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IMPLEMENTING A RITE OF PASSAGE INTERVENTION THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: INSTILLING A SENSE OF BELONGING

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother and father, Audrey and Ronnie, who instilled the importance of being a change of agent for the younger generation. To my husband, Melvin, and my daughter, Shaelynn for the late nights, early mornings and limitless patience during this journey. To my family, close friends and work crew who stood in the gaps to offer encouragement and advice. And lastly, to each student I had the pleasure to advise through RSG, RCL, the BACKS, Student Council, Royal Court, Fashion Club, Gospel Choir, Homeroom Reps, Talented Tenth and the amazing Orientation Team. I am blessed to have you all.

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The first educator I would like to acknowledge is Dr. Todd Lilly. Your ability to offer a critique while igniting excitement is a testament to your sincerity for helping students. You made this process enjoyable and a moment I will never forget as I use your guidance to influence others. I would also like to thank Dr. Bogiages, Dr. Kirylo and Dr. Williams for serving on the dissertation committee.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact implementing a rite of passage through school-based extracurricular activity has on a students' sense of belonging. The students participating in the rite of passage are members of a school-based club known as the Orientation Team. The team consists of 24 students at an urban high school facing discipline challenges and a strained school climate. The intervention's relationship with the theory of liminality will be explored.

Key terms: action research, belonging, extracurricular activities, liminality, rite of passage, school belonging

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As inspiring educators, we have the opportunity to see representations of inner-city schools plagued with poverty and gangs through the arts of television and film. From films such as *Dangerous Minds* and *Lean on Me*, a person's perception of an inner-city school can come from a perfectly written script, credible actors and the glitz of Hollywood magic. Hollywood allows outsiders to dig into a culture without being uncomfortable. However, for some educators, these films speak to an inner truth. The high school in this study has fought against several of the issues the characters in these films face. From deaths due to gun violence, gang fights, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, low academic performances and high volumes of truancy, the school is constantly at war with barriers to graduation. Unlike the one-hour quick fix of Hollywood, this school is continuously striving to help students navigate through the troubling years of adolescence.

Managing an assessment-driven environment while increasing attention on non-academic activities has left Benjamin High School scrambling to juggle test scores, curriculum maps, school operations, and student interest. As the Intervention Specialist, I have observed students become disengaged with the school community and ultimately participate in risk behavior. Students who were members of clubs, organizations and sports teams continue to engage in delinquent behavior such as gangs and substance abuse. Recently, the faculty and staff were devastated to lose a senior athlete to gun

violence after engaging in criminal behavior with local gang members. This bedlam has increased my attention on how to help students navigate through the turbulence of adolescence while providing them with an opportunity to gain a greater sense of belonging to the school campus.

Problem of Practice

For this study, the research site will be referred to as Benjamin High School. Benjamin High School serves a high minority and high poverty student population. As the Intervention Specialist at BHS, I was tasked with assisting students in removing barriers to graduation. With a strong background in student affairs, I used extracurricular activities as an intervention strategy to encourage student involvement and prevent dropouts. According to research, students who participate in extracurricular activities are more academically motivated and are less likely to participate in delinquent behavior, join a gang, or engage in substance abuse (Masaoni, 2011; Marsh and Kleitman, 2003; Holloway, 2002). Also, students who participate in extracurricular activities have an increased sense of belonging to the school community (Arslan, 2016). With this knowledge, I began to work on expanding the opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities within our campus by increasing the number of clubs on campus. Students were surveyed on what clubs they would like to join, and faculty members volunteered to serve as club advisors. The school increased the number of clubs and organizations from one to seventeen.

As the years progressed, BHS saw an increase in graduation rate, but no impactful changes in the number of discipline referrals. BHS is seeking to improve the high volume of discipline referrals and overall negative school culture. Over the past four

years, the school averages over 1,500 discipline referrals per year. The high volume of discipline referrals has a negative impact on the extracurricular activities program. In fact, I have experienced the struggle of recruiting and maintaining student members due to low grades, delinquent behavior and a lack of student engagement. Currently, there are students who participate in clubs and sports who also affiliate with the local community gangs. The students' confusion on whether to resist participation in risk behavior or follow the negative behavior of other peers speaks to the students' liminal period of adolescence. *Liminality* is a concept elaborated on by Arnold Van Gennep and later continued by Victor Turner (Atkinson & Robinson, 2012). The word "liminal" stems from the Latin root *limen,* which means "threshold" (Turner, 1934). Liminality is defined as a structurally and physically invisible space where an individual is a transitional being, in the process of being initiated into a different status in life (Gibbons, Ross, & Bevans, 2014). Research indicates that the liminal period in adolescence is turbulent and confusing as youth seek to find their new identity (Marshall et al., 2018; Turner, 1934). Youth left in the liminal period can experience a negative psychological consequence while others who lack a caring adult to guide them through the period may seek assistance from self-proclaimed leaders such as older gang members who are incapable of leading them to an environment of positive cultural values and ethics (Beech, 2011; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Thomassen, 2009).

Though faculty and support staff serve as club advisors and coaches, there are minimal instructional strategies to ensure extracurricular activities serve the purpose of preventing students from dropping out of school or engaging in delinquent behavior. Based on my observation and school district data, the following Problem of Practice

(PoP) has been identified: Instructional strategies used in extracurricular activities rarely help students through the liminal period of adolescence.

Theoretical Foundation

This research study will explore the theory of liminality within the adolescent years of youth and the need to guide adolescents through this period. *Liminality* is a concept elaborated on by Arnold Van Gennep and later continued by Victor Turner (Atkinson & Robinson, 2012). "During the intervening liminal period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the passenger) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner, 1969, p. 94). Turner (1969) describes this period as "betwist and between" where the individual may feel stuck in an invisible space. The individual is at the door, shedding his or her former identity, but has not yet entered through the new door to establish his or her new identity (Gibbons, Ross, & Bevans, 2014).

The temporal dimensions of liminality can be identified in periods (i.e. weeks, months and years) (Thomassen 2009). The years of adolescence are identified as the years between the ages of 10 – 19 (Marci, 1966). Youth can experience phases of liminality within these years. The period of adolescence is characterized by the struggle of establishing an identity, securing a sense of self, and the confusion or reluctance to commit to a certain identity of self (Marci, 1966). As youth navigate the years of adolescence, schooling is a part of the liminal experience. Liminality is ritualistic and can be initiated by a triggering event (Beech, 2011). Youth can experience liminality when transitioning from elementary school to middle school or when transitioning from middle school to high school. Youth can also experience liminality when searching for a club or

organization to join, a group of peers to start a friendship with or a career field after graduation. Through this research study, I will explore the theory of liminality within the adolescent years and the need to guide adolescents through this period.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the use of a rite of passage theoretical framework to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence and moving toward a greater sense of belonging within the school community. The study will explore the impact a rite of passage intervention implemented through a school-based extracurricular activity has on a student's sense of belonging with the school community. Researchers suggest, "There is a need to measure social, emotional, ethical and cognitive dimensions of school life" (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009, p. 196). In the article, *Developing the Whole Child in an age of Academic Measurement (2015),* the authors shared the results of a survey, given to 100 teachers across 33 secondary schools. The survey revealed how most teachers recognized a significant role in developing the whole child through character education. Several teachers showed concern for "preparing them for life" versus limiting student success merely to academic achievement (Sanderse, Walker, & Jones, 2015, p. 199).

Like the teachers in this article, the faculty and staff at BHS recognize the importance of offering opportunities for students to develop socially, emotionally and ethically. Faculty and staff showed their support by agreeing to serve as advisors for the clubs and organizations that students showed interest in. As BHS used extracurricular activities as the glue to connect students to the school, the need to investigate effective methods became part of the school improvement plan. Through daily observations and

monthly meetings to review school data, the expectations of the extracurricular activity

programs were not being met. According to research, students who participate in

extracurricular activities are less likely to dropout of school or engage in criminal

behavior (Masaoni, 2011; Marsh & Kleithman, 2003; Mahoney, 2000). Also,

extracurricular activities can serve as an academic motivator for students who may not

recognize the value of a formal education (Mahoney, 2000). Students who participated in

extracurricular activities at BHS were still participating in risk behavior and earning 1 or

more discipline referrals. Students appeared to struggle in resisting the negative pressures

of adolescence and finding their identity within the school community.

This action research study will investigate the use of a rite of passage to help

student navigate through the liminality of adolescence. In conjunction with helping

students through the liminal period of adolescence, this study will explore the impact of

belonging after the implementation of a rite of passage intervention. The study will

provide educators with the knowledge on the benefits of the rite of passage intervention

in relation to satisfying the need for belonging among adolescents. The term rite of

passage was coined by Arnold Van Gennep and defined as community-created or

community-directed experiences that cultivate cultural value and knowledge to an

individual or a group (Blumenkratz & Goldstein, 2010). The rite of passage facilitates

the transformation of the individual and celebrates the accomplishments of the individual.

He asserts that all rites of passage have three phases: (1) separation, (2) transition, and (3)

incorporation (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Van Gennep, 1960). Blumenkrantz and

Goldstein (2010) describe the rite of passage as "one of the most powerful ecological

tools available to community psychologist" (p. 42). Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010)

advocate the use of rites of passage as a conceptual framework for positive youth and community development and revealed the downside of youth or communities lacking structured rites of passage. "In the absence of meaningful community-based rituals, youth will define and create their own marker events based on peer or media values, many of which may be destructive both individually and communally" (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010, p. 43). Students lacking a structured, positive rite of passage can potentially engage in negative social behaviors including violence, crime and substance abuse (Lee, 2005). Whereas the current practices for extracurricular activities at BHS are less intentional, the rite of passage intervention could facilitate a more positive and healthy high school experience for students. This study could lead to other clubs, organizations and schools creating structured rites of passage for students to transition through liminal stages towards adulthood.

Research Question

The following question will guide this research study:

1. As students struggle to navigate the liminal state of adolescence, can students can a stronger sense of belonging to the school community by participating in an extracurricular organization that institutes elements of a rite of passage and culminates a symbolic ritual?

Action Research Methodology

Action research provides the teacher-researcher the opportunity to apply an intentional solution to an educational situation with the focus on pursuing further action or changing a practice (Mertler, 2014). While researchers conducting traditional research

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are removed from the educational issues, action research works directly with the education professionals who have identified the problem. In action research, the role of the teacher-researcher is to immerse into the educational setting (Efron & Ravid, 2013). For this study, I will use a mixed-method approach to observe the impact the rite of passage intervention has on a student's sense of belonging within the school community. I will select one school-based club to participate in the study. Members of the club will participate in a rite of passage intervention over an eight-week period. The rite of passage intervention will consist of 20 elements provided by Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010). I will develop activities to align with the 20 elements and embed them within the club's training and meetings spanning the course of 8-weeks. The beginning of the rite of passage process will be signified by the acceptance of the members into the club and the ending will be signified by a celebration of the members' new statuses.

Before starting the process, the students will participate in focus group interviews to determine the students' perception of navigating high school and their perceptions of participating in school-based extracurricular activities. The students will also complete an online survey to review their perception of the benefits of participating in extracurricular activities. After completing the rite of passage, the students will complete two additional online surveys to observe their perception of the rite of passage intervention activities and their sense of school belonging. Qualitative data collected from focus group interviews and observations will be analyzed along with quantitative data from the online surveys. The final phase in Mertler's (2014) action research plan is reflecting. During reflection, I will interpret the findings and reflect on an action plan to

improve the extracurricular activity programs at BHS to encourage an environment to promote school belonging.

Conclusion

As stated, the purpose of the action research is to investigate the use of a rite of passage to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence and moving toward a greater sense of belonging within the school community.   The problem of practice stems from the need for instructional strategies for extracurricular activities to encourage students to develop a sense of belonging within the school culture and therefore disrupt the pattern of risk behavior. Through the action research process, I will implement a rite of passage intervention through a school-based extracurricular activity and explore the impact it has the participants' sense of belonging within the school community.

Chapter Two will offer an in-depth review of the literature regarding the theory of liminality in adolescence and the concept of using a rite of passage to guide students through the liminal space. Chapter Two will also review research-based evidence on belonging and the need for belonging within the school community. Finally, Chapter Two will provide an overview of the literature regarding the efficacy of extracurricular activities, their capacity to influence student identities, and posit how the research aligns with or offers hope for the participants in my study at Benjamin High School.

Chapter Three will detail the action research methodology for this study. I will extensively detail the steps of the action research study in implementing a rite of passage intervention through a school-based extracurricular activity and collecting data before,

during and after the implementation. I will use Mertler's (2014) cyclical process of action research: (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) developing, and (4) reflecting. Chapter Four will present the data from the study and a critical analysis of the findings. Chapter Five will discuss the findings and provide implications for future research studies.

Key Terms Glossary

Action Research: A cyclical research methodology conducted by the educator in their own setting focuses on a problem and helps to make a decision on how to improve that practice (Efron & Ravid, 2013; Mertler, 2014).

Belonging: The significant affiliations between individuals and their surroundings such as places and groups (Arslan, 2018)

Extracurricular Activities: School-related academic or non-academic activities that occur outside of normal class hours and do not involve a grade or academic credit; students participate on a voluntary basis (Bartkus, Nemelka, Nemelka & Gardner, 2012)

Liminality: a space between in which membership and identity with the former is suspended and membership in and identity with the next has not yet been established (Van Gennep, 1960)

Rite of Passage: community-created or community-directed experiences that cultivate cultural value and knowledge to an individual or a group (Blumenkratz & Goldstein, 2010).

School Belonging: the student's sense of valued involvement with the school environment (Arslan, 2018)

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of a rite of passage to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence and moving toward a greater sense of belonging within the school community. I will implement a rite of passage through a school-based extracurricular activity to encourage a sense of belonging among the student participants. Chapter 2 will begin with an overview of the theoretical framework for this study. I will provide the transitional period of liminality, an overview on rites of passage, and its implications on adolescence. For this study, the rite of passage will be used to encourage a sense of belonging. Therefore, I will provide research on belonging and the concept of belonging within the school community. As the rite of passage will serve as the driver, the vehicle moving the student towards a greater sense of belonging is a school-based extracurricular activity. I will provide a historical overview of school-based extracurricular activities, a description of the extracurricular activities offered at the research site and a description of the club chosen to participate in rite of passage intervention for this research study.

Problem of practice. The following Problem of Practice (PoP) has been identified: Instructional strategies used in extracurricular activities rarely assist in navigating students through the liminal period of adolescence. Benjamin High is in search of ways to create the opportunity for students to gain a sense of belonging through

participation in school-based extracurricular activities and move students through the liminal period of adolescence towards adulthood.

Rationale. The purpose of this research study is to investigate the use of a rite of passage to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence and moving toward a greater sense of belonging within the school community. The study will explore the impact a rite of passage intervention implemented through a school-based extracurricular activity has on a student's sense of belonging with the school community. The student participants in this study are mostly African-American and identify as economically disadvantaged.

Research question. The following question will guide this research study: As students struggle to navigate the liminal state of adolescence, can students can a stronger sense of belonging to the school community by participating in an extracurricular organization that institutes elements of a rite of passage and culminates a symbolic ritual?

Literature search. For the literature review, the theory of liminality and its relation to adolescents will be researched to provide a theoretical framework.   From the theory of liminality, an overview of the rite of passage and the practice of utilizing a rite of passage as an intervention strategy will be researched to provide an understanding of the intervention. As the rite of passage guides the student through the liminal period, the goal is to provide the student with a greater sense of belonging through participation in extracurricular activities. Therefore, research on belonging, the need for belonging within the school community and an overview of extracurricular activities will be researched. The literature will be collected through online searches through the Thomas

Cooper Library at the University of South Carolina, which includes journal articles, books, and dissertations/thesis.

