term observable outcomes; and summary. The qualitative data collected from interviews was analyzed, classified and grouped based on the YPAR steps outlined by the literature review and the main research question as to *how effective the Youth Program was in meeting its intended short-term outcomes*. (Appendix A). One of the secondary research questions - *whether the observed outcomes of the Youth Program be duplicated at the Centre after the Youth Program was completed* - was addressed in this section. The other secondary research question - *whether the current organizational culture at the Education Centre support the YPAR process* - was addressed in the Organizational Culture Profile section. The findings of the Youth Program presented in this report were based on the qualitative data collected from the interviews with program co-researchers, Program administrators and Program-involved teachers.

5.1 Youth Program Background

The Youth Program was implemented by two graduate students (i.e., *program administrators*) from Trinity Western University in BC. The main program administrator implemented this Youth Program at the Education Centre as part of his master's graduate degree requisite. The second program administrator joined the YPAR program to expand his knowledge in YPAR and assist the main program administrator. The three program-involved teachers were recruited by the Education Centre and volunteered to assist with the recruitment of program co-researchers in their classrooms. Program co-researchers self-selected into Youth Program after listening to presentations provided by program administrators in their classrooms and/or after their teachers (program-involved teachers) recommended that they join the Youth Program. Program administrators stated that recruitment of program co-researchers was done by program-involved teachers and word of mouth.

Program administrators and program co-researchers did not have previous experience with YPAR. The three program-involved teachers indicated they had previous YPAR experience. Interviewed program co-researchers had been students at the Education Centre between one to two years. Interviewed program-involved teachers had been working as alternative school teachers between one and half to fifteen years.

Program-involved teachers described YPAR as a developmental process requiring a considerable amount of time. They stated that YPAR enables youth to express their voice, increases youth's level of confidence in their own skills by taking ownership of a project and increases youth's self-esteem by enabling youth to accomplish a project based on their own skill level. They also stated YPAR implementation is challenging with

youth as they are going through their own development process. They noted that the YPAR process is more challenging with alternative school students as they might not be at a developmental stage consistent with their chronological age due to the multiple challenges they face, such as poverty, drug addiction, mental health, lack of consistent caregivers and overall lack of supports to promote development.

5.2 Youth Program Purpose and Intended Outcomes

As stated earlier, the purpose of the Youth Program was to increase student engagement and academic success of youth that volunteered to be program co-researchers by engaging them in research at the Education Centre. Program co-researchers stated that the purpose of the Youth Program was to identify what worked and did not work for alternative school students in mainstream and alternative schools. They described the Youth Program as a process where research is conducted through a youth's lens. One program co-researcher summarized this point by saying the following:

“Adults don't understand what it's like for youth anymore, it is just a fluff on the outside, adults can talk to the principal and other adults, but don't ask youth why it is so hard for kids to complete school and graduate, adults might do this because they feel pressure because there are so many kids in the schools.”

In addition, program co-researchers stated that another goal of the Youth Program was to help program co-researchers develop skills useful to their long term goals. Program-involved teachers stated that the outcome of the Youth Program was to explore the reasons why alternative school students came to the Education Centre and the factors that hindered their success in mainstream education.

Although the explanation provided by both groups is somewhat consistent with the Youth Program's purpose, program-involved teachers were not aware of all of the intended outcomes of the Youth Program outlined in the Youth Program logic model (Appendix A). One program co-researcher indicated that the program-involved teachers “did not have a clue of what was going on and the purpose of the Youth Program”. Program-involved teachers stated there was a presentation provided to them prior to the implementation of this Youth Program. However, program-involved teachers stated that there were no follow up meetings or updates provided to them during the implementation of the Youth Program. YPAR literature outlines teachers' involvement as crucial in order to create YPAR student-teacher feedback loops at their school (Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010).

5.3 Youth Program Activities, Outputs and Linkages to Intended Outcomes

The following is a summary of the activities, outputs and linkages of the Youth Program. Program administrators met with program co-researchers between two to three hours every week from October 4, 2012 to June 12, 2013 (between 70 to 105 hours in total). Extra meetings took place prior to community presentations between Program administrators and program co-researchers.

Youth Program Activities and Outputs

Program administrators and program co-researchers stated that in addition to meetings between Program administrators and program co-researchers, the following activities took place during the implementation of the Youth Program:

1. Recruitment of Program co-researchers and Training: Program administrators trained program co-researchers on how to conduct qualitative research (i.e. developing research questions, interviewing participants, confidentiality and data

- analysis). This training took place from October to December 2012 at the Education Centre. Although program co-researchers were not involved in the problem identification step of the Youth Program, program administrators stated program co-researchers established the Youth Program internal goals. The Youth Program internal goals were for marginalized youth to have a voice and be respected by the education system. Ten youth from the Education Centre were recruited as program co-researchers and eight completed training on research methods, with two dropping out of the Youth Program before the program co-researcher training was completed.
2. Youth Program Participant Recruitment and Interviews: Program co-researchers developed student participant consent forms, created posters about the Youth Program and provided presentations to students at the Education Centre regarding the purpose of the Youth Program and the need to interview students. Program co-researchers used snowball sampling by recruiting their friends and their friends bringing other friends. The Youth Program participant recruitment took place from January to February 2013. Initially, program administrators were present during program co-researcher interviews with alternative school students. Interviews took approximately thirty minutes. However, program co-researchers provided feedback to program administrators that student participants felt more comfortable only with program co-researchers present during interviews. From then on, only program co-researchers were present during the interviews. This is consistent with YPAR literature (Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010; Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). Program co-researchers conducted eighteen student interviews in total at the Education Centre. Program co-researchers implemented quality assurance after each interview by asking interviewees to provide feedback as to how the interviews with student could be improved. After feedback was collected, program administrators and program co-researchers discussed and implemented recommendations made in subsequent student interviews.
 3. Data Analysis: While two program co-researchers conducted interviews, six program co-researchers and program administrators worked on the data analysis. After each interview was completed, interview recordings were sent to a transcriber. Program administrators brought interview transcripts to the group and program co-researchers identified themes and grouped data accordingly. Program administrators felt limited by the time they had each week with program co-researchers to work on the data analysis and finished some of the data analysis on their own to maximize time with program co-researchers. Program administrators coded data based on how program co-researchers were grouping and categorizing the data. Program administrators asked program co-researchers to review the data program administrators coded on their own to ensure this was consistent with how program co-researchers were coding the data. After information was coded into themes, program co-researchers went back to each interviewee to verify that the coding was consistent with their answers. This process took approximately fifteen minutes. According to program administrators, this process increased the credibility of the data analysis conducted by program co-researchers and minimized program co-researchers bias. Based on the thematic analysis of the

- data, program co-researchers and program administrators created seven recommendations to the Chilliwack School District. YPAR literature outlines the importance of involving program co-researchers in the data analysis process (Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010; Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). Out of the eight program co-researchers who completed training, six remained, with two program co-researchers dropping out of the Youth Program before the data analysis was completed.
4. Presentation of Youth Program Findings and Recommendations: Program co-researchers and program administrators provided a total of four presentations to the community regarding the Youth Program findings. Out of the six program co-researchers who completed the data analysis, three were actively involved in providing presentations regarding the findings and recommendations of the Youth Program to community partners. The first presentation took place in March 2013 before the Youth Program was completed. This presentation was provided at a counseling psychology conference where the focus was on youth taking active roles in research. The second presentation took place in May 2013. This presentation was provided to the CSRPC. The third presentation took place in May 2013. This presentation was provided at the Principal and Vice-principal meeting in Chilliwack (three co-researchers were present during this presentation). The last presentation took place in June 2013. This presentation was provided to the Chilliwack School Board of Education.
 5. Implementation of the Youth Program Recommendations: Program administrators stated that during the Youth Program, the Education Centre was painted and garbage bins were moved away from the main entrance. This action was taken after the Youth Program presented their recommendations to the client that included one about improving the Education Centre's exterior to increase student morale. According to program administrators, program co-researchers told them that they were happy to see changes made by the school based on their recommendations. Neither program co-researchers nor program-involved teachers were able to comment to the evaluator on the Youth Program recommendations implemented by the Education Centre or the Chilliwack School District when asked directly what the Chilliwack School District did or will do about the Youth Program recommendations. Program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers were unaware as to what the Chilliwack School District will do with the Youth Program recommendations.

Youth Program Linkages to Intended Outcomes-Involvement

One of the activities listed in the Youth Program logic model (Appendix A) was to involve program-involved teachers with the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers stated that they were not part of the Youth Program team. They stated program administrators provided an initial presentation of the Youth Program, but this was the extent of their participation in the Youth Program. They were aware of the steps involved in the Youth Program through informal updates provided by some of the program co-researchers or other students at the Education Centre but received no updates as to how program co-researchers were doing, what they were learning from the program and the overall progress of the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers were only involved in the recruitment phase of program co-researchers.

