THE ROLE OF CAMP ART EDUCATION IN A RURAL SETTING

A Master's Degree Thesis by Paige Colditz

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the role art education serves in three rural camp settings. The researcher conducted a multi–site case study in three different camp settings – each site was at least 45 minutes from Philadelphia, located in a rural setting, and had some form of art education activities in place. For the sake of this study, a "rural setting" has been defined as at least 45 minutes from a major U.S city, with a low population density. The three camps reviewed will be: an art camp henceforth known as **Tree Camp**, a traditional camp with a strong arts program henceforth known as **Branch Camp**, and a traditional camp with a minimal arts program henceforth known as **Leaf Camp**. Data was primarily collected by interviews with full time staff at each site and interviews with two summer staff alumni at one site. Data was also collected through the visual documentation of camper art, camp community art, and art making facilities – all photographed during site visits. Researcher interests include social–emotional learning development through art making practices and investigating how camps and rural communities can work together in support of art programming that supports social–emotional development.

Key Terms: social–emotional learning, summer camp, outdoor experiential education, positive youth development, community building

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this study to all of the camp kids – young and old. May you always have someone to sing camp songs with, may your S'mores always be cooked perfectly, and may your Chaco tan line be strong.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

Rural communities face unique challenges to accessible art education. According to Donovan and Brown (2020), these challenges include: poverty and lack of economic opportunity, geographic distance, the recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators to rural communities, lack of funding for art education, policies that do not support the arts, limited collection and analysis of data (meaning that there are fewer studies and fewer funds allocated to support possible future studies) and lack of representation in creative economy initiatives – meaning that there are simply less people supporting that arts at the table. However, it is possible that these challenges can be met with community partnerships with rural assets (Donovan and Brown, 2017, Bauch, 2001, Keifer–Boyd, 2000). One such rural asset would be the summer camp.

As someone who grew up in the rural south and was fortunate enough to spend almost every childhood summer at various summer camps and youth development programs (mainly through 4–H), I was able to witness the unique learning that happens at these programs. Although I grew up in a rural area with – supposedly – limited resources, I have always been keenly aware of just how much I learned at these various youth development programs. I would even argue that one of the most important lessons I learned was that learning can be fun (and probably should be).

Prior to beginning my post–graduate journey, I was also fortunate enough to return to the camp world as a summer staffer and intern at a small summer camp just

outside of Harrisburg, PA. It was during this internship, where I began to understand how camps can work together with local communities in support of accessible art education. As an intern, I led an afterschool art club at a local partner youth center and I also worked with local art museums, nature centers, and local artists in order to bring art to our camp – whether it be with the afterschool art club or during the camp's summer art camp program. During this experience, I was able to truly understand the power of community partnerships and the wealth of knowledge and artistic power that is present in small rural communities. This experience also reinforced for me just how valuable youth development programs are (or in this case summer camps).

Problem Statement

Although I discuss the many nuances of rural art education in my literature review and the bulk of the data collected culminates into what is essentially a series of case studies across three different camps, the two topics at the heart of this study are a) the lack of understanding of what role art education plays in summer camp programs and b) the separation with which we view the experiences of childhood learning that happen in schools as compared to summer camps (or even youth development programs) – when in fact for the children who attend summer camps and youth development programs, these two experiences of learning (school learning and camp learning) speak to and interact with one another. Summer camps offer youth unique social emotional development opportunities (Sibthorp et al., 2020, Povilaitis et al., 2023, & Burskirk–Cohen, 2015), that would naturally then inform how they interact with their peers in schools – and possibly even their classroom teachers and extracurricular activities offered in their schools.

Additionally, we can not take for granted the fact that campers do learn at summer camps. This is most clearly true when we consider the numerous specialty camps that exist (like sports camp or band camp, and of course, art camp). However, it is also true when we consider the classic activities associated with a traditional summer camp; canoeing, archery, horseback riding, climbing on high course challenges, team building activities on the low course challenges, and of course, arts and crafts. Of course, these are only a few of the countless activities that may be offered at summer camps.

When I reflect on my own personal experiences as a camper, I would define this type of learning using the terms; embodied, collaborative, and *fun*. As an educator, these are now terms that I hope to center my teaching practice on. As a summer camp alum (staffer and camper) – obvious personal bias aside (or maybe it's still rather front and center) – I wonder if summer camps are underutilized by their local communities and local schools? As an art educator, I wonder is it possible for the classroom teacher to apply the youth development practices seen in summer camp programs, in their own classroom teaching practice? And what would that look like?

Research Question(s)

Given that many camps utilize camp programming in order to support the development of social–emotional competencies in campers and survey findings suggest that camps play a critical role in the development of social–emotional skills – such as relationship skills and self–management **(**Sibthorp et al., 2020, Povilaitis et al., 2023, & Burskirk–Cohen, 2015**)** – in what ways does camp art programming support the development of social–emotional skills in campers?

Furthermore, how might rural camps and local community classroom teachers work together to provide art programming that further supports social–emotional development in local youth?