Purpose of the review. According to Mertler (2009), the purpose of the literature review is to "use the insights and discoveries of others whose research came before yours in order to make your research more efficient and effective" (p.51). The literature review is used to: (1) select research relevant to the study, (2) outline existing knowledge in the field, (3) position the student in the context of previous research, and (4) indicate how the topic is to be investigated (Costello, 2011). For this study, I aim to research the topic liminality, rites of passage and the usage of rites of passage as an intervention within other studies. To further express the significance of the study in potentially offering strategies to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence while encouraging a sense of belonging within the school community, I will highlight the challenges of combating gang culture and poverty within an extracurricular activities program.

Overview of Theoretical Foundation

Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1994) expand on the concept of the liminal space within the transition phase in a rite of passage. Turner (1994) describes liminality as a threshold or margin when an individual loses his or her identity and begins the process of reconstructing a new meaningful identity. The term liminality is frequently used in anthropological studies (Gibbons, Ross, & Bevans, 2014). In anthropology, liminality represents the experience during initiation rites where the tribal members present an initiate who is beginning a social transition (Gibbons et al., 2014; Turner, 1994). Though the liminal period is considered a space, it is structurally and physically invisible

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(Gibbons et al., 2014). During the liminal period, the individual may have feelings of being stuck or as Turner (1994) describes "betwist and between". The individual is at the door, shedding his or her old identities, but has not entered through the new door where his or her new way of being exist (Gibbons et al., 2014). "During the liminal time, the individual exists in a state in which the past is left behind but the future state has yet to emerge" (Gibbons et al., 2014, p. 424).

The concept of liminality can be identified based on subject area, temporal dimension and spatial dimension (Thomassen, 2009). The subject areas of liminality are divided into three different areas: (1) single individual, (2) social groups such as cohorts or minorities, and (3) whole societies such as entire populations or centuries (Thomassen, 2009). The temporal dimensions of liminality are also divided into three different areas: (1) moments, (2) periods, and (3) epochs (Thomassen 2009). First, there are moments or sudden events such as death or the diagnosis of a life-changing illness (Thomassen, 2009). Second, there are periods such weeks, months or even years (Thomassen, 2009). Lastly, there are epochs such as decades or generations of liminality (Thomassen, 2009). The spatial dimensions of liminality are related to: (1) a specific place or threshold, (2) areas or zones such monasteries, prisons or the border between two countries, and (3) countries or continents (Thomassen, 2011).

Liminality and adolescents. The liminal period is ritualistic and often initiated by a triggering event (Beech, 2011). For an adolescent, a triggering event can be entering high school, earning a driver's license or starting his or her first job. From the triggering event, the liminal period is conducted in a specific place for a specific time period (Beech, 2011). Within the specificities of this space and time period, individuals are

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assigned a temporary social status exempting them from normal duties and activities (Marshall, Grinyer, & Limmer, 2018). This is an important period because it enables the individual to proceed through the transition phase and reenter society at a higher social status (Marshall et al, 2018; Turner, 1994). As individuals look to find their new status, this temporary status can cause individuals to experience communicative alienation (Marshall et al., 2018). Communicative alienation is described as "a feeling of disassociation from others and an inability to relate to anyone not in the liminal stage" (Marshall et al., 2018, p. 1).

For adolescents, this can be a disturbing time period. The years of adolescence are depicted as a period when key developmental tasks such as forming a clear identity or separating from parents/guardians must be fulfilled within the journey from childhood to adulthood (Marshall et al., 2018). Adolescence is a developmental period identified by the complex physical, socioemotional, and cognitive changes, which can push adolescents to engross in more self-exploratory processes (Stone, Duffy, Holland, & Bowers, 2018). Individuals spanning the ages of 10–21 years old, begin to pursue more autonomy and decision-making power to participate in more activities independent of the adults in their lives (Stone et al., 2018). The adolescence urge for independence is also a time where one's identity becomes a primary objective and identity exploration and commitment to activities and groups begins (Marcia, 1966; Meeus, 2011). The period of adolescence is characterized by the struggle of establishing an identity, securing a sense of self, and the confusion or reluctance to commit to a certain identity of self (Marci, 1966). Marcia (1966) posits two criteria to establish identity status: (1) crisis and (2) commitment. "Crisis refers to the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among

meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits" (Marcia, 1966, p. 110). Depending on the amount of crisis and commitment, Marcia (1966) categorizes adolescents into four identity statues: (1) identity diffusion, (2) foreclosure, (3) moratorium, and (4) identity achievement. Identify diffusion indicates the adolescent has not committed to a specific developmental task and may not have explored alternatives (Meeus, 2011). Foreclosure indicates the adolescent has committed to a specific developmental task without prior exploration (Meeus, 2011). Moratorium indicates the adolescent is actively searching but has yet to make a commitment (Meeus, 2011). And lastly, identity achievement indicates the adolescent has completed active exploration and has made a clear commitment (Meeus, 2011).

The navigation of this liminal period can be turbulent (Marshall et al., 2018). The adolescent searches for a way to move out of liminality in order to return to society with a new identity, new power and new responsibilities (Marshall et al., 2018). Though confusing and turbulent, this period must be navigated in order to achieve adulthood (Marshall et al, 2018). The liminal period is temporary; however, adolescents can become trapped (Beech, 2011; Marshall et al., 2018; Turner, 1994). Adolescents who extend the period of liminality can experience negative psychological consequences (Beech, 2011). Research highlights the need for an adult to guide the adolescent through the liminal period (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2011; Thomassen, 2009). By participating in a rite of passage, adolescents recognize the liminal period and know they will soon transition through the period with the assistance of an adult or 'ceremony master' (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Thomassen, 2009). However, those who are in the liminal period without an adult to guide them are at risk (Blumenkrantz &

Goldstein, 2011; Thomassen, 2009). Individuals may allow a self-proclaimed 'ceremony master' assume a leadership position and attempt to navigate the adolescent out of liminality, which can lead to adolescent to a negative environment filled with delinquent behavior and a lack of cultural values and ethics (Thomassen, 2009).

Rite of Passage

For a member of any society, life is earmarked by transitions. Many people may view earning a driver's license or graduating from high school as one of those moments. The impulse to transition to the next level happens either individually or socially (Karianjahi, 2015). Social calls for a transition are considered a rite of passage (Karianjahi, 2015). A French ethnographer named Arnold Van Gennep coined the term rites of passage and defined it as transition points from one stage to another stage or one role to another (Karianjahi, 2015; Van Gennep, 1960). The rite of passage signified a new social status for the individual and created a public celebration to reaffirm the transition and community values (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

Van Gennep identified three phases of a rite of passage: (1) separation, (2) transition (liminality), and (3) incorporation (Karianjahi, 2015; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Separation is initiated by a change in environment or the normal routine of everyday life (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). It facilitates the end of the individual's former status (Karianjahi, 2015). For those transitioning to adulthood, this signifies a separation from childish things and the movement towards an adulthood filled with betterment (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

From separation, the individual moves to the transition phase. Van Gennep (1960) describes this phase as a place of liminality. The liminal period is characterized

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with moments of uncertainty and mystery, resembling a student's entrance into high school from middle school (Van Gennep, 1960). During this phase, the individual undergoes "precise training in values and ethics that inform and guide behavior" (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010, p. 43). Though the individual can experience stress during the transition phase, a strong bond between the individual and instructor is forged (Karianjahi, 2015). The instructor teaches the roles, responsibilities and privileges pertaining to the new status (Karianjahi, 2015).

The final phase is the incorporation phase. The incorporation phase signifies the individual's growth and maturity, which is celebrated through a community event (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Karianjahi, 2015; Van Gennep, 1960). In some traditions, individuals are adorned with a symbol such as a badge or special cloth to acknowledge their new status to the public (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This creates accountability for the individual, which strengthens their commitment to his or her new status (Karianjahi, 2015).

An example of a rite of passage is the Latino tradition of a Quinceanero. At the age of 15, a Latina girl participates in a ceremony that begins with a church service followed by an elaborate celebration (Larson & Martin, 2012). The honoree wears a large, formal gown with a tiara then publicly given a pair of high heels (Larson & Martin, 2012). The ceremony, like others, marks a milestone in the person's journey towards adulthood.

Rite of passage as an intervention. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) advocate for the use of a rite of passage as the conceptual framework to promote positive youth and community development and assist adolescents in transitioning through the

liminal period. Research shows a need for a structured rite of passage for adolescent age students (Karianjahi, 2015; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The absence of a clearly defined rite of passage can lead to youth creating their own rite of passage (Karianjahi, 2015; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein). For example, initiation into a gang becomes more appealing for a young male who does not recognize a different path to adulthood (Karianjahi, 2015). Youth will create their own milestones to include teenage pregnancy, drug use, binge drinking or other risk behaviors (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

As an adolescent enters the liminal period, a well-developed rite of passage must be put in place to create belonging, master skills, and exercise independent choices (Larson & Martin, 2012). Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) provide 20 elements that contribute to an effective of a rite of passage. Table 2.1 provides a description of each element.

The first element is the paradigm shift. The paradigm shift is identified by the connection of the adolescent development to the community development process rather than an individual process (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The overall intervention is ecological rather than individualized to each adolescent (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). During the paradigm shift the adolescent is encouraged to accept the possibility that changing views is necessary (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The second element is community values and ethics. The must consist of community expectations for behavior and values (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The value and expectations must be clear to the adolescent and align with the goal of ensuring the overall success of the community (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The third element is that the program success relies on relationship. The adults involved in the intervention must be intimately connected to the cultivation and adaptation of the strategy (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The adults must be dedicated to fostering quality relationships between themselves and all youth (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The fourth element is "you can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself" (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010, p. 44). Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2011) highlight the need for the adults who are responsible for initiating the intervention to participate in training and professional development to build personal awareness. The adults must participate in their own initiatory experience and rite of passage to assist in their own progression towards maturity to be an effective leader for the adolescent (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The fifth element is that the intervention must happen in the home community. The connection to the geographical place is imperative to the adolescent's sense of self and security (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). To ensure an effective rite of passage, a safe place must be created to offer adolescents a space to have intentional conversations with adults and each other (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The sixth element is the expectation for socially appropriate behavior. The rite of passage experience must involve the transmission of essential values and ethics (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). These values and ethics must guide and inform the adolescent of the expectations for socially appropriate behavior (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The seventh element is rituals. Rituals can empower and add depth to the overall rite of passage experience. Rituals can impact the atmosphere and provide a powerful context for participants (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Rituals allow for the learning and interactions to become rooted within the participant (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The eighth element is challenge or adversity. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) posit that adversity introduces us to ourselves. The challenges in a rite of passage should emotionally and/or physically present opportunities for the adolescent to learn values and/or skills to increase self-awareness (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The challenges should also encourage the adolescent to build more healthful connections (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The ninth element is silence. Adolescents can develop in a deafening environment with minimal moments of silence (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This cacophony of sound and the increased focus on cellular technology may make it difficult for adolescents to recognize the internal alarm clock of the coming of age process (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Moments of silence within the rite of passage can help adolescents create an internal dialogue for making sense of the environment around them (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The tenth element is stories, myths and legends. The passing down of stories or myths from previous generations can convey values and ethics (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Stories from the past generation coupled with the stories of the adolescents can inform the adolescents of their worldview or paradigm and guide their lives and actions (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 11th element is connection to nature. Blumenkrantz & Goldstein (2010) encourage the use of outdoor activities. In element eleven, they advocate for the use of experiences that can help the adolescent to realize and appreciate their connection to the natural environment (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 12th element is time for reflection. Reflection creates the opportunity to balance our connection and relationships (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). In a rite of passage, the adult should provide the adolescent with intentional time to reflect on his or her personal values, beliefs and actions (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 13th element is connection with ancestral roots. The rite of passage experience should give adolescents the opportunity to learn, value and appreciate those who went before (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This develops appreciation for the values and ethics of their heritage, which is essential to human development (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This is also a significant part of culturally centered rite of passage intervention (Washington, Caldwell, Watson & Lindsey, 2017). Adding cultural aspects to intervention programs encourages positive ethnic and racial identities among youth (Washington et al., 2017).

The 14th element is play. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) define play as a "secular spirituality and a primal, organic way for essential learning, laughter, love and sense of community" (p.44). The rite of passage should also help individuals find their bliss (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The rite of passage should consist of activities adolescents can immerse themselves in and receive joy (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The fifteenth element is non-ordinary states of reality. This element aligns with the liminal concept of finding alternative behaviors. During the adolescent years, individuals may experiment with alcohol, drugs or tobacco as an attempt to satisfy primal curiosity (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This element encourages the use of sanctioned behaviors such as meditation, yoga, dance or sports to assist adolescents in satisfying this need (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 16th element is giving away previous attitudes or behaviors. In order to progress through a rite a passage, one must give up previous senses of behavior or attitude that identified their former status (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Leaving something behind signifies the reality of change within the transition process (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 17th element is service to the larger community. The idea of service is embedded in a community-based rite of passage (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Adolescents are taught the importance of serving the community as they transition into becoming adults in society (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 18th element is change in appearance/ reflect new status. This element signifies the adolescent's new status (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). To recognize his or her transition to this new status, adolescents may be adorned with an external symbol to signify this accomplishment (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This symbol may be a special cloth, badge or adornment (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Initiates can be awarded this external symbol during a public rite of passage (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The 19th element is the demonstration of new competencies and change of status. The adolescent must be given the opportunity with his or her family, school, or community to showcase his or her new skills (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). This also publicly affirm his or her achievement and new status (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

The final element is celebration. The community comes together to celebrate the new status of the adolescent (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The adolescent is recognized and acclaimed for their commitment to the rite of passage (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

Table 2.1

20 Elements of a Rite of Passage	
Characteristic	Description
1. Paradigm shift	Adolescent development is connected to a community development process
2. Community values and ethics	Community discussions to create communal ethics and values for the youth to carry out
3. Relationships	Building relationships with peers and adults
4. Instructor/Mentor	Those who initiate the rite of passage need training and professional development to build personal awareness and resources; instructors need to undergo their own rite of passage
5. Home – community	Establish a safe place for intentional conversations
6. Socially appropriate behavior	Create expectations for socially appropriate behavior
7. Rituals	Detailed sequence of actions
8. Challenges	Experiences to challenge a person physically and emotionally

9. Silence	Opportunity to develop internal dialogue and figure out what is going on around them
10. Ancestral Roots	Opportunity to learn, value and appreciate one's connection to those who went before
11. Stories, myths or legends	Stories from previous generations are passed down to convey morals and cultural values
12. Connection with nature	Experiences are created to help individuals recognize and appreciate their natural environment
13. Time for reflection	Time set aside to reflect on individual values, actions and beliefs
14. Play	Participate in activities to bring the person joy
15. Giving away previous attitudes	The process of giving up some aspect of their former status to convey a reality of change
16. Non-ordinary states of reality	The use of sanctioned behaviors such as meditation, movement or play with sports to experience non-ordinary states of reality
17. Service	Opportunity to serve the community
18. Change in appearance	Adorn the person with an external symbol
19. Opportunities	Demonstrate publicly new acquired skills
20. Celebration	Community celebrates person's new status

(Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010)

Sense of Belonging

The study examines the impact a rite of passage intervention implemented

through a school-based extracurricular activity has on a student's sense of belonging.

Belonging means "The significant affiliations between individuals and their surroundings

such as places and groups" (Arslan, 2018, p.23). To understand the concept of

belonging, one must begin with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow (1943)

categorizes needs into a hierarchy in which a certain need must be met before satisfying

another need. Maslow's (1934) first level of needs are psychological needs.

Psychological needs are the most important and are the biggest motivating factor for any

individual (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Psychological needs include shelter, food, drink,

sleep and clothing (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). If sleep is needed, the individual will

suppress all other needs until that need is met (Burleson & Theron, 2017). In the realm

of education, this can cause a student to act out because the student's first concern is

getting sleep rather than learning (Burleson & Thoron, 2017).