Program administrators stated program co-researchers were involved in steps one to four of the Youth Program; however, their involvement varied. The Youth Program team was not involved in step five according to program administrators. The five steps outlined by the Youth Program included the YPAR research stages one to five outlined in the YPAR literature (Phillips, Bert, Rodriguez, Morgan, 2010) and presented in section three of this report. Program administrators stated program co-researchers involvement decreased during and after the data analysis step. Program co-researchers indicated that although decision-making was always shared with them and they were treated as equal research partners in the Youth Program, they felt that having program administrators complete data coding on their own had a negative engagement effect on some of the program co-researchers. Two program co-researchers stated that the program co-researchers that dropped out of the Youth Program during the data analysis step did not feel like they were fully used by program administrators and lost motivation in the Youth Program.

Youth Program Linkages to Intended Outcomes-Engagement

According to program administrators, engagement of the eight program co-researchers remained high until the interview step concluded. Program co-researchers' engagement until this step was demonstrated by the program co-researchers regular weekly attendance, active efforts to recruit students to be interviewed as part of the Youth Program and motivation to conduct the interviews according to program administrators.

Program administrators struggled with motivating program co-researchers to work on the data analysis after they completed all of the interviews. They stated that the data analysis step was a tedious process for program co-researchers and it was hard for the Youth Program group to move forward and increase participation among program co-researchers in the data analysis process. They also stated that two program co-researchers dropped out of the Youth Program after the data analysis step was completed and that the remaining six program co-researchers did not attend the rest of the weekly sessions consistently or came a few minutes before the weekly sessions were about to end. Out of the six program co-researchers left at that point, according to program administrators, three program co-researchers continued to be engaged in the Youth Program. The other three program co-researchers remained somewhat engaged in the Youth Program according to program administrators by showing up during presentations and asking updates about the Youth Program from group members.

Program administrators were unaware as to what contributed to the disengagement of the five program co-researchers who completed the training. One program administrator listed "school obligation" as one possible factor that might have decreased engagement among program co-researchers. However, one of the program co-researchers was not attending school since March 2013, but continued to attend the Youth Program until May 2013 according to program administrators. This program co-researcher confirmed this statement. Program administrators indicated that one of the program co-researchers dropped from the Youth Program due to family issues. This program co-researcher confirmed this statement. All three interviewed program co-researchers indicated that internal group conflict between program co-researchers might have contributed to disengagement from the Youth Program among the five program co-researchers that dropped out.

Youth Program Linkages to Intended Outcomes-Shared Ownership

Even though program administrators and program co-researchers indicated there was shared ownership of the Youth Program, two program co-researchers indicated that disengagement by some of the program co-researchers probably happened as a result of program administrators working on the data coding without program co-researchers. Those program co-researchers that dropped out of the Youth Program according to two interviewed program co-researchers may have experienced ownership of the Youth Program differently.

All three interviewed program co-researchers indicated that the Youth Program was their project and that program administrators acted as equal research partners that guided them throughout the research process by transferring knowledge about how to conduct research. However, the three interviewed program co-researchers indicated that decision-making about the Youth Program was not shared at all times with them. An example of decisions made by the program administrators without the program co-researchers' involvement was when program administrators decided to conduct data coding and analysis on their own. This example indicated that ownership of the Youth Program was not shared at all times as two of the interviewed program co-researchers did not experience a sense of control in all of the decisions made about the YPAR program. Program co-researchers' participation in YPAR programs increases when they have a strong sense of ownership (Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010).

Although the Youth Program actively involved program co-researchers in the data analysis, the lack of participation of program co-researchers in all of the elements of data analysis process may have contributed to the disengagement of the five program co-researchers that dropped out of the Youth Program according to two interviewed program co-researchers. In addition, ownership of the Youth Program was not shared with program-involved teachers, as they were not part of the Youth Program team.

5.4 Youth Program Short-Term Observable Outcomes

The following summary of the Youth Program observed outcomes is based on the qualitative data collected from interviews with program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers. The observed outcomes of the Youth Program are grouped and divided in the seven categories representing the short-term intended outcomes presented in the Youth Program logic model (Appendix A).

Increased School Engagement

The Youth Program did not increase school engagement for program co-researchers at the Education Centre. Program co-researchers' engagement with their classroom learning decreased after their involvement in the Youth Program according to program-involved teachers. Student engagement is measured by a student's "sense of belonging, positive friendships at school, attendance, positive homework behaviour, interest and motivation, and effort" (Dunleavy, Willms, Milton, & Friesen, 2012, p. 3). Program-involved teachers indicated that program co-researchers decreased their interest and motivation in their classes; and therefore, the program co-researchers' classroom effort decreased. One of the program co-researchers stated school engagement remained unchanged during their participation in the Youth Program. One program co-researcher indicated that classroom attendance, interest and motivation decreased after becoming involved in the Youth Program and that the only reason this program co-researcher

continued going to the Education Centre was the Youth Program. One of the program co-researchers indicated that classroom attendance, motivation, and interest were low prior to joining the Youth Program; however, these increased as a result of being part of the Youth Program. Program co-researchers could have viewed school engagement as increased due to their engagement in the Youth Program. If the Youth Program was an educational program at the Education Centre, school engagement of program co-researchers could have been assessed as increased as a result of the Youth Program. However, the Youth Program was not an academic program offered at the Education Centre at the time of this evaluation. Program-involved teachers stated program co-researchers' school engagement decreased after they became involved in the Youth Program demonstrated by program co-researchers' decreased classroom attendance, motivation and effort with their classroom learning.

Program administrators were only able to comment on the program co-researchers' engagement in the Youth Program. For example, at the beginning of the program, program co-researchers' engagement was high as program co-researchers regularly attended weekly sessions, actively participated in weekly discussions and completed tasks they were responsible for. Attendance and effort decreased among program co-researchers at the end of the Youth Program for unexplained reasons according to program administrators. Program co-researchers indicated that they adopted the Youth Program as their primary inquiry/learning process. However, program-involved teachers stated that the engagement program co-researchers demonstrated in the Youth Program did not translate into increased program co-researchers' engagement in their traditional academic school programs at the Education Centre.

Increased Student Attendance and Academic Participation

The Youth Program did not increase academic success for program co-researchers in their traditional school programs at the Education Centre. Program-involved teachers indicated that program co-researchers had poor classroom attendance after they became involved in the Youth Program. One of program-involved teachers stated that one of the goals for students at the Education Centre is for students to bond with an adult in the building to assist students with becoming a "functioning member of society". However, the program-involved teacher stated that the Youth Program did not allow for this process to take place, as program-involved teachers were not included in the Youth Program. According to program-involved teachers, program co-researchers and program administrators developed this bond.

Based on their school records, program-involved teachers stated that program co-researchers' academic learning outcomes decreased after they became involved with the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers stated program co-researchers' attendance and participation in the Youth Program appeared high as they saw program co-researchers at the school and program co-researchers informed program-involved teachers they were working on the Youth Program. Although program-involved teachers could not confidently conclude that due to their students' participation in the Youth Program their classroom attendance and academic participation decreased, they indicated this could be one of the factors that may have contributed to poor classroom attendance and academic success.

Established School Feedback Loops

The Youth Program did not establish a school feedback loop at the Education Centre. This intended outcome pertained to one of the secondary research questions as to whether the observed results from the Youth Program can be duplicated at the Education Centre. Although the Youth Program provided a feedback process between students and school decision makers, the Youth Program did not establish an ongoing feedback loop at the Education Centre. The two program administrators that implemented the Youth Program did not teach program-involved teachers and/or other school staff how to conduct YPAR programs at the Education Centre. Both program administrators and program-involved teachers indicated that future YPAR program initiatives at the Education Centre would require outside implementation support. For these reasons, the Youth Program did not leave the Education Centre with an established school feedback process or with the capacity to duplicate the observed outcomes of the Youth Program at the Education Centre.

Identified Youth Program Initiatives

The Youth Program identified seven recommendations to the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC). As stated above, the Youth Program team provided presentations regarding these recommendations to the Chilliwack School District and CSRPC. However, program administrators, program-involved teachers and program co-researchers were unaware as to what the Chilliwack School District and CSRPC planned to do with these recommendations. Program-involved teachers stated that these recommendations might be discussed in the next academic year (September 2013) and different school committees might look as to how to implement the Youth Program recommendations. However, no information was provided as to what the Chilliwack School District and/or CSRPC plan to do with the Youth Program recommendations at the time these interviews were conducted.

Increased Community Connections

The Youth Program increased community connections for program co-researchers. This was the fifth intended short-term outcome of the Youth Program. Program co-researchers stated the Youth Program connected them with community contacts that would not have been available to them if they had not been involved in the Youth Program. For example, one of the program co-researchers was approached at the end of one of the Youth Program community presentation by the head of a local community college that asked the program co-researcher to contact him and provided the program co-researcher with his business card if the program co-researcher was considering attending a community college program in the future. This program co-researcher was attending this community college program in September 2013 according to an interviewed program co-researcher. Program co-researchers indicated they developed connections with members of CSRPC and program administrators. Also, program-involved teachers indicated that program co-researchers appeared in a local newspaper talking about the Youth Program. Program co-researchers stated these community connections might help them with their future educational goals.