The second need is safety and security (Maslow, 1934). Safety and security can

include any environment the individual comes in contact with including home, school,

church or anywhere else (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). A student experiencing an unsafe

home life due to parents who fight, or a drug addicted sibling may have trouble focusing

at school (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). If the student feels unsafe at school due to

bullying, the student will once again struggle with focusing on school work due to the

need to feel safe (Burleson & Thoron, 2017).

The third need is love and belongingness. Love and belongingness includes the

need for friendship and family relations (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). A sense of

belonging can be developed through participation in clubs, churches or other areas

(Burleson & Thoron, 2017). After the third need is satisfied, the individual will move to

the fourth need of self-esteem. Self-esteem is divided into two groups (Burleson &

Thoron, 2017). First, the individual will desire confidence, strength and achievement

(Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Second, the individual will desire recognition, appreciation

and a reputation of prestige (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). After satisfying both areas of

self-esteem, the individual will foster feelings of strength and adequacy but if the needs are not meet, the individual will feel weak and/or helpless (Burleson & Thoron, 2017).

The first four needs are categorized as deprivation needs where the lack of these needs can produce deficiencies in the individual (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). The final need is self-actualization, which is the desire for self-fulfillment (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Motivated by a desire for personal growth, this need reinforces an individual's desire to becoming everything one envisions for his or her life (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Maslow (1970) describes self-actualization as:

> "It may be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, and other factors. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best they are capable of doing, reminding us of Neitzche's exhortation 'become what thou art.' They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable (p.150)"

For students to fulfill the need of self-actualization, the other needs must be met (Burleson & Thoron, 2017; Maslow, 1934). Maslow's (1934) suggest that educators begin to satisfy a deficiency in order to motivate the growth needs. Given the high number of students who experience a needs deficiency, educators need a working knowledge of the relationship between each need (Noltemeyer, Bus, Patton & Berger, 2012). This knowledge can give educators the prerequisites for creating environments to maximize learning outcomes (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Unfortunately, a high number of students across the United States experience a high level of deficiencies (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Though educators cannot fulfill the needs of every student, they can cultivate

an environment to satisfy student needs within the school environment (Burleson &

Thoron, 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Baumeister and Leary (1995) posit that the need to belong has two

distinct features. The first feature is the need to have frequent and personal interactions

with other persons (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The second feature is the need to

perceive the interaction as an interpersonal bond marked by stability and concern

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995). These two features coupled together gives the individual a

sense of belonging due to the care the other individual shows for his or her welfare

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In these terms, one may recognize that belonging is more

than a need for affiliation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). If the individual engages into

frequent contact with non-supportive or indifferent individuals, this will not satisfy the

individual's need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). On the other side of the

spectrum, in the individual is in a relationship characterized by a strong sense of

attachment or commitment but lacks consistent engagement, it will also be unable to

satisfy that individual's need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Also, being

aware that a bond exist with an individual or a group of individuals yet the relationship

lacks any engagement will also fail to meet the need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary,

1995).

School Belonging. In this study, I will use the rite of passage to help students

navigate the liminal period of adolescence and gain a greater sense of belonging within

the school environment. The concept of belonging reveals four defining attributes (St.

Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017). The first is positive emotions, which includes feelings

of attachment, usefulness, support and pride (St. Amand et al., 2017). The second

attribute is positive relations with peers and teachers. The relationship between peer and teachers must be associated with encouragement, acceptance, respect and warmth (St. Amand et al., 2017). The third attribute is the student's ability to demonstrate energy and a willingness to be involved with a group (St. Amand et al., 2017). The final attribute is harmonization, which encourages the student be able to adapt to any situation or person (St. Amand et al., 2017).

School belonging is associated with the student's subjective perception of being included, accepted, respected, and supported by other individuals within their school environment (Arslan, 2018). School belonging is grounded in the student's perception of value and support received in the school environment (Arslan & Duru, 2016). A student's sense of belonging also stems from acceptance (Arslan & Duru, 2016). As student's search for belonging or membership, they assume that joining will result in strong social bonds with others in the group (St. Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017). The sense of membership influences a student's commitment to school and educational values (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). The feeling of acceptance and value is associated with positive emotions (Arslan & Duru, 2016).

The enhancement of school belonging has contributed to academic achievement, school engagement and investment in extracurricular activities (St. Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017). A lack of school belonging can have an adverse effect. Students lacking a sense of belonging lack educational purpose and have lower levels of academic achievement (Arslan, 2016). Research also identifies the lack of school belonging as a dropout risk factor (St. Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017). The absence of school

belonging can also lead to a negative social outcome such as depression, violence, alcohol and drug use, and loneliness (Arslan & Duru, 2016).

Overview of Extracurricular Activities

During the 19th century, extracurricular activities began to emerge in the United States (Massoni, 2011). Extracurricular activities were to serve as a supplement and extend from the experiences of a formal classroom setting (Millard, 1930). Harvard and Yale hosted the first extracurricular activities known as literacy clubs consisting of Greek letter fraternities and sororities and a variety of debate clubs (Massoni, 2011). Early on, educators were unsure of extracurricular activities because they believed school was reserved only for academics (Millard, 1930). Current educational systems recognize the benefits of extracurricular activities and the positive effects on life skills and academic performance (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Though researchers agree that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive outcome, the cause of the outcome is unclear (Shulruf, 2011). Shulruf (2011) recognized the relationships between extracurricular activities and educational outcomes, but could not attest to evidence of causal effects.

Research is filled with information regarding the benefits of students participating in extracurricular activities. However, some researchers recognized a clear definition of extracurricular activities is needed in order to move forward in further studies. The authors of *Clarifying the Meaning of Extracurricular Activity: A Literature Review of Definitions (2012),* began by examining the root term "curricular" and the prefix "extra". Curricular is defined as of or relating to academics (Bartkus et al, 2012). Extra is defined as more than normal or more than necessary (Bartkus et al, 2012). The conjunction of the

two terms mean outside the normal curriculum or academics of a school. Bartkus et al.

(2012) defined extracurricular activities as "academic or non-academic activities that are

conducted under the auspices of the school but occur outside of normal classroom time

and are not part of the curriculum" (p.698). Additionally, extracurricular activities do not

involve a grade or academic credit and participation is optional on the part of the student"

(Bartkus et al., 2012).

Though activities occur outside of the normal classroom hours, activities can be

closely tied to the academic curriculum. Extracurricular activities can directly or

indirectly align with academic subject areas. A direct extracurricular activity is defined as

"one that is more closely associated with a student's major or curriculum" (Bartkus, et

al., p. 699). An indirect extracurricular activity is defined as "one that is relatively

unrelated to the student's major or curriculum" (Bartkus et al., p.699). A student

interested in a career in science may join the forensic science club, which is considered a

direct extracurricular activity as it directly ties to an academic subject area. The same

student may play an instrument and decide to join the marching band, which is

considered an indirect extracurricular activity as the student is engaged in an activity not

tied into his or her academic subject area. Bartkus et al. (2012) provide a detailed table to

identify the variety of extracurricular activities that researchers examine in academic

studies. For the purpose of this research, Marsh (2002) provides the most concise listing

of extracurricular activities that pertain to secondary education. Marsh (2002) includes

the following activities:

> Varsity athletic teams, Other athletic teams—in or out of school, Cheerleading,
>
> Cheerleaders, pep club, majorettes, Drama/debate, Debating or drama, Music,

Band or orchestra, Dance/chorus, Chorus or dance, Hobby clubs, Hobby clubs such as photography, model building, hot rod, electronics, craft, School subject clubs, School subject matter clubs such as science, history, languages, business, art, Vocational education clubs, Vocational education clubs such as Future Homemakers, Teachers, Farmers of America, DECA, FBLA, or VICA, Community youth clubs, Youth organizations in the community such as scouts, Y, Church activities, Church activities including youth groups, Junior achievement, Junior achievement Publications, School newspaper, magazine, yearbook annual, Student government, Student council, student government, political club, Service clubs, Service clubs or other community service activities, Honor societies, Honorary clubs, such as Beta Club or National Honor Society, Fraternity/sorority (Bartkus et al, p. 696).

As stated earlier, students who participate in extracurricular activities are less likely to dropout of school or engage in criminal behavior (Mahoney, 2000). Participation in extracurricular activities can have a positive effect on students well into adulthood and serve as an academic motivator for students who may not recognize the value of a formal education (Mahoney, 2000). In particular, at-risk students who participate in school athletics made the connection between participating in school-related activities and the value of academic success (Marsh and Kleitman, 2003). Students begin to associate a need to take responsibility of their academics in order to participate in the activities they enjoyed.

Extracurricular activities positively affect behavior revealing that students who participate in extracurricular activities have reduced behavior problems (Massoni, 2011).

Students involved in extracurricular activities are responsible for performing tasks and are rewarded when those task are performed properly (Massoni, 2011). According to Massoni (2011), this reward system builds self-respect, self-confidence and pride in students. Between the hours of three o'clock in the afternoon and seven o'clock in the evening, children are at the greatest risk of committing a crime or a violent act (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). Children who participate in extracurricular activities are under the supervision of an adult and engaged in the activity, decreasing chances of participating in delinquent behavior. Being actively involved can empower students to reject the temptation to join gangs, use drugs or alcohol and commit crimes (Massoni, 2011).

Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more connected to the school. Participating in extracurricular activities builds self-esteem and creates a positive and voluntary connection to the school (Massoni 2011). Participation also positively effects student motivation, teacher perception, and adult relationships within the school (Holloway, 2002; Massoni, 2011). It gives the student an opportunity to meet new people and build stronger relationships (Massoni, 2011).

John Holloway's (2002) article *Extracurricular Activities and Student Motivation* discusses the benefits of extracurricular activities for student motivation in academics. Holloway (2002) suggests that educators utilize extracurricular programs as a means to improve school climate and motivate all students school-wide. The benefits are listed as:

1. Activities appeal to student interest

2. Activities encourage student to interact with peers

3. Activities teach students how to cooperate with others

4. Activities assist in building healthy student-adult relationships

5. Activities provide students with structure and challenges

6. Activities keep students connected to the school

7. Activities increase student interest in the field of science (Holloway, 2002).

Barriers to Extracurricular Activities

Poverty. Poverty is a chronic and severe barrier to graduation. BHS is a high poverty school with 91% of the student body identified as economically disadvantaged. Due to the extreme challenges of living in poverty, a student is more likely to fall victim to the impact (Baydu, Kaplan, & Bayar, 2013). The challenges of poverty include lack of parental and societal support, increased pressure to become a financial contributor for the family, less opportunities to build trust and fewer examples of positive role models (Baydu et al, 2013). Author Eric Jensen (2013) discusses how these challenges often cause students to be less engaged in the school environment. A web of these factors can make it challenging to influence students to participate in school related activities. A student may be unable to meet the financial requirements for club membership, work a part-time job, which causes him or her to miss club meetings, or does not see the benefits of joining a club.

Schools serving students of poverty face unique challenges. Poverty is a chronic and severe barrier to education and can create a disconnect between the school and the student. Due to the extreme hardships of living in poverty, a student is more likely to fall victim to the impact (Baydu, Kaplan, & Bayar, 2013). Children living in poverty often suffer through a variety of challenges making it difficult to focus on academics or the overall school experience. Lack of parental and societal support, increased pressure to

become a financial contributor to the household, less opportunities to build trust in adults and fewer examples of positive role models are a few examples of the challenges students living in poverty face (Baydu et al., 2013). A student facing the challenges may feel out of place in a traditional school environment. As educators adjust to the shift towards non-cognitive development, the effects of poverty must be taken into account.

Poverty plays a significant role in preventing students from successfully completing school. Students of color who live in poverty see a major increase in their chances of dropping out of high school. According to a 2008 report in the *Alliance for Excellent Education*, 50 percent of all students of color, living in poverty, dropout of school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). The article *Facing the Influence of Poverty on Graduation Rates in Public High Schools* (2013) discusses a study the effect poverty had on the graduation rate of public high schools for the 2007 – 2008 school year. The authors obtained poverty data from the Current Population Survey to learn the the percentage of households in poverty and utilized the Common Core Data to obtain the graduation rates for all 50 states in order to answer the research question (Baydu et al., 2013). The quantitative method revealed a statistically significant relationship between poverty and graduation rates (Baydu et al., 2013). The study concluded the graduation rate increased across the United States as the poverty rate decreased (Baydu et al., 2013).

Research shows marriage rates drop significantly among low socio-economic status populations and nearly three-fourths of parents living in poverty are unmarried (Bishaw & Renwick, 2009; Fields, 2004; Jensen, 2013). This statistic puts students at-risk of having an absent or stressed caregiver (Jensen, 2013). Building a positive relationship with a caring adult is important to adolescent development. Children raised

in supportive and caring environments learn how to respond appropriately to everyday situations (Jensen, 2013). Jensen (2013) discusses the effect of a chaotic experience can have or the absence of at least one parent can have on a child's development. This unfortunate experience can effect brain development and cause a child to become insecure and stressed (Jensen, 2013). Students with poor emotional regulations, as early as prekindergarten, can be predicted to have academic difficulties (Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). The absence of emotional regulation can lead to inappropriate school behavior and the student's inability to work well with others (Jensen, 2013).

Schools of poverty face high teacher turnover rates, inadequate funding, large class sizes, and unsafe environments (Jensen, 2013). Individuals living in lower socioeconomic status can envision a negative perspective of the future (Jensen, 2013). A student's mindset plays an important role in motivation towards academic success. Mindset is essential to the student's attitude toward teachers, academic work and future goals (Jensen, 2013). Studies show that students perform better when they believe they have the ability to be academically successful (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016). Students with a fixed mindset may prefer to avoid situations that will test their academic capabilities (Claro et al, 2016). Educators must think creatively on how to combat the barrier of fixed mindset and highlight the dimmed potential in every student.

Poverty and Extracurricular Activities. Poverty can also affect participation in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities can offer students living in poverty the opportunity to participate in a structured, adult-supervised activity. According to research, the number of children left unsupervised after-school increases among low-income, single-parent households (Burkhardt, 2016). The lack of adult supervision can

increase risk behavior among youth (Burkhardt, 2016; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). Ideally, students could participate in an extracurricular activity to combat this issue. However, families identified as economically disadvantaged have barriers preventing students from participating in extracurricular activities (Hoff & Mitchell, 2007). Hoff & Mitchell (2007) explain the cost associated with participation in extracurricular activities with 34 states having schools who charged a fee for participation. Families with higher income are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than families with lower income (Barnett, 2008; Huff & Mitchell, 2007). Parental involvement is also a factor in participation as students need parental support for cost, transportation, and other activities (Huff & Mitchell, 2007).

Students at BHS are not charged an overall fee for participating in extracurricular activities. However, there are fees associated with participation in sports and other organizations who require payment for uniforms or a collection of dues. Students are required to stay after-school to attend meetings and practices and transportation is not provided by the school.

Gangs. Gangs can be a menace to a school's climate. It can fester within the academic and social aspects of a school building. In a study by Alvin Wang (1994) he compared gang versus non gang high school students to measure self-esteem, racial attitude and their self-possessed role models. According to the study, gang members possessed lower levels of self-esteem and named fewer role models than non-gang students. According to the 2010 National Survey of American Attitudes of Substance Abuse XV, "Teens and parents reported that 45% of high school students stated there are gangs, or students who consider themselves to be part of a gang in their schools" (Estrada

et al., 2014, p. 229). Research shows administrators and teachers rank gangs second as

the most significant school safety issue (Estrada, Gilreath, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2014).