Increased Capacities

The Youth Program achieved this intended outcome. Program administrators observed increased levels of confidence among program co-researchers. For example, some program co-researchers initially shy developed their own voice during the different

Youth Program steps and actively engaged in the data analysis discussions and community presentations. Program-involved teachers observed increased confidence among program co-researchers during the Youth Program presentations. Due to the lack of discussion between program administrators and program-involved teachers, program-involved teachers could not comprehensively assess the academic capacities program co-researchers developed as a result of their participation in the Youth Program.

Program co-researchers developed knowledge about research methods as a result of their participation in the Youth Program including interviewing skills, data analysis, participant confidentiality and dissemination of results. As a result of their engagement, participation and mastery of the studied areas, program co-researchers developed expertise in the areas addressed by the Youth Program. Program administrators and program-involved teachers agreed that program co-researchers showed insight and expertise in the areas addressed by the Youth Program. Program co-researchers indicated that presentation participants viewed them and treated them as subject experts.

Program co-researchers developed leadership, listening, interviewing, conflict resolution and presentation skills as determined by both program co-researchers and program administrators. Program administrators stated that they determined that program co-researchers developed these skills based on their observations of program co-researchers before, during and after the implementation of the Youth Program. Program administrators indicated that their observations regarding the skills program co-researchers developed as a result of their participation in the Youth Program were based on their subjective view. Program administrators indicated that no formal testing was conducted to determine whether program co-researchers developed these skills as a result of their participation in the Youth Program. Program co-researchers stated that they developed an ability to work in teams, read body language, be accountable for their own responsibilities and be positive about their own future due to their participation in the Youth Program. One of the program co-researchers stated that the Youth Program helped with regulating sleeping patterns as it provided structure. As a result of the Youth Program, this program co-researcher claimed to have developed a healthy sleeping routine.

Increased Communication Skills

The Youth Program achieved this intended outcome. Program administrators, program-involved teachers and program co-researcher all agreed that program co-researchers communication skills increased a result of their participation in the Youth Program. Program co-researchers stated that due to the support, coaching, and regular feedback they received from program administrators, they were able to become comfortable with public speaking and provide public presentations. Program administrators indicated that program co-researchers demonstrated high levels of insight and knowledge about communication at the end of the Youth Program. For example, program co-researchers knew how powerful information was when presented in a manner that related to the audience and asked program administrators to adapt the Youth Program presentations based on their audience. According to Ozer and Wright (2012), YPAR programs are successful when youth are able to demonstrate increased knowledge of the issues addressed. Based on the interviews, program co-researchers' level of insight demonstrated increased knowledge of the issue addressed by the Youth Program.

5.5 Summary of the Youth Program Short Term Observed Outcomes

The Youth Program did not increase program co-researchers' school engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. Given that no school staff was trained on how to implement YPAR programs, the Youth Program did not establish a continuous feedback loop between program co-researchers and the school. However, the Youth Program identified seven recommendations that address challenges alternative school students experience at school. Also, the Youth Program increased community connections, communication skills and knowledge of challenges faced by alternative school students for program co-researchers.

Based on the findings from the evaluation, the Youth Program conceptual framework discussed in section four of this report did not increase school engagement and academic success for the youth involved as program co-researchers. The findings from the evaluation of the Youth Program would have looked different if the Youth Program were an educational program at the Education Centre. If the Youth Program were an educational program at the Education Centre, the evaluation of the Youth Program would have concluded that the Youth Program successfully increased school engagement and academic success among program co-researchers at the Education Centre.

This program evaluation identified two issues with the Youth Program conceptual framework discussed in section four of this report that were likely responsible for these results. The first issue was that program-involved teachers were not involved in the implementation of the Youth Program. This prevented program co-researchers and program-involved teachers from bonding and creating a working relationship that might have increased program co-researchers' engagement and academic participation in their classes at the Education Centre. One program co-researcher indicated that program co-researchers would have been more likely to attend classes if the program-involved teachers were involved in the Youth Program.

The second implementation issue was that the Youth Program concluded after the Youth Program provided its findings and recommendations. The Youth Program did not complete all of the YPAR research stages discussed in section three of this report.

The Youth Program could have overcome these barriers by engaging program-involved teachers in the Youth Program as part of the team and evaluating program co-researchers levels of engagement and academic success at the Education Centre after the Youth Program recommendations have been implemented and all of the YPAR cycle stages have been completed. Program-involved teachers' involvement in the Youth Program team could have supported continuity of the YPAR process at the Education Centre. The impact of these ideas on the identified Youth Program implementation barriers is explained in more depth as part of the discussion of research section, in the future state conceptual framework.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE PROFILE

Program-involved teachers were provided with the OCAI to complete after they were each interviewed. Program-involved teachers were asked to think of the Education Centre culture when answering all questions in the OCAI. All of the OCAI completed results from the program-involved teachers were compiled to generate an overall OCAI for the Education Centre. The purpose of the OCAI is to provide the Education Centre and the Chilliwack School District with a clear overview as to the current organizational culture, as well as what a preferred organizational culture might look like. The OCAI informs the client whether changes are needed in the organizational culture at the Education Centre to increase the effectiveness of strategies promoting engagement and participation among alternative school students.

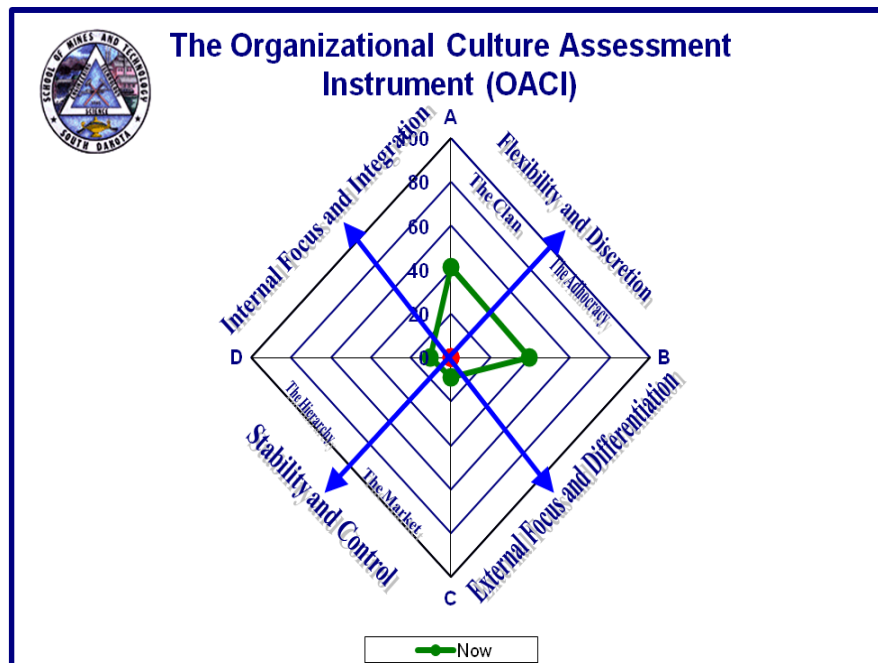


Figure 4. The Education Centre OCAI Current Culture (South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, 2006).

Figure 6 shows that the Education Centre current organizational culture (in green) is predominantly a *clan*. A clan organizational culture is defined as a “friendly place to work where people share a lot of themselves” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75). This type of culture rewards people that have strong mentorship skills. Commitment, loyalty, and emphasis on human development hold together clan organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Cohesiveness, “teamwork, participation, and consensus” are key elements in the clan culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75). Success in a clan culture is measured by their “concern for people” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75). The second most significant quadrant for the Education Centre current organizational culture is the *advocacy* culture. The advocacy culture is a “dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75). The advocacy culture rewards people that are “innovators and risk takers” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75). What supports an advocacy culture is the “commitment to experimentation and innovation” (Cameron &

Quinn, 2011, p. 75). The goal of an advocacy culture is to improve services through individual “innovation and freedom” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 75).