By law, youth are required to attend school daily. For schools located in heavy

gang activities, this can make gang culture normal within the school's culture (Estrada et

al., 2014). Gang literature reveals that some students utilize the school environment as a

recruitment office for their gangs (Gass & Laughter, 2015). Gass and Laughter (2015)

provide research on gang identification and recruitment. The researchers identify 3

categories of gang membership: (1) non-gang youth, (2) transient gang members, and (3)

stable gang members. Non-gang youth may have social encounters with gangs at or

around school but are not associated with a gang (Gass & Laugher, 2015). Transient

gang members seesaw between being active gang participants and complete

disassociating from the gang (Gass & Laughter, 2015). Stable gang members are

consistently classified as active gang participants (Gass & Laughter, 2015). Thornberry

(1993) utilizes the 3 levels of gang membership to examine the recruitment patterns. The

three models for how a student can be selected to join a gang are: (1) selection model, (2)

social facilitation model, and (3) enhancement model (Thornberry et al., 1993). For the

selection model, gang members recruit adolescents who have previously engaged in

delinquent behavior (Thornberry et al., 1993). The social facilitation model proposes that

adolescents change their behavior after joining the gang (Thornberry et al., 1993).   New

members who were recruited using this model are heavily influenced by the behavior of

the current gang members (Thornberry et al., 1993). Lastly, the enhancement model

combines the two previous models and offers members increased status and solidarity

(Thornberry et al., 1993). Native American, Latino and black males from low

socioeconomic backgrounds without a stable living arrangement are prime recruitment for gangs (Thornberry et al., 1993).

According to Gass and Laughter (2015) "The main reason students seek out gang membership are to find a sense of belonging within a group, to find acceptance from peers, to combat low self-esteem and negative social interactions" (p. 336). Their need for belonging is similar to all high school students except marginalized such as students of poverty and minority risk, are at a greater risk of finding a negative group to join such as a gang. Schools cannot allow gangs to be the only choice for marginalized students. Gass & Laughter (2015) states "Some participants in this research describe delinquency as an unavoidable choice and see school as a place where their first risk-taking behaviors were enacted. The failure of something better sets students on the school-to-prison pipeline" (p. 337).

Gangs and extracurricular activities. BHS has students who identify themselves as gang members. Gang members with identify with local neighborhood gangs or national gangs such as Bloods, Crips and Gangsta Disciples. Student participation in gangs leads to risk behavior (Gass & Laughter, 2015). This behavior makes it a challenge to recruit and maintain members of school-based clubs and organizations. Students may not meet the behavior requirements to join a club or organization or get involved in a risk behavior, which causes their removal from the club or organization. For this study, the teacher-research will use the focus group interviews to collect data on gang activity and delinquent behavior within the school environment. The student participants will provide their observations of the risk behavior and their perception of how it effects the extracurricular activity programs.

Benjamin High Extracurricular Activities. In 2014, BHS offered one club on campus, the National Honors Society with no evidence of a roster. Currently, the school offers seventeen clubs. BHS also offers participation in eight sports teams, a marching band, a dance line and a cheerleading squad. In total, 20 faculty and staff members serve as either an advisor and/or coach for a club, organization or sport. All clubs and organizations must complete a BHS Club Registration Packet and earn approval from the principal in order to be recognized as an official club or organization at BHS. Sports teams must register with the district athletic department and be in compliance with the state athletic association. To encourage student involvement, BHS host an organization fair during the first few weeks of school to allow all students the opportunity to sign up for all clubs, organizations and sports team. The fair is held in the cafeteria on school day during lunch hours.

Orientation Team. The Orientation Team was registered at BHS in the Spring of 2015. I needed assistance with the Freshmen Orientation initiative and decided to orchestrate an Orientation Team like the one I joined in college. Orientation Team members complete submit an application with the advisor in order to join. Due to the frequency of discipline referrals, the requirements were lowered to recruit more students with the goal of encouraging members to perform better academically and socially. Members must meet the following requirements:

1. Passing 5 out of 7 classes

2. Currently a member of a club, organization or sports team

3. No severe disciplinary referrals within the last year.

Methodologies

Mertler (2014) identifies action research as a cyclical process, which involves gathering information, planning, implementing the action plan, and reflecting. I will implement a rite of passage through a club at BHS. This action research study involves a mixed method approach. I will compare results from student surveys along with field observations and focus group interviews. Prior to the implementation, students will take a survey and participate in focus group interviews to gather information on student perceptions of navigating high school and participation in extracurricular activities. After the intervention, students will take two additional surveys. I will gather information from those surveys to explore student perception the rite of passage activities and their sense of belonging within the school community. I will analyze and reflect on the data to determine an action plan for improving the extracurricular activity programs to better assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence and creating an environment to encourage belonging.

Conclusion

BHS advisors and coaches for extracurricular activities are in search of instructional strategies to assist students in navigating the liminal period of adolescence with the goal of creating opportunities for students to gain a greater sense of belonging. To examine the problem of practice, I reviewed such topics as liminality in adolescence, rite of passage and the need for belonging. The literature suggests a lack of belonging along with an unstructured rite of passage during the liminal period of adolescence can lead students to participate in risk behaviors and create a disconnect with the school values and ethics (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Karianjahi, 2015; Larson & Martin, 2012; St. Amand, et al, 2017). The literature also suggests participation in extracurricular

activities as beneficial to a student's academic experience (Masoni, 2011; Mahoney, 2000). The creation of a rite of passage through a school-based extracurricular activity will be explored in this study, particularly in relation to a student's sense of belonging within the school community. Blumenkrantz & Goldstein (2010) offer 20 elements to implement a rite of passage with youth to increase opportunities to instill a sense of belonging and push them through the liminal period of adolescence. After the implementation, student participants will take surveys to explore their perception of the rite of passage and their perception of belonging within the school community. The findings will be analyzed and interpreted in order to provide implications for improvement and suggestions for future research studies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature suggests the need to guide the adolescent through the turbulence of the liminal period (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Marshall, et al., 2018; Thomassen, 2009). Adolescents must navigate through the liminal period in order to achieve adulthood (Marshall et al., 2018). Participation in a structured rite of passage, orchestrated by a qualified adult, can help the adolescent transition through this period (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Thomassen, 2009). The literature also suggest that adolescents have a need for belonging, especially within the school community (Burleson & Thoron, 2017; Maslow, 1934; St. Amand et al., 2017). Participation in the rite of passage can also satisfy the adolescent's need for belongingness (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Research suggest that a sense of belonging can be developed through participation in extracurricular activities (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Participation in extracurricular activities can build a stronger connection between the adolescent and the school (Massoni, 2011). Furthermore, the literature review suggests that adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities are more empowered to reject the temptation to join gangs, use drugs or alcohol, and commit crimes (Massoni, 2011).

As schools prepare adolescents for adulthood, it is important to offer educators pedagogical tools to help adolescents navigate through liminal periods. The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of a rite of passage to assist students in navigating the

liminal periods of adolescents and move towards a greater sense of belonging within the school community. I will examine the attitudes and perceptions of students who participate in a rite of passage as members of an extracurricular activity at BHS.

Goals

The goal of this study is to provide administrators, teachers and support staff of BHS an instructional strategy to promote positive progression through the liminal period through participation in a rite of passage in an extracurricular activity. The implementation will also create the opportunity for students to gain a sense of belonging within the school community. As the faculty and staff at BHS continues to improve the extracurricular activity programs, a consistent and effective strategy needs to be implemented throughout all clubs and organizations to decrease the chances of students being trapped in the liminal period or being guided by a self-proclaimed leader (Beech, 2011; Thomassen, 2009). As stated in the literature review, the lack of a structured rite of passage can result in students creating their own rite of passage or being trapped in the liminal period, which can create a negative psychological experience (Beech, 2011; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Thomassen, 2009; Washington, et al., 2017). BHS faculty and staff need evidence on the benefits of implementing a rite of passage within an extracurricular activity.

Research Approach

To fulfill this study, I will use an action research approach. Action research works directly with the education professionals who have identified the problem of practice. In action research, the role of the teacher-researcher is to immerse into the educational setting (Efron & Ravid, 2013). At the research site, I oversee all

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extracurricular activities, except for sports.   I advise five clubs: (1) Orientation Team, (2)

Homeroom Reps, (3) Gospel Choir, (4) Student Council, and (5) Fashion Club. I

coordinate with faculty and staff to register all extracurricular activities on campus before

students are allowed to participate. I also work closely with advisors to maintain accurate

data regarding the number of active members in each club or organization and the

number of events hosted per month. I am responsible for submitting a monthly report

detailing the collected data to all administrators and department chairs.

Research Design

I will apply the cyclical process of action research: (1) planning, (2) acting, (3)

developing, and (4) reflecting (Mertler, 2014). The cyclical process is further is itemized

into the following steps:

1. Identify and limit the topic

2. Gather information

3. Review the related literature

4. Develop a research plan

5. Implement the plan and collect the data

6. Analyze the data

7. Develop an action plan

8. Share and communicate the results

9. Reflect on the research process (Mertler, 2014).

Identify and limit the topic. Mertler (2014) describes planning as a time for

brainstorming before the implementation of the intervention. During this phase of the

action research study, I reflected on the areas of the extracurricular activities program that

needed improvement. With the increasing number of discipline referrals for students

involved in extracurricular activities, I recognized the need to disrupt the pattern of

behavior. Through our bi-monthly meetings with department chairs and administrators,

the need to assist students in having a greater connection to the school environment and

disrupt or prevent the students from participating in risk behaviors was presented.

Over the years, I recognized that members of extracurricular activities appeared to

be at a crossroads on whether to follow the ethical values of the school or to engage in

risk behaviors such as joining a gang or using drugs or alcohol. We have several students

who participate in school-based extracurricular activities but still actively or passively

affiliate with local gangs. Faculty and staff can attest to the number of probation officers

who visit the school to check on students who were involved in a crime and are now on

probation. Several of those students are current or former members of extracurricular

activities. The students appeared to have a greater connection to the gang or the sub-

culture of participating in negative behaviors. Knowing this, I was interested in

researching how to increase student's sense of belonging to our school. I wanted to

search for instructional strategies to bring students closer to the school community.

Gathering information and a review of the related literature. After

identifying a topic of interest, I researched the topic to gain further insight. Due to my

role as an advisor, I also researched ways extracurricular activities could promote a sense

of belonging. This would provide more evidence, not only to the faculty and staff, but

outside stakeholders on the importance of extracurricular activities in cultivating the

social development of students.

The research highlighted a need for belonging, particularly school belonging, among adolescents (Arslan, 2018; Arslan & Duru, 2016; Burleson & Thoron, 2017; Maslow, 1934). School belonging is associated with the adolescent's subjective perception of being included, respected, and supported within the school community and influences the adolescent's commitment to school and educational values (Arslan, 2018; Arslan & Duru, 2016). According to the research, participation in extracurricular activities can satisfy the need for belonging (Burleson & Thoron, 2017). Adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities were less likely to participate in risk behavior (Mahoney, 2000; Marsh and Kleitman, 2003; Massoni, 2011).

My research continued with a search for strategies to use within extracurricular activities to lead students towards a greater sense of belonging within the school community. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2010) concept of providing adolescents with a structured rite of passage appeared to fit the instructional frame of extracurricular activities. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) describe the rite of passage as "one of the most powerful ecological tools available to community psychologist" (p. 42). Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) advocate the use of rites of passage as a conceptual framework for positive youth and community development. The use of rites of passage as a conceptual framework can lead students through the liminal period of adolescence, instill cultural values, and provide opportunities for the adolescent to incorporate these new values into their lives (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

Research of rites of passage introduced me to the theory of liminality. Liminality is a concept elaborated on by Arnold Van Gennep and later continued by Victor Turner (Atkinson & Robinson, 2012). Van Gennep (1960) describes three phases of a rite of

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passage: (1) separation, (2) transition, and (3) incorporation. The liminal period occurs during the transition phase (Van Gennep, 1960). During this period, the individual leaves what he or she knows of themselves behind and enters a space of confusion and uncertainty (Turner, 1934). Turner (1934) coined this space as "betwist and between".

I recognized the space of liminality reflected a student's entrance into high school. Students enter high school independently in search of self-identity and belonging (Marshall et al., 2018). It is from this understanding, I was able to apply the theoretical framework of liminality to build a conceptual framework regarding a rite of passage and a sense of belonging. The literature review helped to identify the problem of practice as: Instructional strategies used in extracurricular activities rarely assist in navigating students through the liminal period of adolescence.

Develop a research plan. After conducting the literature review and identifying the problem of practice, the teacher-researcher should identify the research question (Mertler, 2014). The research question guiding this study is: As students struggle to navigate the liminal state of adolescence, can students can a stronger sense of belonging to the school community by participating in an extracurricular organization that institutes elements of a rite of passage and culminates a symbolic ritual?

Overview of Information Needed. For this research study, I will need perceptual information (see Table 3.1). The perceptual information from participants is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of how students view the culture at BHS, the extracurricular activities programs and their membership experience with an extracurricular activity. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012):

"Perceptual information relies, to a great extent, on interviews to uncover participants descriptions of their experiences related to such things as how experiences influenced decisions made, whether participants had a change of mind or a shift in attitude, whether they described more of a constancy of purpose, what elements relative to their objectives participants perceived as important and to what extent those objectives were met" (p. 136).

I will utilize focus group interviews and observations to collect perceptual information.

Table 3.1

Types of Information Needed		
Type of Information	**What the Researcher Needs**	**Method**
Perceptual	Students attitudes and perception of the school culture at BHS, the extracurricular programs and membership experience with the Orientation Team	Focus group interviews Observations Surveys

This research study will use a mixed method design. Creswell (2014) describes six mixed-methods design strategies: (1) sequential explanatory, (2) sequential exploratory, (3) sequential transformative, (4) concurrent triangulation, (5) concurrent

nested, and (6) concurrent transformative. For this action research study, I will use the concurrent triangulation method. The concurrent triangulation method is characterized by using two or more methods to conform or cross-validate findings within the study (Creswell, 2014). Concurrent triangulation is useful in expanding quantitative data by collecting extensive qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). Data in concurrent triangulation is collected concurrently and analyzed separated (Creswell, 2014). This method will allow me to concurrently triangulate the quantitative findings of the survey while analyzing the qualitative findings of the focus group interviews and field observations.

Data will be collected through three surveys, focus group interviews and field observations. All club members will be provided a Parent Consent Form (See Appendix E). Students who return the form signed by a parent or guardian will be allowed to participate in the study. Members of the club will complete the first survey to access the student's perception of participation in extracurricular activities at BHS. The survey will be created electronically using Google Forms and titled the Extracurricular Activities Survey (See Appendix A). The survey will be influenced by the "Student Life Survey: Student Involvement and Belonging" by the Ohio State University Office of Student Life (Ohio State University, 2015). This survey asks students to answer question regarding their experience as a student who participates in extracurricular activities within the Ohio State University campus (Ohio State University, 2015). This survey investigates the student's sense of belonging as participants in extracurricular activities (Ohio State University, 2015). Using questions from this survey will give insight on how the student participants view participation in extracurricular activities in relation to their connection to Benjamin High. Questions will be presented on the survey with a Likert scale. The

results will be converted to numeric values: Strongly Agree (SA) = five points, Agree (A) = four points, Neutral (N) = three points, Disagree (DA) = two points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = one point. The numeric value will provide the average response for each question.

Next, students will participate in focus group interviews. Focus group interviews are used to help the teacher-researcher gather in-depth information on the participants perceptions and attitudes relating to the concept being observed (Mertler, 2014). The focus group interviews will provide in-depth information on the students' perceptions of navigating through high school and participating in extracurricular activities. Students will be placed in groups of four – five per session. They will be grouped based on their elective course to ensure students are not pulled during their core classes. This is a common practice at BHS when having to meet with students during the school day. The interviews will take place in the Student Activities Room. Each interview will be recorded, and I will take notes. As students enter the room, they will be asked to sign-in to keep track of who participated in which group. I will read the focus group questions to each group (See Appendix D). Interview questions will be semi-structured to encourage a more organic discussion. A total of five focus groups will be interviewed. Students will be asked about the culture of the school, the daily experiences in the classrooms and common areas, experiences with participating in extracurricular activities and experiences with membership in the club.