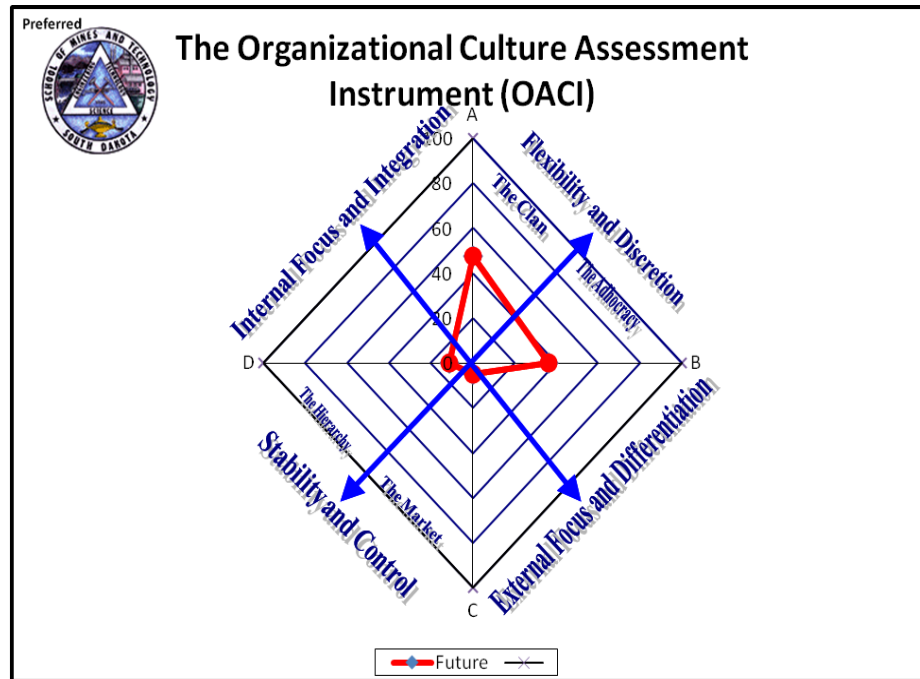


Figure 5. The Education Centre OCAI Preferred Culture (South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, 2006).

Figure 7 shows the preferred organizational culture (in red) for the Education Centre. The preferred organization culture for the Education Centre is similar to its current organizational culture. The preferred state culture at the Education Centre has a slight emphasis on the *advocacy* culture.

Program-involved teachers described the culture at the Education Centre as dynamic and creative that supports innovation and new approaches to student engagement. Program administrators stated that the organizational culture at the Education Centre provides a flexible environment where student engagement initiatives can be implemented. Program co-researchers indicated program-involved teachers were flexible and bent their classroom rules to allow program co-researchers to be part of the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers stated that there is a provincial and school district move to support alternative school education and student engagement strategies. Program-involved teachers indicated that the flexible open environment alternative schools provide is ideal for testing new initiatives like YPAR. Based on the OCAI current and preferred culture, the organizational culture at the Education Centre supported the implementation of the Youth Program.

7. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH

7.1 Limitations

The limitation of the qualitative data included the limited number of program co-researchers interviewed as part of this Youth Program evaluation. The requirement of parental/guardian consent placed a barrier for program co-researchers to be interviewed as part of this evaluation. Program co-researchers were provided with consent forms and prepaid envelopes by the evaluator. After one month of not receiving any signed consents from the program co-researchers that attended the evaluation presentations provided at the Education Centre, the evaluator contacted program co-researchers via e-mail. After two weeks of not receiving any response from these program co-researchers, the evaluator contacted the program administrators and inquired as to whether any program co-researcher wanted to be part of the present evaluation. Three program co-researchers provided signed consent forms to the program evaluator and interviews were scheduled in June 2013 after the Youth Program concluded. One of the program co-researchers that provided a signed consent was unable to be interviewed as part of this program evaluation. This program co-researcher cancelled three interview appointments with the evaluator. The reason why this program co-researcher was unable to attend the scheduled interviews is unknown. It was communicated through a staff from the Education Centre that this program co-researcher was not regularly attending school and struggling with personal problems. An interview with another program co-researcher was arranged and completed in September 2013. This brought the number of interviewed program co-researchers to three.

Another limitation of this evaluation was that it only measured the observed outcomes of the Youth Program after this program concluded. A comprehensive program evaluation of the Youth Program would have measured program co-researchers' school engagement and academic success before their participation in the Youth Program and after their participation in the Youth Program. This pre and post assessment of program co-researchers' school engagement and academic success would have assisted the present evaluation measure differences in the program co-researchers as a result of their participation in the Youth Program.

A third limitation of this evaluation was that interviewees might have modified their behavior in response of being interviewed. This is known as the Hawthorne Effect (Manheim, Rich, Willnat, & Brians, 2008). The implication of having any effect on the interviewees' response was that the interviewees might have modified their answers regarding their own experiences of the Youth Program as a result of the present evaluation.

An additional limitation of this evaluation was that it could not evaluate the long-term effects of the Youth Program. This was a matter of timing as the present evaluation was completed after the client was presented with recommendations from the Youth Program. This represented a limitation in the present evaluation as the observed outcomes of the Youth Program only went as far as stage five of the YPAR research stages outlined in section three of this report. The Youth Program team identified seven initiatives as to how to address challenges alternative school students experience at school. This is one of the short-term outcomes outlined in the Youth Program logic model (Appendix A). However, this evaluation could not provide an assessment as to the

actions taken by the client regarding these seven recommendations made by the Youth Program.

Another limitation of this evaluation was that the program evaluator likely brought cultural bias into the interviews he conducted with program co-researchers, Program-involved teachers and Program administrators despite efforts to remain objective during this process. For example, based on the program evaluator's work experience with alternative school programs, the evaluator had a preconceived idea about alternative school programs. The program evaluator's views about alternative school programs were consistent with the literature review in that youth attending alternative school programs were unable to attend mainstream education programs due to poor school attendance, poor academic participation and behavior challenges (BC Ministry of Education, 2009; The McCreary Centre Society, 2008). To limit the program evaluator's cultural bias, the program evaluator based the program evaluation questions (Appendix B) on the YPAR literature review.

It should be noted, however, that the program evaluator's work experience also brought several advantages to the present evaluation, such as the evaluator's ability to connect with interviewees during interviews while ensuring all questions were answered as well as the evaluator's ability to know when to ask for further information from interviewees to make sense of the answers provided; all of this was supported by the program evaluator's extensive work experience with alternative school programs and alternative school students in BC, along with eight years of interview experience both with youth and adults as a child protection worker in BC.

7.2 Discussion of Findings

Although program co-researchers indicated that the Youth Program assisted them with developing several skills, program co-researchers stated that they did not see any changes for themselves at the Education Centre as a result of their involvement in the Youth Program. As discussed in the Findings section, program co-researchers' engagement and participation was high during their participation in the Youth Program. However, despite the Youth Program achieving all of the intended outcomes for program co-researchers outlined in section three of this report (Powers & Tiffany, 2006, p. S80; Ozer & Wright, 2012), the Youth Program did not increase program co-researchers' school engagement or academic success at the Education Centre.

The Youth Program was implemented as a solution to the identified problem of alternative school students' lack of school engagement and academic achievement with the goal to increase student engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. The Youth Program conceptual framework had a linear progression that concluded with program co-researchers increasing their engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. During the implementation of the Youth Program, the YPAR program did not translate into increased engagement or academic success of program co-researchers.

One of the program co-researchers completed school at the end of the Youth Program and graduated with a Dogwood Diploma. This program co-researcher stated that completing school was a goal set prior to joining the Youth Program. The elective credits awarded to this program co-researcher for participating in the Youth Program were only a portion of the credits this program co-researcher needed to graduate. It is unknown whether the Youth Program had any effect in assisting this program co-

researcher in completing school and graduating, but program-involved teachers indicated that engagement and participation in the classroom by this program co-researcher dropped after joining the Youth Program.

Program administrators stated that one of the implementation challenges was that the Youth Program had an already defined program outcome outlined by the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council (CSRPC). The fact that program co-researchers and program-involved teachers were not involved in the drafting of what the Youth Program intended to accomplish might have had an impact on the intended goal of increasing program co-researchers' engagement and academic success at the Education centre.

Program-involved teachers were not involved in the Youth Program. If program-involved teachers were involved in the Youth Program, program co-researchers might have developed a connection with them. One of the program co-researchers indicated that it would have been good if program-involved teachers were part of the Youth Program team as they could have provided support to the team during the different Youth Program steps. A second interviewed program co-researchers indicated that school engagement and academic success would have increased for program co-researchers if the program-involved teachers had actively participated in the Youth Program as program co-researchers would have felt connected to program-involved teachers and encouraged to attend their classes.

Program-involved teachers indicated that no discussion took place between them and program administrators regarding how program co-researchers were being graded by the program administrators for their participation in the Youth Program. According to program-involved teachers, program administrators did not discuss the rationale used to assign a mark to program co-researchers at the end of their participation in the Youth Program. Lack of communication as to how program co-researchers were doing in the Youth Program was a major problem outlined by program-involved teachers.

Program administrators and program co-researchers indicated that time was a challenge for the Youth Program implementation. Program co-researchers were aware program administrators needed to complete the Youth Program by the end of the school year (June 2013). Program administrators and program co-researchers indicated that in an attempt to maximize time, program administrators did a lot of work behind the scenes during the data analysis step. Program co-researchers indicated that this may had a negative impact on some of the program co-researchers, as they did not feel fully utilized. Program co-researchers stated that the program co-researchers that made these comments dropped out of the program. Program administrators stated they had to push program co-researchers at times to work on the data analysis as their engagement decreased during this step of the Youth Program.

Program administrators stated the Youth Program was a huge undertaking that required more manpower and "was bigger than we expected". Program administrators stated the Youth Program could have been divided into three YPAR programs. As a result of program co-researchers' disengagement in the data analysis step and the limited time to finish the program, program administrators indicated they experienced levels of stress. Based on their experience in the Youth Program, program co-researchers recommended that future YPAR programs allocate more time for program co-researchers to work on data analysis as they felt pressured to finish this before the school year ended.

Program administrators indicated that one of the implementation challenges with the Youth Program was working with program co-researchers facing several challenges. Program administrators stated that some program co-researchers were faced with inconsistent home arrangements, lack of transportation, drug addiction, homelessness, mental health problems and poverty issues. These issues made it hard for program co-researchers to consistently engage and participate in the Youth Program. Program administrators started bringing food to weekly sessions, as program co-researchers energy levels at times were low due to hunger. Given that some of the program co-researchers were not actively attending school, they missed meal-time at the Education Centre. Program-involved teachers indicated that alternative school students are more likely to require one-on-one support to compensate for the lack of supports they experience outside of the Education Centre. This also speaks to the suggestion made by program administrators that more manpower is required when implementing YPAR programs at alternative school programs. This is supported by the literature review (Irizarry, 2009; Ozer & Wright, 2012; Phillips, Bert, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010).

7.3 Summary

The present evaluation provides an overview of the observed outcomes of the Youth Program based on interviews conducted with program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers. Based on the qualitative data collected from the interviews, the Youth Program achieved most of its intended short-term outcomes, such as increasing community connections for program co-researchers, increasing communication skills for program co-researchers, identifying initiatives as to how to address challenges face by alternative school students and increasing a sense of mastery, self-esteem and confidence among program co-researchers. The Youth Program achieved all of the intended outcomes for program co-researchers outlined in section three of this report (Powers & Tiffany, 2006, p. S80; Ozer & Wright, 2012). However, the primary goal to increase program co-researchers' school engagement and academic success at the Education Centre was not achieved by the Youth Program at the end of this evaluation. This evaluation could not comment on the long-term effects of the Youth Program due to time constrains and the fact that long-term outcomes take significant time to occur.

One of the main challenges identified by the evaluation was the lack of involvement program-involved teachers had in the implementation of the Youth Program. The literature review consistently outlined the need for teachers to be involved in the YPAR process in order to establish this as an ongoing process between youth and their schools (Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichy, & Aoun, 2010; Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). The Youth Program failed to involve program-involved teachers. An example of how uninvolved program-involved teachers were in the Youth Program was when a program-involved teacher claimed to have no knowledge about the Youth Program recommendations during the evaluation interview. Program co-researchers' engagement and academic success might have looked different if program-involved teachers were part of the Youth Program team. The relationship developed between program co-researchers and program-involved teachers during the YPAR process might have translated in program co-researchers becoming more engaged in school and increasing their academic success at the Education Centre.

Program administrators and program co-researchers agreed that the Youth Program was rushed to conclude. The limited amount of time to implement the Youth Program might have contributed to the lack of involvement of program-involved teachers. Furthermore, if the Youth Program had been extended for another school year, the Youth Program might have completed of the YPAR research stages outlined in section three of this report.

7.4 Youth Program Conceptual Framework – Future State

Figure 8 shows a revised conceptual framework that incorporates the findings regarding the barriers encountered in the Youth Program implementation. By including program-involved teachers in the Youth Program, program administrators expand their team. This will help program administrators share some of the workload of the Youth Program. An approach will be to involve only one teacher and his or her classroom as part of the Youth Program. This approach has been implemented by previous YPAR programs with success (Phillips, Bert, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010). YPAR is a meaningful engagement process for youth and this is demonstrated by this Youth Program and other YPAR programs (Powers & Tiffany, 2006). If the purpose of a YPAR program is to increase student engagement and academic success at school, key stakeholders such as teachers need to be involved in the implementation of YPAR programs. The Youth Program also needs to engage program co-researchers and teachers in the implementation of recommendations coming from the Youth Program. The Youth Program further needs to complete all research stages to clearly assess whether intended outcomes are achieved. Engaging school staff in the implementation of YPAR programs research stages will assist with creating and establishing a feedback loop between students and schools. This is supported by the literature on YPAR programs (Smith, Davis, & Bhowmik, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010; Chen, Poland, & Skinner, 2007). Furthermore, having the active participation of teachers in the implementation of the YPAR program might generate the desired outcome of increased program co-researchers' engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. This Youth Program continuous cycle could be further transformed into a research class at the Education Centre that is included into the academic standard curriculum. By including YPAR into the standard school curriculum, the proportion of intended student beneficiaries is increased. This recommendation is explored further in recommendation number five of this report. All interviewed program co-researchers support the ongoing implementation of YPAR programs at the Education as a strategy to increase school engagement and academic success.

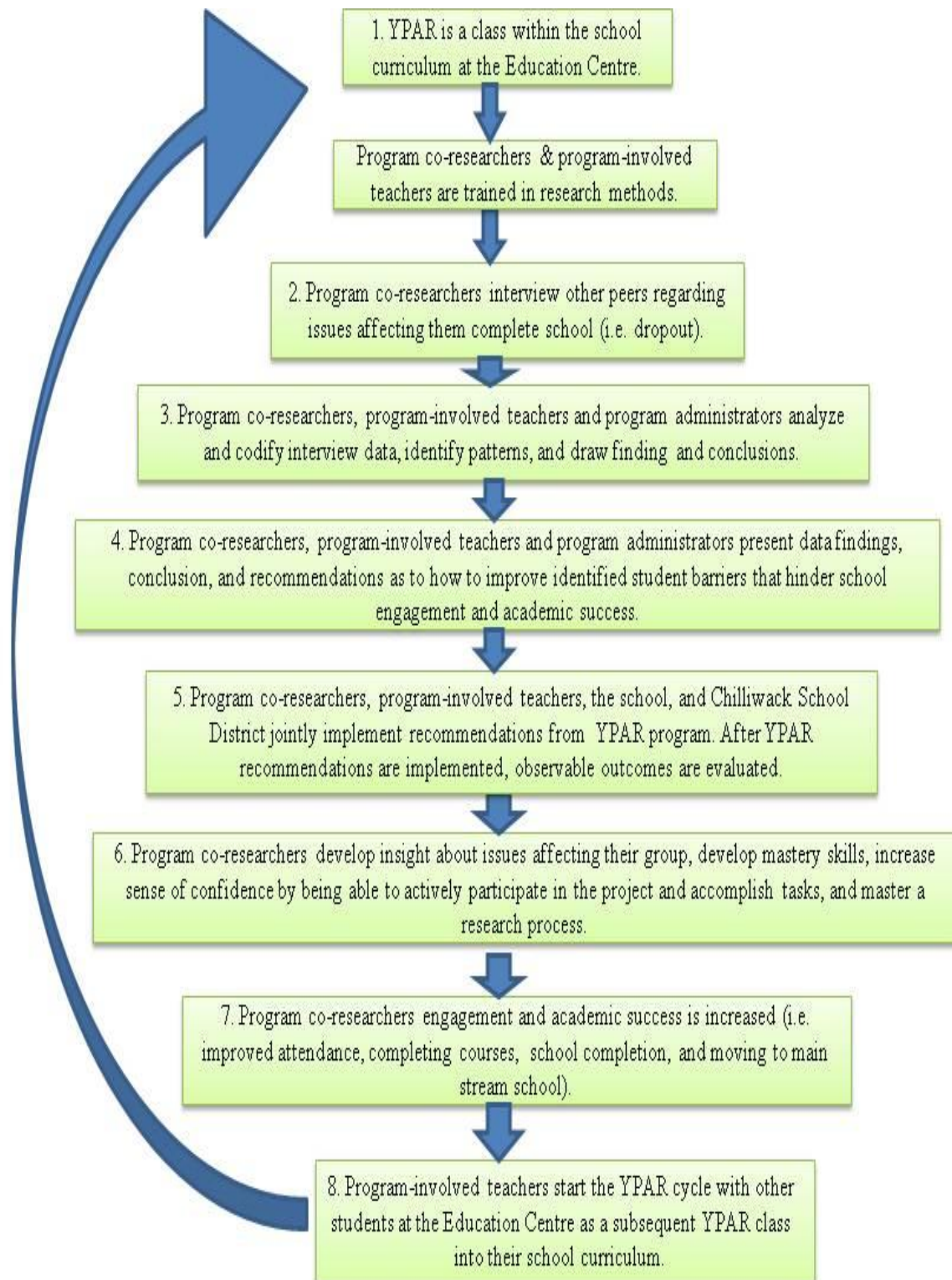


Figure 6. Youth Program Conceptual Framework- Future State

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The client implemented the Youth Program with the intended outcome to increase program co-researchers' engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. The following nine recommendations of this evaluation are based on a literature review and information gathered from interviews conducted with program co-researchers, program administrators and program-involved teachers about their experience with the Youth Program implemented at the Education Centre from October 2012 to June 2013:

1. **Future YPAR programs implemented at the Education Centre should actively involve teachers as team members.** This builds an inclusive system whereby program co-researchers and teachers have the opportunity to interact and build a deeper teacher-student relationship in the classroom. This relationship, co-developed by program co-researchers and teachers, has the potential of creating a spillover effect where program co-researchers might become more engaged with the classes provided by the involved teachers.
2. **The Education Centre should provide support to involved teachers in order to participate in YPAR programs while fulfilling other educational requirements.** The knowledge developed by program co-researchers and teachers during the YPAR process can assist them with implementing future YPAR program as a continuous feedback cycle at the school.
3. **Decision makers should clearly communicate how the Youth Program recommendations will be implemented before YPAR programs come to an end.** YPAR programs generate a momentum of engagement among participants and in order to maintain engagement, school decision makers need to inform and involve YPAR program participants in the implementation of YPAR program recommendations. This Youth Program concluded before all of the YPAR research stages were completed. No presentation was provided to students and teachers at the Education regarding the findings of the Youth Program. It is important that all YPAR research stages are completed in order to assess comprehensively the Youth Program long-term outcomes. The client needs to articulate to program co-researchers, program-involved teachers, program administrators and students at the Education what they will do with the Youth Program recommendations and actively involve them in the decision making process.
4. **Youth Program recommendations that have been implemented should be advertised at the Education Centre.** This will serve as publicity that decision makers take student feedback seriously. The advertisement of implemented recommendations should be made in different forms such as posters, presentations and e-mail communications to students and staff at the Education Centre.
5. **In order for YPAR to become an established feedback process between students and school decision makers, school decision makers should commit to support the implementation of YPAR programs at the Education Centre into their standard curriculum on a yearly basis.** Operating YPAR programs as an extracurricular activity represents a resource constrain for the Education Centre and the students given that the teachers' and the students' time is limited. YPAR as a school engagement strategy increases the number of intended beneficiaries (i.e. number of students that increase their school engagement and

- academic success) more cost-effectively if YPAR is included into the standard academic curriculum at the Education Centre. This holds the potential of YPAR being more effective in achieving its intended outcomes and cost-effective.
6. **Any YPAR program implemented at the Education Centre should take into account the amount of work needed to complete all of the YPAR program research stages and adjust the YPAR program implementation accordingly.**
 7. **Ongoing partnerships with universities to assist and facilitate the implementation of future YPAR program initiatives at the Education Centre should be created.** These partnerships can look very different depending on the type of YPAR program.
 8. **The client should track changes in engagement and academic performance of program co-researchers involved in the Youth Program.** Increased engagement and participation at the Education Centre by program co-researchers might take place in the upcoming academic year 2013-2014. Program-involved teachers indicated that it might be challenging for program co-researchers to concentrate on two programs at the same time; and
 9. **For every YPAR program implemented at the Education Centre, an evaluation of the YPAR program should be conducted.** Ongoing program evaluations can assist school decision makers understand whether intended outcomes were achieved and how to improve future YPAR programs.

9. CONCLUSION

The present evaluation of the Youth Program showed that a more integrated approach, where students and teachers come together during the implementation of YPAR programs, was required to increase the likelihood of achieving intended outcomes. The Youth Program missed an important implementation linkage to generate the intended outcome of increasing student engagement and academic success at the Education Centre. This missed implementation linkage was to actively involve the three program-involved teachers in the implementation of the Youth Program. The intended outcome of increasing student engagement and academic success might have been achieved if program co-researchers and program-involved teachers worked together on the Youth Program at the Education Centre.

The Youth Program had buy-in by all participants. However, the lack of involvement of program-involved teachers prevented program co-researchers and teachers from developing a working relationship that could have translated into increased engagement and academic success of program co-researchers at the Education Centre. Furthermore, the lack of involvement of program-involved teachers prevented them from learning the YPAR process, along with curbing the potential for teachers to implement similar programs at the Education Centre with their students in the future.

Interviewed program co-researchers stated that going through the Youth Program was a meaningful experience. Program co-researchers indicated that the Youth Program allowed them to be part of a group that was working towards making changes to improve education for alternative school students. Program-involved teachers indicated how students at the Education Centre interviewed as part of the Youth Program felt empowered by the Youth Program. Program-involved teachers viewed the leadership at the Education Centre as progressive and supportive of new student engagement initiatives. This was consistent with how program-involved teachers assessed their present and preferred organizational culture as reflected in the OCAI findings. Based on the results of this qualitative evaluation, the Youth Program achieved all of the intended outcomes for program co-researchers outlined in section three of this report (Powers & Tiffany, 2006, p. S80; Ozer & Wright, 2012). The successful achievement of all the YPAR intended outcomes for program co-researchers should be accounted by the client as the Youth Program initiative was also implemented as a way of finding new measures of student academic success for alternative school students in Chilliwack.

Program co-researchers indicated that the Youth Program helped them understand the importance of teacher-student relationships in assisting students at alternative school programs succeed academically. The Youth Program demonstrated that program co-researchers were able to engage and participate in programs when they felt connected to the problem addressed by the YPAR initiative.

The information collected by this qualitative evaluation from participants cannot be considered representative of the experiences of alternative school students with YPAR programs in general. However, this qualitative evaluation does provide potential insight into the experiences, perception and views of the Youth Program participants regarding the effects YPAR programs have in increasing engagement and academic success among program co-researchers. It is important that future YPAR programs that want to increase student school engagement and academic success involve teachers as team members to increase student-teacher engagement. This student-teacher engagement will likely

translate into improved student-teacher dynamics and hopefully increase student engagement and academic success.

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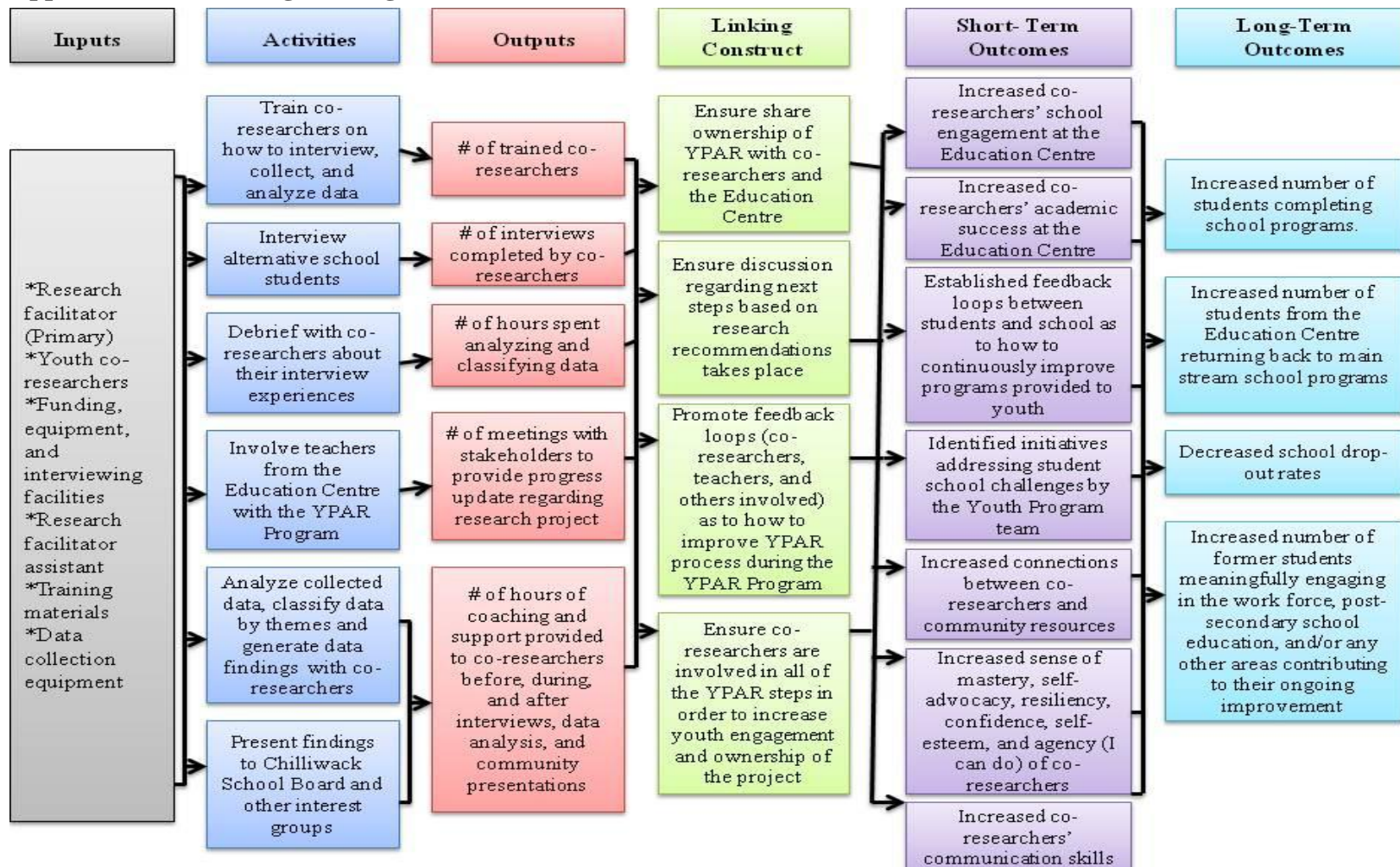
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APPENDICES