After completing the Extracurricular Activities survey and the focus group interviews, treatment will be implemented within the club. In traditional research, the primary goal is to examine and explain educational issues (Mertler, 2014). Action

research takes a different approach. Action research provides the teacher-researcher the opportunity to apply an intentional solution to an educational situation with the focus on pursuing further action or changing a practice (Mertler, 2014). While researchers conducting traditional research are removed from the educational issues, action research works directly and within the body of education professionals who have identified the problem of practice (Mertler, 2014). Action research focuses on a specific problem in the classroom or school and helps to decide how to improve a practice (Mertler, 2014).

The research design is founded on the research question: As students struggle to navigate the liminal state of adolescence, can students can a stronger sense of belonging to the school community by participating in an extracurricular organization that institutes elements of a rite of passage and culminates a symbolic ritual?

Arnold Van Gennep defines a rite of passage as "rite of place, state, social position and age" (Turner, 1969, p. 94). He asserts that all rite of passage have three phases: (1) separation, (2) margin, and (3) aggregations (Van Gennep, 1960). Liminality, a concept within the rite of passage, was elaborated on by Arnold Van Gennep and later continued by Victor Turner (Atkinson & Robinson, 2012). As Van Gennep (1977) described, "I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world post liminal rites" (p.22). The high school experience is similar to the liminal period where students enter with a clean slate but are in need of a sense of belonging and identity.

The conceptual framework of Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2010) rite of passage and my own experience with implementing and advising extracurricular

activities will be used to develop the rite of passage. As the research indicates, there are

20 elements of the rites of passage (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The combination

of these elements contributes to "an effective, contemporary community-based rite of

passage" to instill a sense of belonging with student participants (Blumenkrantz &

Goldstein, 2010, p. 43). I will develop activities aligned with each element for the

students to participate in (See Table 3.2). During the implementation, I will take field

observations of the student participants. This observation will be considered a participant

observation as I will be a member of the setting and instructing the students through the

activities (Creswell, 2014). Observations will be semi-structured to allow for data to

emerge through the field notes (Creswell, 2014). I will observe how students react during

activities individually and collectively. During the observation process, I will use

Silverman's (2008) observation to guide me.

    1. What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?

    2. How exactly do they do this?

    3. How do people characterize and understand what is going on?

    4. What assumptions do they make?

    5. Analytic questions: What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these

    notes? Why did I include them?

After the implementation of the treatment, student participants will complete the

second survey. The second survey will be titled after the name of the club chosen to

participate in this study. I will create the survey to examine student perception of the

activities provided through the rite of passage process implemented through the club.

Each question will align to one or more of the 20 elements provided by Blumenkrantz &

Goldstein (2010). Questions will be presented on the survey with a Likert scale. The results will be converted to numeric values: Strongly Agree (SA) = five points, Agree (A) = four points, Neutral (N) = three points, Disagree (DA) = two points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = one point. The numeric value will provide the average response for each question.

Lastly, students will complete the third survey titled the Sense of Belonging Survey (See Appendix C). This survey will utilize the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale to measure the student participants' sense of belonging within the school community (Goodenow, 1993). The survey will be imputed into Google Forms and administered online. Previous investigations support the statistical reliability and validity of the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (Carson, 2014). The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale measures three specific factors: (1) belonging, (2) rejection, and (3) acceptance (Carson, 2014).

Students will complete all surveys during first period on designated days. Each student will receive a pass to report to the computer lab in BHS media center. I will assign each student to a computer and read the survey instructions. Students will be instructed to wait quietly until all students completed the survey. Responses will be submitted immediately after students click the submit button. Any students who turned in the consent form but were unable to complete the survey on that day, will be given a make-up date.

Implementation of the plan and collection of the data. To implement the plan and collect the data, I must determine the following: (1) student participants, (2) activities

for the rite of passage, and (3) time frame. Before selecting the student participants, I will provide background information on the research site.

Research Site. Benjamin High School is in an urban school district with ten high schools, nine middle schools, thirty-four elementary schools and three special schools. Benjamin High is a Title 1 school with 97% of the population identified as economically disadvantaged and 91% identified as minority students. Once labeled as the lowest achieving school in the county, BHS has seen improvements in its graduation rate from 35.9% in 2014 to the current rate of 74%. BHS suffers under the burdens of poverty-stricken families, low parental involvement, and low student motivation. BHS averages close to 1500 disciplinary referrals a year.

It is important to seek prior approval from administrators before performing any research or data collection involving students (Efron & Ravid, 2013). I will seek approval from the Institutional Review Board before beginning the research study. I will also draft a letter to the principal to ensure the school's willingness to participate in the study. After receiving approval from the principal, I will complete the procedures for research packet with the school district and seek approval from the district level.

Student participants. After reviewing the clubs, I decided to implement the rite of passage with the student members of the Orientation Team. This group meets every summer to participate in a summer training, which provides time to implement the 20 elements for the rite of passage process. The Orientation Team consists of students who assist with freshman orientation and campus tours for new students or visitors. The Orientation Team also assist with organizing school-wide activities such as homecomings, pep rallies, and student incentive celebrations.

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To recruit members for the Orientation Team, I created a flyer to distribute to all homeroom teachers and for display around the school announcing the opportunity to join the Orientation Team. Flyers were also displayed on the mounted televisions in the hallways of the school. Students could pick up applications in the Student Activities Room during lunch or after school. To be eligible for membership, students were required to pass five out of seven classes, be a member of at least one club or sports team and no severe discipline referrals (i.e. physical assault, pending tribunal cases, etc.). After reviewing the applications, students who met the eligibility requirements were selected to join. They were notified with an acceptance letter and details on the first meeting. For returning members, their eligibility was reviewed in order to continue their membership with the Orientation Team. If they were still eligible, they received a letter with information on the details for the first meetings.

Only students who have a consent form signed by a parent or guardian will be allowed to participate in the study. Currently, the Orientation Team has 25 members.

Treatment. The treatment for this research study is the implementation of a rite of passage within a school-based extracurricular activity. This study will use Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2010) 20 elements for an effective rite of passage to guide the process. The rite of passage process will begin once each student is accepted into the Orientation Team and end with the celebration of their new status.

The first element is the paradigm shift, which connects adolescent development to a community development process (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). For full membership into the Orientation Team, students must participate in the Summer Leadership Training. The Summer Leadership training will require students to work as a

team to complete activities and learn of their expectations and role as members of the Orientation Team.

The second element is community values and ethics (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The BHS school community has four school-wide behavior expectations: (1) Be punctual, (2) Act appropriately, (3) Respect self and others, and (4) Keep it clean. The members of the Orientation Team will be required to memorize and recite the school-wide expectations. The members will also be required to teach these expectations to the freshman class during Freshman Orientation and transfer students during their initial tour of the campus.

The third element is relationships aimed towards building relationships with peers and adults (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). After students apply for the Orientation Team and are accepted to participate in training, they will be given a list of current and new members. Each member will be required to find the persons listed, introduce themselves and ask them for their cell phone numbers. Students will be encouraged to use the numbers to pass important information for events and to check on members who were late or absent from activities. Also, during summer the training, students will be randomly separated into groups. The groups will work together in preparation for Freshman Orientation. The groups will be required to stay together during the two-day orientation and work closely to assist new students and the orientation staff.

The fourth element is "you can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself" (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010, p. 44). To display my own initiatory experience with the Orientation Team, I will describe my experience as an Orientation Team member and the current practices of other Orientation Teams.

The fifth element is home – community, which establishes a safe place for intentional conversations (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). During the training, students will be given the opportunity to work in their designated groups to discuss the areas within the school community in need of improvement. Students will be encouraged to speak openly and confidently without the fear of being chastised or silenced for voicing their opinions. Each group will be given the opportunity to present their areas of improvement as a collective group, the Orientation Team members will develop potential solutions for each area to encourage an increased value in the school community.

The sixth element is socially appropriate behavior where students are taught expectations for behavior (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Students will be provided the expectations of an Orientation Team member. The expectations will be summarized into the top five expectations and taught as a chant by the 2016 members of the Orientation Team: (1) Be a family, (2) Stay motivated to be successful, (3) Be responsible, (4) Have superior school spirit, and (5) Be a better bulldog. The chant will be recited randomly throughout summer training for memorization and to embed the expectation into the student's learning.

The seventh element is rituals or a detailed sequence of actions (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The Orientation Team will participate in 3 rituals: (1) New Membership Induction, (2) OT Chant & Line Up, and (3) 1960 Drill. The New Member Induction will take place after all applications have been reviewed and potential members have been chosen. After the interested students have completed the application process, they will be asked to meet with the current Orientation Team members and the advisor after school. Current members will stand in front of the new members to welcome them

into the club and recite the Orientation Team oath with the new members. For the new members, this will mark their journey to earning their official Orientation Team paraphernalia and reaching a new social status by completing the rite of passage process.

The OT chant and Line Up is the Orientation Team's version of calling a meeting to order. A designee will be instructed to yell the OT chant and the other members will yell the appropriate response. The OT chant is O-O-O-O-T with the members responding O-O-O-O-T in a specific rhythmic pattern. As the chant continues, Orientation Team members will move quickly to their designated lines. Students will line up in height order. Each line will be created based upon the year the student became a member of the Orientation Team. During line up, members will be required to recite the 5 expectations and the school history. After recitation, members must remain lent until further instructions are provided by the advisor.

The 1960 Drill is titled after the founding year of the school – 1960. For the 1960 Drill students will be required to create two list. On the first list, each student writes nine personal or academic goals. On the second list, each student writes 6 inspirational quotes provided by the advisor. The students will be required to keep both list with them at all times. Whenever the advisor calls for a 1960 Drill, the students must present both sheets of paper and discuss as a group how they are making steps towards completing their goals or share the goals they have accomplished.

The eighth element is challenges or experiences to challenge a person physically and emotionally (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Orientation Team members will participate in the Alma Mater walk as their group challenge. During training, members will break into lines and memorize BHS' alma mater. At the direction of the advisor, they

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will form one line and begin the Alma Mater walk down each hallway, through the common areas, around the outside of the school and end at the Student Activities Room. The students will continuously recite the alma mater as they walk. If any person messes up, the members and the advisor will perform 25 jumping jacks. Though physically challenging, the students must preserve through the walk as a team.

The ninth element is silence, which gives a person the opportunity to develop internal dialogue and figure out what is going on around them (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Orientation members will begin this element by turning off their cell phones and putting them away at the start of each training or meeting. Students will be allowed to use their cellphone during lunch or after the meeting is over. Also, students will remain silent while in OT line up, unless the chant, school history or alma mater is being recited.

The tenth element is stories, myths and legends. The mascot for BHS is a husky. The first members of the BHS Orientation Team created a story tied to the husky statues throughout the school building. They named each husky statue and created a reason behind each name. The new members of the Orientation Team will learn about this story and pass it on to future members.

The 11th element is connection to nature (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The school environment constitutes as the natural environment. Through the rite of passage process the goal is to help students gain a greater connection and sense of belonging to the school community.

The 12th element is time for reflection (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014). During the summer training, members will participate in a discussion on ways to improve

the school environment. Chart paper will be placed throughout the classroom. Each paper will have a student concern written on it based on the findings from the focus group interview. In small groups, students will be instructed to reflect on each concern and identify possible solutions. Each group will present their findings to the team.

The 13th element is ancestral roots in which the person is given the opportunity to learn, value and appreciate one's connection to those who went before (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Orientation Team members will be required to learn the school history, alma mater, motto, names and stories of important alum and any special traditions or celebrations. Graduates from BHS, who were members of the Orientation Team will be asked to come in and help during this session of training.

The 14th and 15th elements will be used concurrently. The 14th element is play in which a person participates in activities to bring joy and the 15th element is non-ordinary states of reality (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). For the 15th element, the use of sanctioned behaviors such as movement and dance are used to create non-ordinary states of reality (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014). Orientation Team members will participate in fun activities through music and dance. Members will learn dance routines and school chants during training and display the routines and chants throughout the school year (i.e. Freshman Orientation, pep rallies, etc.).

The 16th element is giving away previous attitudes or behaviors (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014). After discussing the ways to improve school culture, members will be asked to list what behaviors they must change in order to support the improvement. This list will symbolize the previous attitude and behavior each member will put away in order to progress through the rite of passage and reach a higher status.

The 17th element is service where the person is provided the opportunity to serve the community (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Orientation Team members will serve as tour guides for new students and special guest at BHS. When a new student enrolls and receives his or her schedule, the guidance department will call for an Orientation Team member to show the student to his or her classes and the common areas of the school. The Orientation Team will serve as peer mentors for that students who need assistance. The administrators will also request the services of an Orientation Team member when special guest visit such as the state superintendent, school board members or any other public officials. Orientation Team members will also assist in organizing school-wide, school pride initiatives throughout the school year (i.e. pep rallies, homecoming, spirit week, etc.)

The 18th element is change in appearance where the person is adorned with an external symbol (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). After completing the interview process, the initiation ceremony and training, Orientation Team members will receive their official Orientation Team shirt. No one in the school can wear the Orientation Team shirt except team members. Every year a new shirt is created commemorating the theme for the school year. Student input is used in selecting the theme.

The 19th element is opportunities where the person publicly demonstrates new acquired skills (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). Orientation Team members will be given the opportunity to display their new skills during freshman orientation and throughout the school year. During freshman orientation, members will recite the school history, the school motto and the five expectations for the entire freshman class and their

parents. Members will also be asked to display their new skills during peer mentor sessions and campus tours.

The last element is celebration where the community celebrates the person's new status (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The Orientation Team will celebrate at the end of the rite of passage process with a pizza party. The students will also earn a certificate and award at the end of the school year at Club Awards Night. At BHS, the students who participate in a club or organization are invited to attend Club Awards Night to honor their service and school pride.

Table 3.2

Rite of Passage Intervention		
Characteristic	**Description**	**Activity**
1. Paradigm shift	Adolescent development is connected to a community development process	Members participate in OT training as a group
2. Community values and ethics	Community expectations for behavior and values	Members will memorize and recite the school-wide expectations known as "BARK"
3. Relationships	Building relationships with peers and adults	Connection through training – small groups
4. You can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself	Initiators have a knowledge of the rite of passage through his or her personal experiences	Members will learn of the advisors past experience as a Orientation Team Member
5. Home – community	Establish a safe place for intentional conversations	Providing a safe space for members to offer suggestions for school improvement

6. Socially appropriate behavior	Create expectations for socially appropriate behavior	Members learn the expectations and specifically the 5 expectations
7. Rituals	Detailed sequence of actions	(1) New Membership Induction (2) OT Chant & Line Up (3) 1960 Drill
8. Challenges	Experiences to challenge a person physically and emotionally	Alma Mater Walk
9. Silence	Opportunity to develop internal dialogue and figure out what is going on around them	Members remain silent during OT Line Up; No cell phone usage
10. Stories, myths and legends	Stories from previous generations are passed down to convey morals and cultural values	
11. Connection with nature	Experiences are created to help individuals recognize and appreciate their natural environment	
12. Time for reflection	Time set aside to reflect on individual values, actions and beliefs	
13. Ancestral Roots	Opportunity to learn, value and appreciate one's connection to those who went before	Members learn the school history, school motto, school traditions and the names of important alums
14. Play	Participate in activities to bring the person joy	Members learn fun dance routines and chants
15. Non-ordinary states of reality	The use of sanctioned behaviors such as meditation, movement or play with sports to	Members learn fun dance routines and chants

	experience non-ordinary states of reality	
16. Giving away one's previous attitudes and behaviors	The process of giving up some aspect of their former status to convey a reality of change	Members will list attitudes and behaviors they must change to improve themselves and promote positivity within the school culture community
17. Service	Opportunity to serve the community	Members serve as campus tour guides and peer mentors
18. Change in appearance	Adorn the person with an external symbol	Members earn their official OT shirt
19. Opportunities	Demonstrate publicly new acquired skills	Members can recite their knowledge to the entering freshmen and their parents at Freshman Orientation
20. Celebration	Community celebrates person's new status	Pizza Party and end of the year award at Club Awards Night

(Bluemenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010)

Analyze the data. As stated, the data will be analyzed through concurrent triangulation (Creswall, 2014). The findings from the surveys, focus group interviews and observations will be analyzed to determine the student's perception of participation in extracurricular activities, the student's perception of the rite of passage intervention and the student's perception of belonging. Implications will be developed based upon the findings from the data.