Appendix A Youth Program Logic Model



Appendix B Youth Program Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Program co-researchers

1. How long have you been a student at the Education Centre?
2. Prior to your participation in this program (*Nothing About Us Without Us*), would you describe your experience as a student at the Education Centre as:
 Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
 And why?
3. Prior to your participation in this program, would you describe your engagement and involvement as a student at the Education Centre as:
 Very High Above Average Average Below Average Very Low
 And why?
4. What is *Nothing About Us With Us*? What is the purpose of this program?
5. How did you become involved with the program?
6. What was your role in the program?
7. Could you walk us through the different stages involved in this program?
8. Based on these different stages, how involved were you in the decision-making for each one of them?
 Always Often About half the time Occasionally (or rarely or seldom) Never
 Here, the interviewer goes one by one of the stages listed by the youth. Explain your answers.
9. Based on these different stages, how engaged were you in each one of them?
 Always Often About half the time Occasionally (or rarely or seldom) Never
 Here, the interviewer goes one by one of the stages listed by the youth. Explain your answers.
10. Did anything hold you back from becoming more involved and engaged in this program? And why?
11. Did you feel supported by your teachers to participate in this program? What did your teachers do to support you during this program?
12. Did you feel supported by the people who implemented this program in learning and developing new skills? Explain how they supported you during this program?
13. What skills have you developed or improved as a result of your participation in this program?
14. Have your views about the challenges youth face when completing school changed or stay the same as a result of this program? If so, what were they before and what are they now?
15. Have there been any changes for you (i.e. school/family/community) due to your participation in this program?
16. Did you develop new connections as a result of this program? If so, which ones? (i.e. friends) and how do these new connections help you achieve your educational/professional goals?
17. What are your long term goals (education/professional)?

18. Do you feel supported by the Education Centre and the Chilliwack school system in achieving your long-term goals? Why or why not?
19. Have there been any changes for you at the Education Centre since you became involved in this program?
20. What has the school done with the recommendations and feedback you collected as a result of this program?
21. If Participatory Youth Research Action happened again at the Education Centre, what would you do to increase co-researchers engagement and involvement?
22. What are the positive things that came out of this program?
23. What are the negative things that came out of this program?
24. Do you have any comments to the people who implemented this research program, the Education Centre, and the Chilliwack School Board?
25. Do you think programs like this at the Education Centre help students become more engaged and involved with their education? Do you think they have any impact in the future of youth involved in them? And why?
26. Overall, how was your experience in this program?
27. Would you recommend that the Education Centre continue with programs like this in the future? Why or why not?
28. Would you describe your engagement with the Education Centre as :
Much higher Higher About the same Slightly lower much lower
as a result of your participation in this program? Explain why?
29. Do you have any questions/ comments regarding this program evaluation?

Interview Questions for Involved Teachers

1. How long have you been working at the Education Centre?
2. Have you had any experience with Youth Participatory Action Research or similar programs? If so, which ones?
3. Do you know what Youth Participatory Action Research is? If so, explain.
4. What are your views regarding Youth Participatory Action Research?
5. Do you know the purpose/goals/outcomes of *Nothing About Us Without Us*?
If yes, what are they?
6. Do you know the reason why Youth Participatory Action Research was used for this program? If so, why?
7. What was your involvement in this program?
8. Do you know the steps that were involved in this program?
9. Based on these different stages, how involved were you in each one of them?
Always Often About half the time Occasionally (or rarely or seldom) Never
Here, the interviewer goes one by one of the stages listed by the teacher.
Explain your answer.
10. Have you seen any changes (i.e. education/behavioural/participatory/increased community connections) for the involved youth as a result of this program? If yes, could you list them?

11. Have you heard any comments from the involved youth regarding this program? If so, what are they (i.e. negative/positive)?
12. What are the positive things that came out of this program?
13. What are the negative things that came out of this program?
14. Does the organizational culture at the Chilliwack School Board support new initiatives like this program to increase student engagement and involvement? Why or why not?
15. What do you think is needed for teachers to take over and continue incorporating YPAR at the Education Centre (i.e. training/experience)?
16. Do you think that the Education Centre will be able to implement and follow through with the recommendations/findings that came out of this program? Why and why not?
17. What is the Education Centre doing with the findings and recommendations that came out of this program?
18. What feedback do you have for the people who implemented this program?
19. What feedback do you have for the Chilliwack School Board as to how to improve youth engagement and decrease dropout rates at the Education Centre and other alternative school programs in Chilliwack?
20. Do you have any other comments/feedback/questions?

Interview Questions for YPAR Program Administrators

1. Have you had any experience with Youth Participatory Action Research prior to this program? If yes, could you describe this?
2. Can you walk us through the stages of this YPAR program?
3. How much time did you spend with the involved youth in this program during each stage?
4. Based on these stages, when did the program co-researchers become involved and what was their level of involvement?
5. Based on these different stages, how involved were the program co-researchers in the decision-making for each one of them?
 Always Often About half the time Occasionally (or rarely or seldom) Never
 Here, the interviewer goes one by one of the stages listed by the program facilitators. Explain your answer/rational as to their involvement.
6. Based on these different stages, how engaged were the program co-researchers in each one of them?
 Always Often About half the time Occasionally (or rarely or seldom) Never
 Here, the interviewer goes one by one of the stages listed by the program facilitator. Explain your answer/rational as to their engagement.
7. Were program co-researchers provided with responsibilities during this program? If so, what were they directly responsible for?

8. What were some of the challenges/barriers you encountered in implementing this program with the program co-researchers? With the teachers? With the school? With the youth's family? With the Chilliwack School Board? With others?
9. How were these challenges addressed? Was there resolution to these challenges? Are there any outstanding issues as a result of these challenges? If so, explain why they were not resolved?
10. Based on the implementation of this program, do you think the Education Centre will be able to implement similar YPAR in the future? Why or why not? What needs to happen?
11. Do you think that the organizational culture at the Education Centre and the Chilliwack School Board support initiatives like this program? Why or why not?
12. What are the observable outcomes you observed as a result of this program for youth co-researchers, youth at the school, school, and the community?
13. Are these observable outcomes consistent with the intended program outcomes? How so?
14. Were outcomes measured for this program? If yes, how? Were these effectively measured? How could measurement of observable outcomes have been improved?
15. Based on the observable outcomes of this program, what would you think needs to occur to achieve this program's intended outcomes: increase student engagement and reduce drop-out rates? (i.e. time, resources, more time creating a relationship with co-researchers prior to jumping into interviewing other students, more time creating a relationship with the school, more participation from school and teachers).
16. If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently to improve the implementation and delivery of this program to achieve intended outcomes?
17. Do you have any recommendations/comments to the Education Centre, the Chilliwack School Board, and the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council as to how to better support YPAR initiatives in the future?
18. Do you have any comments/questions regarding this program evaluation that have not been addressed by the questions already discussed?

Appendix C Youth Program Evaluation Recruitment Message**Recruitment Document Script (Principal, the Education Centre)*****Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Project Evaluation:**

For the last couple of months, we have implemented a Youth Participatory Action Research initiative called *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* in our school (i.e. the Education Centre). In order for all of us (i.e. teachers, students, and the school) to know what was accomplished by implementing this initiative, we need to assess this program. A program evaluation of this project will be conducted by an independent person who is not affiliated to the Chilliwack School Board and/or to the Education Centre. This program evaluation will be conducted by Eliot Gonzalez.

Eliot Gonzalez is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, Mr. Gonzalez is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Public Administration. The Education Centre has requested that Mr. Gonzalez to conduct a program evaluation of the outcomes of *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Mr. Gonzalez will be providing three different information sessions regarding this program evaluation:

1. The first information session will be provided to the youth who were involved in the program;
2. The second information session will be provided to the teachers involved in this program from the Education Centre; and
3. The final session will be provided to the administrators of *Nothing About Us Without Us!* Program.

During these information sessions, Mr. Gonzalez will be recruiting people who may want to participate in this program evaluation. More details regarding this program evaluation will be provided by Mr. Gonzalez during these sessions. It should be noted that participation in this program evaluation is voluntary. No one should feel pressure to attend these information sessions and/or participate in this program evaluation. Only the group (i.e. youth involved in the program, teachers involved in the program, and program administrators) and Mr. Gonzalez will be present during the different information sessions.

You may contact Mr. Gonzalez by e-mail at eliotgon@uvic.ca or by cell phone at 778-836-2121 if you have any questions prior to these information sessions.

Thanks,
Rick Jones,
Principle at the Education Centre

Appendix D Youth Program Evaluation Youth Consent Forms***Youth & Parent/Guardian Participant Consent Form***

Nothing About Us, Without Us! Program Evaluation

April 16th, 2013

During the last couple of months, the Education Centre has implemented a Youth Participatory Action Research initiative called *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* In order to know the outcomes of this program, the client, the Education Centre and the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council have requested a program evaluation. The client understands and agrees that no one should feel pressure to participate in this program evaluation.

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Program Evaluation.

The program evaluation of this project will be conducted by Eliot Gonzalez. Eliot Gonzalez is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by e-mail at eliotgon@uvic.ca and/or cell phone number at **778-836-2121**.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Public Administration.

If you decide to participate in this program evaluation, I will be conducting an interview regarding your experience with *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* that will approximately take one hour at the Education Centre during instruction time. The school will allow students to miss one hour of instruction time and students will not be required to make up lost instructional time. Students will be able to review later with their instructors what was covered during this lost instructional time.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to find the changes *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* made on the youth who participated in this project. *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* was created to understand the elements that help or prevent youth from engaging and completing high school.

Importance of this Research

This program evaluation will assist the Chilliwack School Board in knowing whether youth participatory action research initiatives like *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* create positive outcomes for involved youth and whether this positive outcomes are connected to engaging youth and assisting them to complete high school.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a youth that participated in *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* project. If you have not participated in this project, please decline this request to participate in this project evaluation.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, primarily in the amount of time you are being asked to devote to answering the interview questions. There are no other known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include a much greater understanding to identify, develop and deliver more educational responsive programs that can increase youth school engagement and increase high school completion.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. No one should feel pressured to participate in this program evaluation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be included in this research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The identity of those who participate in this research project will be kept anonymous in the dissemination of the results. This means that your name will not be used and your answers will not be connected in any way to you. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Information (data) collected from this research will be coded and reported without any identifying information. All information collected from this research will be stored in a locked filing cabinet until D, 2013 and then be destroyed and deleted. Computer files will be password-protected.

Even though answers will not be connected in any way to you and your identify will be kept confidential by the researcher, there are confidentiality limits to this research due to the small number of youth who participated in *Nothing About Us With Us!* and that this program took place in a specific location (Chilliwack). Given the client (the Education Centre and the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council), involved youth, teachers, and other individuals familiar with the program and who participated in this initiative, there might be a possibility that they might be able to guess the identities of those who participated in this program evaluation. Therefore, there are limits to confidentiality in this program evaluation.

If you wish to be removed from this program evaluation once the interview is completed, you are able to do so without any consequence.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: presentation and defence of the final report, which will be submitted to the Examination Committee of the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria. The final report will also be submitted to the Chilliwack School District and the Education Centre.

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (205) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Parent/guardians are encouraged to contact me directly at eliotgon@uvic.ca or by phone at 778-836-2121 if they have any questions regarding this consent form and the program evaluation.

Youth must receive parental/guardian signed consent in order to be part of this program evaluation. **Deadline for mailing signed consent is May 9th, 2013.**

<i>Name of Youth Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Name of Youth Parent/Guardian</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

Youth contact information to arrange interview at the Education Centre

E-mail address and/or phone number:

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your record and mail a signed copy to the researcher within the pre-paid postage envelop provided at the information session.

Thanks

Appendix E Youth Program Evaluation Adult Consent Forms***Participant Consent Form***

Nothing About Us, Without Us! Program Evaluation

April 16th, 2013

During the last couple of months, the Education Centre has implemented a Youth Participatory Action Research initiative called *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* In order to know the outcomes of this program, the client, the Education Centre and the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council have requested a program evaluation. The client understands and agrees that no one should feel pressure to participate in this program evaluation.

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Program Evaluation.

The program evaluation of this project will be conducted by Eliot Gonzalez. Eliot Gonzalez is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by e-mail at eliotgon@uvic.ca and/or cell phone number at **778-836-2121**.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Public Administration.

If you decide to participate in this program evaluation, I will be conducting an interview regarding your experience with *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* that will approximately take one hour at the Education Centre. This interview will be provided during school hours and preferably outside of your instructional time. Interviews can also take place over the phone during or after school hours. I will also be providing you with a survey (the Organizational Cultural Assessment tool) at the end of the interview for you to complete. This survey will approximately take 30 minutes to complete. After you have completed this survey, you are being requested to mail this in the pre-paid postage envelop provided, e-mail this directly to me (I can send this survey to you on an e-mail as an attachment), or provide this completed survey to me in person at the Education Centre.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to find the changes *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* made on the youth who participated in this project. *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* was created to understand the elements the help or prevent youth from engaging and completing high school.

Importance of this Research

This program evaluation will assist the Chilliwack School Board in knowing whether youth participatory action research initiatives like *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* create positive outcomes for involved youth and whether these positive outcomes are connected to engaging youth and assisting them to complete high school.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as an individual who participated in *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* project. If you have not participated in this project, please decline this request to participate in this project evaluation.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, primarily in the amount of time you are being asked to devote to answering the interview questions. There are no other known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. The potential benefits of your participation in this research include a much greater understanding to identify, develop and deliver more educational responsive programs that can increase youth school engagement and increase high school completion.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be included in this research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The identity of those who participate in this research project will be kept anonymous in the dissemination of the results. This means that your name will not be used and your answers will not be connected in any way to you. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Information (data) collected from this research will be coded and reported without any identifying information. All information collected from this research will be stored in a locked filing cabinet until August, 2013 and then be destroyed and deleted. Computer files will be password-protected.

Even though answers will not be connected in any way to you and your identity will be kept confidential by the researcher, there are confidentiality limits to this research due to the small number of youth who participated in *Nothing About Us With Us!* and that this program took place in a specific location (Chilliwack). Given the client (the Education Centre and the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council), involved youth, teachers, and other individuals familiar with the program

and who participated in this initiative, there might be a possibility that they might be able to guess the identities of those who participated in this program evaluation. Therefore, there are limits to confidentiality in this program evaluation.

If you wish to be removed from this program evaluation once the interview is completed, you are able to do so without any consequence.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: presentation and defence of the final report, which will be submitted to the Examination Committee of the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria. The final report will also be submitted to the Chilliwack School District and the Education Centre.

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (205) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project. **Deadline for mailing signed consent is May 9th, 2013.**

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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Contact information to arrange interview

E-mail address and/or phone number:

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your record and mail a signed copy to the researcher within the pre-paid postage envelop provided during the information session.

Thanks

Appendix F OICA Questionnaire

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument – Current Profile

Nothing About Us, Without Us! Project Evaluation:

Eliot Gonzalez is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by e-mail at eliotgon@uvic.ca and/or cell phone at 778-836-2121. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Public Administration. The Education Centre has requested the researcher to conduct a program evaluation of the observable outcomes of *Nothing About Us, Without Us!* Project.

Please keep in mind that we will respect the confidentiality of all information (scores) you provide to us in this assessment. Any comments you make will not be attributed to you in our final report, which will be submitted to the Education Centre, the Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council and the University of Victoria. Once this program evaluation is completed, these records will be destroyed by us.

Instructions:

The purpose of completing this tool is to provide us with a picture of the assumptions on which the Education Centre operates and the values that characterize this school. There is no right or wrong answer for these items. Therefore, when completing this assessment, be as accurate as you can in responding to these items so we can provide a clear cultural diagnosis of this school.

These six questions ask you to identify the way you experience the Education Centre right now, and at the same time, the way you think it should be in the future to achieve its goals. When answering these items, think only of the organizational culture of the Education Centre. This will help us narrow our findings.

When completing the six questions, divide 100 points between alternatives A, B, C, and D depending on how similar they are to the Education Centre. For example, if you think that item A under the first question is the most similar to the Education Centre, give this the highest number. The total score should be 100 at the end of each of the six categories. In the first column, you are rating the Now, which is the present organizational culture. On the second column, you are rating the Preferred, which is how you would think the organizational culture should be in the Education Centre to meet intended goals in the next three to five years. You may divide the 100 points in any way among the four alternatives in each question, which means that some alternatives may obtain zero points. Remember that the total for each question must equal 100 points.

1. Dominant Characteristics	Now	Preferred
A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
B. The organization is a dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risk.		
C. The organization is very results oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented.		
D. The organization is very controlled and structured		

place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total	100	100

2. Organizational Leadership	Now	Preferred
A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a non-nonsense, aggressive results-orientated focus.		
D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		
Total	100	100

3. Management Employees	Now	Preferred
A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		
Total	100	100

4. Organization Glue	Now	Preferred
A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.		
B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.		
C. The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.		
D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal		

rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth running organization is important.		
Total	100	100

5. Strategic Emphases	Now	Preferred
A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.		
B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.		
C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.		
D. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.		
Total	100	100

6. Criteria of Success	Now	Preferred
A. The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concerns for people.		
B. The organization defines success on the basis of having unique or the newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.		
D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical.		
Total	100	100

This Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument-Current Profile tool was taken directly from Cameron, K., & Quinn, R. (2011). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: based on the competing values framework* (3rd ed.). USA: Jossey-Bass books.

Please contact Eliot Gonzalez if you have any questions regarding how to complete this assessment tool. Thank you!