Develop an action plan. The development of the action plan is used to determine what revisions or improvements need to be made for future research (Creswall, 2014). For this study, I will use this period of reflection to answer the following questions: (1)

what will I do differently within the extracurricular activities program as a result of this study, (2) how will I share this study so that the results will be useful to others, and (3) what future studies can be implemented?

Share and communicate the results. As support staff and department chairs, we meet twice a month to review the school improvement plan and discuss crucial areas of development within the campus. At the end of the study, I will initially share my findings with the leadership team at BHS. From there, I will ask the administrators if a meeting with all coaches and advisors can be organized. If so, I will share the findings with this group and open the presentation for comments or concerns. BHS does not have a team of advisors and/or coaches. This presentation could present the opportunity to form this team. This team could use the findings from this study to investigate ways to assist our students through liminality by offering rites of passage in other clubs, organizations and sports.

I will continue to share the findings of the study with entities outside of BHS. Through conference presentations and visits to other high schools, the findings could be useful for other schools across the country.

Reflect on the research process. The reflection process encourages the teacher-researcher to review the study, determine its effectiveness, and decide on revisions for future implementation (Mertler, 2014). I will compile the comments and concerns from the advisors and/or coaches along with my own observations to determine future improvements on the implementation process. I will also utilize the Orientation Team survey to review activities that may need improvement versus activities that appear to be more effective.

Ethical Considerations

The primary responsibility of I is to maintain ethical standards throughout the action research (Mertler, 2014). This action research does not pose any threat to the student participants. The names of the student participants will not be revealed. All participants will remain anonymous.

Extracurricular activities are defined as school-related academic or nonacademic activities that take place outside of classroom instruction time (Bartkus et al., 2012). Most importantly, participation in extracurricular activities is optional (Bartkus et al., 2012). Participants will be allowed to participate in the extracurricular activities on a voluntary basis. Each participant and the families of the participants will receive an Parent Consent Form that details the action research process and the level of involvement for the participants. The principle of benefit is to acquire knowledge about human beings and the educational process and in return benefit the individual or a group of people (Mertler, 2014). It will be a priority to emphasize the principle of beneficence of this action research for the student participants and the overall school community.

Limitations

One cannot assume the findings of this study can be generalized for all education systems. This study will be conducted in one high school in an urban school district. Future studies may take place in a different context with varying methodologies. The goal is for other researchers to utilize the data and findings from this study to further determine how to align extracurricular activities with student development and research-based practices.

Action research gives insight to a particular situation and does not deliver generalized data (Holly, Arhar & Kasten, 2005). The following limitations and assumptions will be noted for this study: (1) student participants will give self-reported answers on a closed-ended survey and it is assumed each participant will report an honest answer, and (2) time limitation as this study will be conducted during an 8-week period within one school year. The teacher researcher will have a deep knowledge of the student participants and the school environment as it is her current place of employment. She will have knowledge of their likes, dislikes, backgrounds and personal situations (Holly et al., 2005).

Conclusion

Chapter three has detailed the research design for this study. The study will use a mixed method design to determine the impact a rite of passage intervention has on a student's sense of belonging within the school community. The study will occur from the end of the Spring 2018 semester to the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester. The beginning of the rite of passage will be signified by the acceptance of members into the Orientation Team. The earning of the Orientation Team shirt and pizza party celebration will signify the end of the rite of passage. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's 20 elements will be used to guide the process of a rite of passage. The findings from this study will provide information to create an action plan for further implementation with the goal of creating a sense of belonging for more students at BHS and assisting students through the liminal period of adolescence.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS FROM THE DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research study was to explore the impact a rite of passage implemented through a school-based extracurricular activity has on assisting students through the liminal period of adolescence and moving towards a greater sense of belonging within the school community. The goal was to offer the administrators, teachers and support staff at Benjamin High School an instructional strategy to promote positive progression through the liminal period by introducing a rite of passage in an extracurricular activity.

After reviewing the literature, I recognized a need to offer students a direction during the `liminal period of adolescence. The research identified the liminal period of adolescence as turbulent, unclear, and confusing (Beech, 2011; Marshall et al., 2018; Turner, 1934). During this period, the adolescent is in search of a way out in order to return to society with a new status (Marshall et al., 2018). Educators can assist in leading students through this period. Instructing students through a rite of passage can help students recognize this liminal space and transition them to a new status towards adulthood (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). As research highlights the benefits of adolescent participation in extracurricular activities, the addition of a rite of passage as an instructional strategy for extracurricular activities could prove beneficial in transitioning adolescents to a new status towards adulthood. The addition of the rite of passage can also provide students with a greater sense of belonging within the school community.

For this research study, I implemented a rite of passage intervention into an existing extracurricular activity at BHS: The BHS Orientation Team. After conducting school-wide advertisements for applications, students who applied to be on the Orientation Team and met the eligibility requirements were accepted for membership during the spring semester of 2018. At this point students began the process of a rite of passage. Members were provided Parent Consent Forms to participate in the study (See Appendix E). Members who returned a Parent Consent Form signed by a parent and/or guardian participated in the study.

Student participants completed the Extracurricular Activities Survey to review student perception of participating in extracurricular activities at BHS (See Appendix A). After completing the Extracurricular Activities Survey, students were randomly selected and divided into small groups to complete focus group interviews. Each focus group had four – five student participants. Focus group questions were asked in a semi-structured format to encourage an organic discussion to gain in-depth information on students' perceptions of navigating high school and their perceptions of participating in extracurricular activities (See Appendix D). At the start of the interviews, I informed students that I would record their responses and take notes. I reminded students that their responses would be anonymous. I also encouraged to be honest and respect the opinions of others within the group.

Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2014) 20 elements were embedded within the Orientation Team's training and activities to guide the process of the rite of passage. After completing the activities aligned with the 20 element, the ending of the rite of passage process was signified by distributing official Orientation Team shirts and

celebrating with food and drinks. For further data collection, students completed two online surveys: (1) Orientation Team Survey (See Appendix B), and (2) Sense of Belonging Survey (See Appendix C). The Orientation Team survey was used to review the students' perceptions of participating in the rite of passage process. The Sense of Belonging survey was adopted from the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale and used to review students' perceptions of belonging within the school community (Goodenow, 1993).

Research Question

The research question for this study is as follows: As students struggle to navigate the liminal state of adolescence, can students can a stronger sense of belonging to the school community by participating in an extracurricular organization that institutes elements of a rite of passage and culminates a symbolic ritual?

Findings of Study

The information gained through an action research study can be separated into major themes (Mertler, 2014). The findings from this study will be separated into three major themes: (1) student perception of navigating high school, (2) student perception of participating.in a rite of passage process, and (3) student perception of belonging within the school community. The results are as follows.

Perception of Navigating High School. Aligned with Van Gennep's (1960) theory of liminality, students discussed the clean slate each freshman has when they enter high school. Some students felt that majority of the student body were trying to fit in. A male student stated, "Everybody wanna be bad. Everybody wanna be a thug. Everybody wanna prove themselves."

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"I feel like a lot of people are trying to adapt. They come to high school thinking

'what is it I have to do to make it?' Then when you come here and you see people

fighting. You see the people you came from middle school with hitting. You see

people joining gangs. And now you feel like, 'all my friends are doing it, so let

me do it so I don't feel left out...it's like you're a white board when you come

into high school and you are just looking for anybody to draw something on you."

This uncertainty reflects the research regarding liminality during the years of adolescence

(Marshall et al., 2018; Thomassen, 2009). Students were uncertain of their social identity

and therefore in search of where they fit in at the school. The need to fit in speaks to the

research on belonging. The students feel that the students are in search of finding where

they belong within the school community. In association with school belonging, students

are in search of being included, accepted, respected, valued and supported by other

individuals within their school environment (Arslan, 2018; Arslan & Duru, 2016).

Research in the literature review asserted that adolescents who are navigating the

liminal period without the guidance of a caring adult are in jeopardy of participating in

gangs or other risk behaviors (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014; Thomassen, 2009).

Students may allow a self-proclaimed leader such as a gang member or a well-known

delinquent peer to lead them toward a negative environment (Thomasse, 2009). Students

were asked to detail the overall interactions in the classrooms and common areas of the

school. The student responses gave insight on the pressures the students face at BHS in

resisting participation in risk behavior. One student described the school culture as

"intense". He explained,

I feel like my vibe here is more strained because at any moment anything can

happen. You can feel that when you're sitting in the classroom. You can feel that

when you're walking in the hallway. And sometimes it is a distraction. Well not

sometimes but pretty much all the time because you're trying to go to class and a

fight break out, it's four minutes long, everybody is huddled around and going to

it and you are just trying to get through the crowd and get to class. Now you are

late. You can't say you were trying to get pass the fight 'cause teachers don't

care about that.

Students described their school as one of the top "ratchet" schools in the county, a

reputation they believe the community placed on the school years ago after a viral video of

a riot in the school cafeteria made national news. The students described "ratchet" as

"loud, ghetto, and fights". Students discussed the normality of the behavior and how

majority of the students were comfortable with the tense environment after having similar

experiences in middle school.

They described seeing multiple fights and often smelling marijuana in the

classrooms and hallways. Each student in every group knew at least one peer who either

smoked or sold marijuana. The student descriptions of the culture at BHS reveals the easy

access to of gangs and other risk behaviors. According to the students, the opportunity to

join a gang or engage in harmful behaviors is prevalent within the school environment. It

appears there are students who lack a structured rite of passage and are creating their own

rite of passage based on the values of their peers. The lack of a structure rite of passage

can elevate other rites of passage such as drug use, teen pregnancy, gang activity and

similar behaviors (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2014).

Perception of Belonging within the School Community. With a tense environment, the students appeared to find solace by participating in extracurricular activities. All 24 students feel being a member of a club, organization, or sport helps them to stay on track. A student described the benefits by using another member as an example, "The extracurricular has to be something you love to do. For example, he [pointing to another student] likes basketball so he knows if he has bad grades, he will get in trouble and they probably won't let him play. So it keeps him on track at school and with behavior." Students cited the following as benefits: (1) helps students to stay on track, (2) prevents students from getting into trouble you, (3) helps students meet new people, (4) creates well-rounded student, (5) increases school pride, and (6) prepares students for college. The student reflections on the benefits of participating in extracurricular activities ties to the third attribute of school belonging (St. Amand et al., 2017). The students demonstrate an energy and a willingness to be involved with a group (St. Amand et al., 2017). It appears the students have made a connection between participation in extracurricular activities and achievement. According to research, the enhancement of school belonging has contributed to academic achievement, school engagement and investment in extracurricular activities (St. Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017). The students seem to be more invested in participating in extracurricular activities because it has proven to be beneficial for their school career.

During the focus group interviews, students agreed the school lacked consistent school pride. One student stated "There is no superior school spirit. They only want to say they go to BHS during homecoming week." Another student stated, "There is none. There is no school spirit. If it's a popular person then everyone is going to follow along.

It's like follow the leader." Several expressed disappointments with the student body after the Orientation Team and Student Council attempted to offer spirit-based activities but frequently received negative critiques from peers. While student participants expressed that the student body was not supportive at school events, they did believe students involved in extracurricular activities exhibited school pride depending on the club, organization or sport. One student explained, "We tend to have more pride in what we do because we do more with the school. If you just come to school every day just to get an education, then leave at 2:30 to ride the bus then you're not going to care." Again, it appears that the students feel they have a stronger connection to the school due to their participation in extracurricular activities. Similar to the research, a sense of school belonging in being fostered through the participation in the clubs, organizations and sports teams (St. Amand et al., 2017). Also, a sense of pride is developed once the student gains a sense of school belonging (St. Amand et al., 2017). This is reflected in the confidence and pride students displayed during the school-wide activities (i.e. homecoming, spirit week, service projects, etc.) they participate in and the joy it brings.

Students also discussed how they search for other students to participate in clubs and organizations. Students described their recruitment in the classrooms and common areas. According to the student, they look for potential within fellow peers to gage whether or not the student can be a benefit to joining an extracurricular activity at BHS. This concept runs parallel to the gang members who also use the school environment as a recruiting ground (Gass & Laughter, 2015). The students' recruitment style reflects the selection model of gang recruitment (Gass & Laughter, 2015). The selection model looks

for the potential of an initiate based on the characteristics and actions of the initiate (Gass & Laughter, 2015).

Along with the information gathered from the focus group interviews, student perceptions on participating in extracurricular activities were collected through the Extracurricular Activities Survey. Student participants responded to statements on a Likert scale. The statements addressed skills to solve personal or social issues, self-confidence, connection with the school campus, stress management, and connection with faculty, staff and peers. To present the findings, the results will be converted to numeric values: Strongly Agree (SA) = five points, Agree (A) = four points, Neutral (N) = three points, Disagree (DA) = two points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = one point. The numeric value will provide the average response for each question.Table 4.3 shows the response rate for members of the Orientation Team.

In the literature review, four defining attributes of school belonging were identified: (1) positive emotions, (2) positive relations, (3) student's ability and willingness to be involved with a group, and (4) harmonization (St. Amand et al., 2017). The first is positive emotions, which includes feelings of attachment, usefulness, support and pride (St. Amand et al., 2017). The survey shows that majority of the students feel positive emotions as participants in extracurricular activities at BHS. 79.2% of the student participants strongly agreed or agreed that being a member of an extracurricular activity made them more confident at school. 91.6% strongly agreed or agreed that being a member of an extracurricular activity helped the student to connect with the school campus. 75% of student participants strongly agreed or agreed they were happy being a student at BHS. 83.3% of the students feel they are a member of the school community.

The second attribute is positive relations with peers and teachers (St. Amand et al., 2017). The survey shows that students feel a stronger connection to the faculty and staff versus the students at BHS. 66.7% of student participants strongly agreed or agreed to feeling connected to the faculty and staff at the school whereas 45.8% strongly agreed or agreed to feeling connected to the students at the school.

The third attribute is the student's ability to demonstrate energy and a willingness to be involved with a group (St. Amand et al., 2017). Student responses showed majority of the students were willing to participate in school-wide activities such as homecoming, pep rallies or service projects. 75% of student participants strongly agreed or agreed to participating in school-wide activities while 79.2% student participants participate in a school-wide activity at least once a month. Every student who participated in the survey is also a member of at least 2 or more clubs, which also speaks to their willingness to be involved with a group.

The final attribute is harmonization, which encourages the student be able to adapt to any situation or person (St. Amand et al., 2017). According to the student responses, majority of the students feel participating in extracurricular activities, helps them to adapt to life situations. 75% of the student participants strongly agreed or agreed that being a member of an extracurricular activity provided the student with the skills to solve personal or social issues. Half of the student participants remained neutral on whether being a member of an extracurricular activity helped in stress management where as 45.8% either strongly agreed or agreed.

Overall, 79.2% of student participants strongly agreed or agreed to have a sense of belonging with the extracurricular activity they participate in whereas 62.5% of

student participants strongly agreed or agreed to have a sense of belonging with the overall high school environment. 75% of student participant strongly agreed or agreed to being satisfied with their high school experience where as 12.5% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Table 4.1

Student Perception of Participating in Extracurricular Activities						
Question	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Avg.
Being a member of an extracurricular activity provides me with the skills to solve personal or social issues	54.2%	20.8%	20.8%	0	4.2%	4.1
Being a member of an extracurricular activity makes me more confident at school	41.7%	37.5%	16.7%	0	4.2%	4.2
Being a member of an extracurricular activity helps me to connect with the school campus	70.8%	20.8%	0	0	8.3%	4.3
Being a member of an extracurricular activity helps me manage stress	8.3%	37.5%	50%	0	4.2%	3.3
I feel connected to the faculty and staff at my school.	37.5%	29.2%	25%	4.2%	4.2%	3.7
I feel connected to the students at my school.	20.8%	25%	33.3%	8.3%	12.5%	3.3
I feel I am a member of the school community	50%	33.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0	4.1
I participate in the school-wide activities	62.5%	12.5%	20.8%	4.2%	0	4.1

I feel a sense of belonging with the extracurricular activity I participate in	50%	29.2%	8.3%	0	12.5%	3.8
I feel a sense of belonging with the overall high school environment	25%	37.5%	20.8%	8.3%	8.3%	3.5
I am happy to be a student at my high school	58.3%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	4.0
I would recommend my high school to other students	50%	25%	8.3%	4.2%	12.5%	3.8
Overall, I am satisfied with my high school experience	50%	25%	12.5%	4.2%	8.3%	3.9

Perception of the Rite of Passage Process. After completing the training and Freshmen Orientation, student participants responded to statements on a Likert scale regarding their perception of the rite of passage activities implemented through participation with the Orientation Team. All 24 participants voluntarily participated in each of the activities. To present the findings of the Orientation Team Survey, the Likert scale data was converted to numeric values: Strongly Agree (SA) = five points, Agree (A) = four points, Neutral (N) = three points, Disagree (DA) = two points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = one point. The numeric value will provide the average response for each question. Each question is aligned with at least one element from the rite of passage. The rite of passage elements were labeled as the following:

1. Paradigm shift = RP.1

2. Community values and ethics – RP.2

3. Relationships = RP.3

4. You can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself = RP.4

5. Home – community = RP.5

6. Socially appropriate behavior = RP.6

7. Rituals = RP.7

8. Challenges = RP.8

9. Silence = RP.9

10. Stories, myths and legends = RP.10

11. Connection with nature = RP.11

12. Time for reflection = RP.12

13. Ancestral roots = RP.13

14. Play = RP.14

15. Non-ordinary state of reality = RP.15

16. Giving away one's previous attitudes & behaviors = RP.16

17. Service = RP.17

18. Change in appearance = RP.18

19. Opportunities = RP.19

20. Celebration = RP.20

(Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

Table 4.2

Perception of the Rite of Passage						
Question	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Avg.
R.1 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team helped me to develop academically	41.7%	41.7%	16.7%	0	0	3.8

RP.1 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team helped me to develop socially.	83.3%	16.7%	0	0	0	4.8
RP.3 - I feel Summer Leadership Training for the Orientation Team helped build stronger relationships with my peers.	66.7%	29.2%	4.2%	0	0	4.6
RP.4 - I feel Summer Leadership Training for the Orientation Team helped build stronger relationships with my advisor.	70.8%	29.2%	0	0	0	4.7
RP.3 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has connected me to my community.	20.8%	29.2%	20.8%	29.2%	0	3.4
RP.6 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has taught me how to behave appropriately at school.	66.7%	20.8%	12.5%	0	0	4.5
RP.6 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has taught me how to behave appropriately at outside school.	37.5%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	0	4.2
RP.7 - I enjoyed participating in the Orientation Team initiation ceremony for new members.	70.8%	20.8%	8.3%	0	0	4.6
RP.7 - I understand that the Orientation Team chant is used to call members to attention.	75%	25%	0	0	0	4.8
RP.7 - I understand coming to attention in a straight line represents unity.	70.8%	25%	4.2%	0	0	4.6
RP.7 - I understand the purpose of the 1960 drill.	54.2%	41.7%	4.2%	0	0	4.5

RP.7 - The 1960 drill has taught me to prioritize my goals.	54.2%	29.2%	16.7%	0	0	4.4
RP.7 - The 1960 drill has taught me to focus on my goals.	62.5%	25%	4.2%	8.3%	0	4.3
RP.8 - I understand the purpose of the Alma Mater walk.	58.3%	25%	8.3%	8.3%	0	4.3
RP.8 - The Alma Mater walk, has taught me to preserve through challenges.	16.7%	37.5%	25%	12.5%	8.3%	3.3
RP.8 - The activities for Orientation Team training were challenging.	75%	25%	0	0	0	4.8
RP.15 - The activities for Orientation Team training were different from activities I have participated in with other clubs.	75%	16.7%	8.3%	0	0	4.7
RP. 15 Orientation Team training provided me with the skills to be a better student.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0	4.7
RP. 15 Orientation Team training taught me what my role is as a student leader.	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%	0	0	4.6
RP.9 - No phone usage during Orientation Team training kept me focused on the activities.	62.5%	29.2%	8.3%	0	0	4.5
RP.9 - Remaining silent when in our Orientation Team line keeps me focused on the lesson or instructions provided by the advisor.	45.8%	37.5%	12.5%	4.2%	0	4.3
RP. 19 - Working with new students during Freshman Orientation helped to build my self-confidence.	41.7%	25%	33.3%	0	0	3.7

RP.19 - Orientation Team activities prepared me to navigate everyday school life.	95.8%	4.2%	0	0	0	5.0
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me the history of my school.	29.2%	33.3%	20.8%	16.7%	0	3.6
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me about the student leaders who came before me.	79.2%	20.8%	0	0	0	4.9
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me about the traditions of my high school.	87.5%	12.5%	0	0	0	4.9
RP.14 - I enjoy being a member of the Orientation Team.	87.5%	12.5%	0	0	0	4.9
RP.14 - I have fun at Orientation Team activities.	87.5%	12.5%	0	0	0	4.9
RP.14 - I enjoy being a guide for new students at my high school.	66.7%	25%	8.3%	0	0	4.6
RP.17 - I consider my role to provide tours for new students as an act of service.	66.7%	29.2%	4.2%	0	0	4.6
RP.18 - Earning my Orientation Team shirt is important.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0	4.7
RP.18 - Other students recognized when I earned my Orientation Team shirt.	25%	37.5%	20.8%	12.5%	4.2%	3.7
RP.18 - I am proud to wear my Orientation Team shirt.	70.8%	29.2%	0	0	0	4.7
RP.17 - After earning membership, I was excited to	45.8%	37.5%	8.3%	8.3%	0	4.2

be a peer mentor for other students.						
RP.19 - After earning membership, I was given the opportunity to be a peer mentor for other students.	54.2%	33.3%	0	12.5%	0	4.3
RP. 20 - I feel my advisor celebrates my role as a member of the Orientation Team.	75%	25%	0	0	0	4.8
RP.20 - I feel my teachers celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.	16.7%	29.2%	29.2%	20.8%	4.2%	3.3
RP.20 - I feel my administrators celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.	25%	25%	37.5%	12.5%	0	3.6
RP.20 - I feel my classmates celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.	12.5%	41.7%	12.5%	16.7%	16.7%	3.2

Students appeared to have a positive experience with the rite of passage process. According to the survey responses, the rite of passage process encouraged the students' sense of belonging within the school community. In relation to the defining attribute of school belonging, students exhibited positive emotions and positive relations during the rite of passage process. During the Alma Mater Walk, students showed signs of support and encouragement to their peers. The addition of the Alma Mater walk aligned to Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2010) eighth element of enduring a physical and/or emotional challenge. As the students walked the halls, common areas and the perimeter of the school reciting the Alma Mater, they began to become frustrated with those who were reciting incorrectly, which increased with the intensity of the summer heat. Each

time someone missed a word, I and the group would do 25 jumping jacks. After a few

rounds of jumping jacks, students began to bicker with each other. They complained and

pointed out who was messing up. One student stated, "Angel should do the consequences

by herself. She's the one who keeps messing up!" This gave the perfect opportunity to

have students focus on the first of the five expectations: be a family. I explained the

purpose was not to showcase the flaws of others but to help each other learn the Alma

Mater and recite it as a unit. I also stated, "If one member looks bad, we all look bad."

An 11th grade veteran asked, "Can the new members go back to the room and use their

paper [with the Alma Mater written on it] since this is their first time?" I responded, "If

you think that will help, let's do it! But here is the trick, all new members will only have

60 seconds to run to the room, get their paper and get back into line. If someone doesn't

make it in time – that's 25 jumping jacks!" You could hear the students get excited as the

new members turned to get into running position. As I yelled go, the veterans began to

cheer for the new members as they dashed down the hallway. As the new students turned

the corner and were out of sight, the veterans stood in line looking down the hallway and

watching the stopwatch on my phone. Several students were jumping up and down and

rocking back and forth with anticipation. With less than 30 seconds left, the first student

darted around the corner. The veteran students begin to cheer yelling, "Come on! Come

on!" Then the next few students rapidly came looking to see if they made it in time. As

the final two dashed to the line the groups erupted as the new members made it with a

few seconds to spare.

The cheers and encouragement the students showed towards each other reflect the

building of positive relationships and emotions among peers, which is highlighted in the

research as a characteristic of belonging (St. Amand et al., 2017). Student responses in the Rite of Passage Survey reflect the above statement with 95.9% of the students responding they strongly agree or agree that the Summer Leadership Training for the Orientation Team helped them to build stronger relationships with their peers.

Students have a greater sense of belonging when they have a positive relationship with the adults within the school community (St. Amand et al., 2017). During the rite of passage process, the students spend several hours with me outside of the normal school hours. This provided opportunities for us to develop a positive relationship. 100% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that the Summer Leadership Training helped them to build a stronger relationship with their Orientation Team advisor.   When asked if they feel their advisor for the Orientation Team celebrates their role as a member of the Orientation Team, 100% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed. The students also showed signs of belonging in relation to having the support and acceptance from other adults within the school community, which is another alignment to the attributes of belonging (St. Amand et al., 2017). When asked if they feel their administrator (principal) celebrates their role as a member of the Orientation Team, 50% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed. When asked if they feel their teacher celebrates their role as a member of the Orientation Team, 45.9% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed.

A feeling of pride is characterized with a positive sense of belonging within the school community (St. Amand et al., 2017). Students expressed a sense of pride during the rite of passage process. On the final day of training, students are presented with their Orientation Team shirt. Students wear the shirts at Freshman Orientation and the first

day of school. The distribution of the shirt aligns to Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's

(2014) 18th element: a change in appearance. As I walked into the room with the box

during the training, the students ran towards me. I asked them to have a seat to make sure

everyone received their shirt. Different students commented:

"Oh my goodness! I've been waiting two years to get a OT shirt!"

"Mrs. Dukes! What's the design for this year? I already know you went all out."

"This is my last OT shirt. I can't believe I'm a senior!"

"Sooooooo, we are the ONLY ones with this shirt, right?"

The student was correct. Out of 951 students, only 24 would have a t-shirt with

this design. Once the students saw the design, which aligned with the Avengers theme,

they begin to cheer. Two 11th grade students hugged each other and began to jump up

and down. The students looked excited to receive their shirts as some tried them on and

others held them up in the air to look at the design. According to the survey, 100% of the

students either strongly agreed or agreed that earning their Orientation Team shirt was

important. 62.5% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that other students recognized

when they earned their Orientation Team shirt. This reflects a sense of value within the

school environment, which also promotes a sense of belonging (Arslan & Duru, 2016).

When asked if they were proud to wear their Orientation shirt, 100% either strongly

agreed or agreed.

Perception of Sense of Belonging within the School Community. At the end of

the rite of passage process, student participants also responded to statements on a Likert

scale regarding their perception of belonging on the Sense of Belonging Survey. All 24

participants voluntarily participated in the survey. To present the findings of the survey,

the Likert scale data was converted to numeric values: Always (A) = three points,

Sometimes (S) = two points, and Never (N) = one point. Table 4.5 provides a snapshot

of the findings.

The relationship between peer and teachers must be associated with

encouragement, acceptance, respect and warmth (St. Amand et al., 2017). This speaks to

the second attribute of school belonging: positive relationship with teachers (St. Amand

et al., 2017). According to the results of the survey, students appeared to have a positive

relationship with the faculty and staff at BHS. 100% of the student participants felt there

was at least one teacher or staff member they could talk to at BHS. 62.5% felt that most

teachers at BHS are interested in them.

In relation to student to peer relationships, 79.2% of the students feel the students

at BHS respect them. However, 45.8% of the students felt very different from most of

the other students at BHS. When asked if other students at BHS take their opinions

seriously, only 16.7 replied in the affirmative. Again, it appears the students have a

stronger connection to the faculty and staff versus their peers.

Overall, majority of the students feel accepted at BHS. Student participants

responded strongly to having a sense of belonging within the school community. 83.3%

felt that it is not hard for them to be accepted at BHS. In continuing the feeling of

acceptance. 95.8% of the students felt included in lot of activities at BHS. Only 4.2% of

the students wished they attended a different school. 95.8% of the students feel proud of

belonging to BHS.

Table 4.3

Perceptions of Belonging				
Question	**A**	**S**	**N**	**Avg.**
I feel like a real part of BHS.	95.8%	4.2%	0	3.0
People at BHS notice when I'm good at something.	54.2%	45.8%	0	2.5
It's hard for people like me to be accepted at BHS.	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%	1.2
Other students at BHS take my opinions seriously.	16.7%	70.8%	12.5%	2.0
Most teachers at BHS are interested in me.	62.5%	37.5%	0	2.6
Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong at my school.	4.2%	33.3%	62.5%	1.4
There is at least one teacher or staff member I can talk to at BHS.	100%	0	0	3.0
People at BHS are friendly towards me.	54.2%	45.8%	0	2.5
Teachers at BHS are not interested in students like me.	25%	16.7%	58.3%	1.7
I am included in lots of activities at BHS.	95.8%	4.2%	0	3.0
I am treated with the same respect as other students.	54.2%	41.7%	4.2%	2.3
I feel very different from most of the other students at BHS.	45.8%	37.5%	16.7%	2.3
I can really be myself at BHS.	70.8%	29.2%	0	2.7
The teachers at BHS respect me.	79.2%	20.8%	0	2.8

People at BHS know I can do good work.	79.2%	20.8%	0	2.8
I wish I were at a different school.	4.2%	8.3%	87.5%	1.3
I feel proud of belonging to BHS.	95.8%	4.2%	0	3.0
Other students here at BHS like the way I am.	58.3%	41.7%	0	2.5

Interpretation of the Findings

Based on the results from this study, majority of the student participants expressed that participation in an extracurricular activity at Benjamin High School. According to Massaoni (2011) participation in extracurricular activities creates a positive and voluntary connection to the school. Results from the Extracurricular Activity Survey reflects that majority of the student participants attributed being a member of an extracurricular activity to learning skills to solve personal or social issues, gaining self-confidence at school and connecting students to the school campus. Student participants identified as being a member of the school community and having a sense of belonging with the extracurricular activity they participate in. However, the results reflected a disconnect between the students and the student body. Majority of the students responded neutral or in disagreement to feeling connected to the students at BHS. This aligned with the student responses during the socially appropriate behavior session of training. The students admitted to engaging in inappropriate behavior but considered their offenses minor compared to those of the student body.

According to the Sense of Belonging Survey, majority of the student participants consider themselves different from most of the other students at BHS. In the Sense of Belonging Survey, less than 20% of the students felt that the students at BHS take their

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opinion seriously. Though the Sense of Belonging Survey and the field observations reflect a positive experience for majority of the student participants, students were divided on whether their peers and teachers celebrated their role as a member of the Orientation Team.

Though the students consider the school to have severe discipline problems with a negative reputation within the community, majority of the students were proud to be members of the school community and did not want to attend a different school. This could be due to the positive experience the students have within the extracurricular activities. The students can participate in an area of interest, have fun with peers and build relationships with school faculty and staff. However, the extracurricular programs could subliminally create segregation within the student body. Students in extracurricular activities have school pride and love the school while disassociating themselves with negative norms. They could be willing to withstand the tense conditions because they prefer being around individuals they grew up with and an environment like their past school experiences. The idea of entering a new liminality and trying to adopt new values or norms could be overwhelming.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Problem of Practice for this study stemmed from the need for instructional strategies to use in extracurricular activities to prevent students from participating in risk behaviors. As a club advisor, I struggled with recruiting and maintaining student members due to low grades, delinquent behavior and a lack of student engagement. Massoni's (2011) research indicates being actively involved in extracurricular activities can empower students to reject the temptation to join gangs, use drugs or alcohol and commit crimes. However, several of the current students who participate in extracurricular activities affiliate with the local community gangs and are repeat offenders of major and minor incidents within the school. At BHS, there are no guidelines or procedures to ensure the extracurricular activity serves the purpose of preventing students from dropping out of school or engaging in delinquent behavior. A review of the literature suggested the need to guide the adolescent through the turbulence of the liminal period (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Marshall et al., 2018; Thomassen, 2009). The participation in a structured rite of passage, carried out by a qualified adult, could serve as a solution. Participation in a rite of passage process could guide adolescents through the liminal period and encourage a greater sense of belonging within the school community.

Overview and Summary of the Study

   The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the impact a rite of passage intervention implemented through a school-based extracurricular activity has on a student's sense of belonging. The intervention of a rite of passage was created to cultivate cultural value and knowledge to an individual or a group and instill a sense of belonging (Blumenkratz & Goldstein, 2010). I implemented a rite of passage within an existing school-based club at BHS: the Orientation Team. The Orientation Team is responsible for assisting with Freshman Orientation, campus tours and other school-wide events. The club is based at Benjamin High School, an urban school serving 951 students in grades 9 – 12 with a high-minority and high-poverty rate. The rite of passage activities were integrated into the Orientation Team's summer leadership training and meetings. To create a rite of passage, I utilized Blumenkrantz & Goldstein's (2010) 20elements. The 20elements are used to guide the process of an effective rite of passage to encourage an individual or group to adopt community values and ethics (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). For data collection, I used three online surveys and focus group interviews. The findings were separated into three major themes: (1) perception of navigating through high school, (2) perception of participating in extracurricular activities, and (3) perception of the rite of passage process.

   The findings of the study reflected that the students who participated in the rite of passage intervention did develop a stronger sense of belonging but were disconnected from the student body. This chapter will provide a summary of the study, suggestions for additional research, an action plan for the teacher-researcher, and conclusion.

Though the student responses revealed a positive reaction to the rite of passage process I have additional questions. Additional studies will be needed to explore variations to the rite of passage within other school-based clubs and other schools. Also, additional studies will be needed to determine validity. The teacher-researcher recognizes the benefits of offering extracurricular activities with specialized rites of passage in particularly for marginalized students.

Suggested Additional Research

The teacher-researcher was left with a few unresolved questions after the study. Firstly, did the rite of passage promote segregation among the student body? Van Gennep (1960) asserts that all rite of passage have three phases: (1) separation, (2) margin, and (3) incorporation. In the first phase, people withdraw from their current social status in preparation to move to a different status (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2015; Van Gennep, 1960). By the third phase, incorporation, people re-enter society at a new status (Van Gennep, 1960). After summer training, the students re-entered the school community with a new a status and an outward symbol (t-shirt) to display their new accomplishment. However, instead of incorporating their new status within the student body, the students distanced themselves. After the rite of passage, the students developed ethics and values different from the school culture norms described by the students in the focus group interviews. One would expect that a disassociation from the student body would create a disassociation from the school. However, the survey results revealed that majority of had a strong sense of school pride and belonging. The students were still proud to be a member of the school and did not want to attend a different school.

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Secondly, is there a way to complete the rite of passage intervention while encouraging students to connect with others? As students develop a greater sense of belonging, I expected students to have a greater connection to their peers. According to research, school belonging is grounded in the student's perception of value and support received in the school environment (Arslan & Duru, 2016). Students have a greater sense of belonging when they have a positive relationship with their peers (St. Amand, et al., 2017). However, the survey results show majority of the students felt different from their peers at BHS. Also, the survey shows that students feel a stronger connection to the faculty and staff versus the students at BHs. 66.7% of student participants strongly agreed or agreed to feeling connected to the faculty and staff at the school whereas 45.8% strongly agreed or agreed to feeling connected to the students at the school.

This conundrum left me with the following questions: (1) do the students see separation as a means to resist peer pressure, (2) as advisors, do we encourage the separation, (3) are the student overwhelmed by the school social culture, and (4) as more students participate in a structured rite of passage within a school-based extracurricular activity will the school see a decrease in discipline referrals?

Lastly, could other advisor adopt a rite of passage intervention for their club or organization? Will this help advisors in recruiting and maintain membership? Will the advisors have the time to implement the activities? I advise five clubs at BHS and oversee all extracurricular programs. I often witness other advisors in search of ways to engage students in club activities. The rite of passage intervention could guide the teacher in creating an impactful extracurricular experience. The use of Blumenkrantz and Goldstein's (2010 20elements gives the advisor a guide to follow for students to align

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themselves with the expectations of the club and reach a higher status within the school community.

Action Plan

For my action plan, I have four focal areas: (1) sharing the study and results with school stakeholders within the building, (2) determining improvements for the Orientation Team, (3) implementing a rite of passage with an additional club, and (4) organizing an Extracurricular Activities Team. I will share the findings of the study with school administrators, club advisors and coaches. As the school continues to improve the extracurricular activity programs from a school-wide perspective, it will be important to discuss and utilize findings as evidence for future initiatives. Twice a week, BHS holds Leadership Team meetings. The Leadership Team consists of all administrators, all support staff and the department chair from each subject area. Through consistent meetings, this group participates in reviewing and presenting school data. In long-term goals, their input could be beneficial in implementing a rite of passage within all extracurricular activities at BHS. In short-term goals, they could impress upon other teachers the need to guide students through liminality and the importance of creating a sense of belonging for each student.

I will continue using the rite of passage with the members of the Orientation Team. According to the findings, the activities were beneficial and encouraged a sense of belonging among the members. To improve the rite of passage process, I will review the Orientation Team survey to evaluate the activities in need of improvement. I will also encourage former members to assist in creating activities and leading new members through the process. This will strengthen elements four (you can only bring someone as

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far as you have been yourself) and thirteen (ancestral roots). I will also track the progress regarding and discipline and attendance of the student participants as a group to examine the long-term effects of the rite of passage process. Lastly, I will add an additional activity aligned to the elements of service and opportunities to give students a chance to reach out to the students who are not involved in extracurricular activities to strengthen their connection with other students.

As a school, the faculty and staff are constantly in search of innovative ways to improve school climate and decrease discipline concerns. The teacher-researcher will work with other club advisors and coaches to create a committee for those interested in improving extracurricular activities. Advisors and coaches will be recruited to serve on the committee. The committee will review data that pertains to extracurricular activities. They could review the attendance, grades and discipline records of students who participate in extracurricular activities and track them throughout their high school career. This could give the committee the opportunity to review the areas students need assistance in. The committee could research resources to provide professional development opportunities for all club advisors. Also, as I continue to use the rite of passage within the clubs I advise, the committee can review the findings and prepare for school-wide implementation. The committee would be responsible for creating a plan and training other advisors on implementing the rite of passage intervention within the club they advise.

Conclusion

As students enter high school, they are in search of acceptance and belonging. In a state of liminality, extracurricular activities can serve as a starting point for students to

discover where they belong. Along with participation in extracurricular activities, a rite

of passage intervention can cultivate the student to adopt a culture that values education

and personal development. This structure should not only bring challenges but a sense of

happiness and belonging. Without a structured rite of passage, students are left to create

their own passage and are subject to negative results. As educators move towards

cultivating the whole student, they must utilize all areas of the school environment,

especially the areas outside of the classroom, as a vehicle to educate and empower the

citizens of tomorrow.

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APPENDIX A

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTVITES SURVEY

Survey Questions **Likert Scale** **Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree**
Being a member of an extracurricular activity provides me with the skills to solve personal or social issues
Being a member of an extracurricular activity makes me more confident at school
Being a member of an extracurricular activity helps me to connect with the school campus
Being a member of an extracurricular activity helps me manage stress
I feel connected to the faculty and staff at my school.
I feel connected to the students at my school.
I feel I am a member of the school community
I participate in the school-wide activities
I feel a sense of belonging with the extracurricular activity I participate in
I feel a sense of belonging with the overall high school environment
I am happy to be a student at my high school
I would recommend my high school to other students
Overall, I am satisfied with my high school experience

ORIENTATION TEAM SURVEY

Question
Likert Scale
Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree
R.1 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team helped me to develop academically
RP.1 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team helped me to develop socially.
RP.3 - I feel Summer Leadership Training for the Orientation Team helped build stronger relationships with my peers.
RP.4 - I feel Summer Leadership Training for the Orientation Team helped build stronger relationships with my advisor.
RP.3 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has connected me to my community.
RP.2 - I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has taught me how to behave appropriately at school.
RP.2- I feel being a member of the Orientation Team has taught me how to behave appropriately at outside school.
RP.7 - I enjoyed participating in the Orientation Team initiation ceremony for new members.
RP.7 - I understand that the Orientation Team chant is used to call members to attention.
RP.7 - I understand coming to attention in a straight line represents unity.
RP.7 - I understand the purpose of the 1960 drill.
RP.7 - The 1960 drill has taught me to prioritize my goals.

RP.7 - The 1960 drill has taught me to focus on my goals.
RP.8 - I understand the purpose of the Alma Mater walk.
RP.8 - The Alma Mater walk, has taught me to preserve through challenges.
RP.8 - The activities for Orientation Team training were challenging.
RP.15 - The activities for Orientation Team training were different from activities I have participated in with other clubs.
RP. 15 - Orientation Team training provided me with the skills to be a better student.
RP. 15 - Orientation Team training taught me what my role is as a student leader.
RP.9 - No phone usage during Orientation Team training kept me focused on the activities.
RP.9 - Remaining silent when in our Orientation Team line keeps me focused on the lesson or instructions provided by the advisor.
RP. 19 Working with new students during Freshman Orientation helped to build my self-confidence.
RP. 19 Orientation Team activities prepared me to navigate everyday school life.
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me the history of my school.
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me about the student leaders who came before me.
RP.10/13 - Orientation Team training and activities taught me about the traditions of my high school.
RP.14 - I enjoy being a member of the Orientation Team.
RP.14 - I have fun at Orientation Team activities.
RP.14 - I enjoy being a guide for new students at my high school.
RP.17 - I consider my role to provide tours for new students as an act of service.
RP.18 - Earning my Orientation Team shirt is important.

RP.18 - Other students recognized when I earned my Orientation Team shirt.
RP.18 - I am proud to wear my Orientation Team shirt.
RP.17 - After earning membership, I was excited to be a peer mentor for other students.
RP.19 - After earning membership, I was given the opportunity to be a peer mentor for other students.
RP. 3/20 - I feel my advisor celebrates my role as a member of the Orientation Team.
RP.3/20 - I feel my teachers celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.
RP.3/20 - I feel my administrators celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.
RP.3/20 - I feel my classmates celebrate my role as a member of the Orientation Team.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT SENSE OF BELONGING SURVEY

Question
Likert Scale
Always, Sometimes, and Never
I feel like a real part of BHS.
People at BHS notice when I'm good at something.
It's hard for people like me to be accepted at BHS.
Other students at BHS take my opinions seriously.
Most teachers at BHS are interested in me.
Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong at my school.
There is at least one teacher or staff member I can talk to at BHS.
People at BHS are friendly towards me.
Teachers at BHS are not interested in students like me.
I am included in lots of activities at BHS.
I am treated with the same respect as other students.
I feel very different from most of the other students at BHS.
I can really be myself at BHS.
The teachers at BHS respect me.
People at BHS know I can do good work.
I wish I were at a different school.
I feel proud of belonging to BHS.

Other students here at BHS like the way I am.

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Question
Describe the culture at BHS.
What are some of the discipline issues you see at school?
Has participating in extracurricular activities helped you?
Why did you decide to participate in an extracurricular activity?
Why did you choose to participate on the Orientation Team?

APPENDIX E

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am conducting a research study as a requirement for my program of study (Curriculum and Instruction) with the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Student participants will be asked to complete a short online survey and participate in a focus group interview. The responses will help educators learn more about high school students who participate in a school-based extracurricular activity and how their participation impacts a sense of school belonging. Your child was selected because he/she meet the following requirements:

- Full time high school student
- Member in at least one or more school-based club or sport
- Student was an active participant in the club or sport for one full school year

The responses from student participants will be completely confidential. Student participants will not include their names on the survey nor will their names be used in the research study. Participation will have no bearing on your child's enrollment, academic, or social activities with the school system.

Please sign and return the form below to provide permission for your child to be included in the survey. If you decline, your child will not be selected to participate in this survey.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
ShaRon S. Dukes, M.Ed.
dukessh1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
(706) 796 – 4959 Ext. 1042

Student's Full Name (please print) _____

Grade: _____

If you are the parent/guardian of the child names above, please read below.

____ **I give permission for my child to participate in the survey and focus group.**

____ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the survey and focus group.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____   Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

ORIENTATION TEAM SUMMER AGENDA

Orientation Team Training
AGENDA

9:00AM   **SIGN-IN**

9:05AM   **PURPOSE**
- What is the Orientation Team?
- Why is it important?
- Keeping Traditions
- 1960 Drill

SHOW ME WHAT YOU KNOW!
- School History
- Alma Mater Walk
- 5 Expectations
- School Culture – Focus Walk

11:15AM   **IT'S LIT … NOT REALLY**
- How to hype a crowd
- Learning OT dances
- Pep Rally practice

12:00PM   **LUNCH (CLEAN UP WHEN YOU ARE DONE)**

12:35PM   BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Group Name	Group Leaders
THANOS	Jasmin, Kayla, Desmond, & Brian
THOR	Houston, Kyra & Carla
Black Panther	John, Quincy, & Dior
Captain America	Laylah, Angel, Diamond, & Taylor
Iron Man	Jordan, Anthony & Erin

3:00PM   WRAP UP
- o Expectations for Training Day Two

Orientation Team Training
AGENDA

9:00AM   **SIGN-IN**

9:05AM   **LINE UP!!!!**
- School History
- Alma Mater Walk
- 5 Expectations
- 1960 Drill

CAMPUS TOUR
- Stay together as a group (or individual if giving a tour during the year)
- Speak clearly and loudly
- Never speak negatively - Give helpful tips
- Follow the students schedule – RETURN STUDENT BACK TO GUIDANCE

GAME TIME – EXPECTATIONS FOR ORIENTATION
- Agenda for both days
- Duty Stations
- Cellphones
- Customer Service with adults/students

IT'S LIT … NOT REALLY
- How to hype a crowd
- Learning OT dances
- Pep Rally practice

12:00PM   **LUNCH (CLEAN UP WHEN YOU ARE DONE)**

12:30PM   BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Bulletin Board (Social Studies Hall)	THANOS
Bulletin Board (Main Hall)	THOR
Bulletin Board (Upstairs)	BLACK PANTHER
Events & Planning	CAPTAIN AMERICA
PowerPoint Practice	IRON MAN

3:00PM   WRAP UP
- o Reminders
- o TSHIRT TIME!!!!