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1: Concept Map of Theoretical Framework
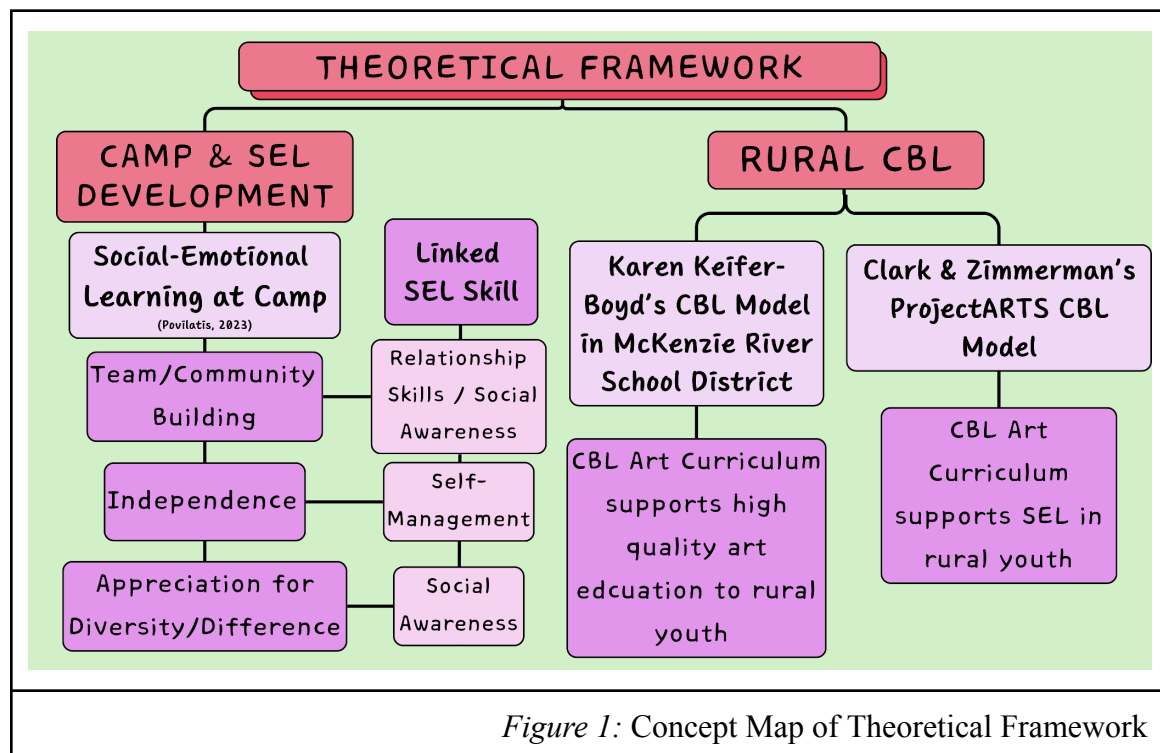
Studies have shown that summer camps offer unique opportunities for social–emotional development in youth (Sibthorp et al., 2020, Povilaitis et al., 2023, & Burskirk–Cohen, 2015). Additionally, community–based art curriculum has shown to be highly successful in supporting high quality art education to rural youth (Karen–Keifer Boyd, 2000) and has also shown to be successful in supporting social–emotional development in rural youth (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000).

The focus of this study is on learning what factors influence art education in summer camp programming and how campers engage with art education activities in summer camp, so that community classroom educators can apply the camp practices that influence camper social–emotional development, in the classroom. This study will also investigate camp–community partnerships in order to understand the role camps may currently play in their local communities and how local schools and camps can work together in support of local youth.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn more about art education in camps in order to: A) fill a literature gap, B) begin to learn what role art education plays in summer camp programming, and C) learn more about how campers engage with art education activities in a summer camp setting. Effectively, I believe this study will benefit youth in rural communities, camps in rural communities, and rural classroom art teachers.This study may especially benefit classroom art teachers who can look at how different camp programming structures in place strengthen camper (or student) engagement during art making activities.

Limitations of the Study

The majority of the limitations of my study are defined by the limitation of time. Ideally, I would collect my data of this research over a time period of at least a year. This would allow me to observe and compare education programs during the peak season and off season of summer camps (meaning that I also will be unable to observe what

programs are given what priority in real time), and to observe campers behaviors / learning engagement during peak season art programming, and then compare to behaviors / learning engagement observed during other non–art camp programming. I would also have a much wider pool of potential interviewees. This also means that most of the data I will be gathering will be second hand and interpretive, and I will be limited by what educational programs I will be able to observe.

However, this is a limitation that I hope will work in my favor. Even though it would be optimal to be able to observe and compare off–season vs peak season programming, my interest for my study is focused on seeing if there are opportunities to expand art education programming during the off–season when camp resources are least utilized.

Finally, I am limited by my bias for camp and my experiences as a white woman. I grew up lower–middle class in a rural community. While I had little access to a robust and inspiring art education, I was fortunate enough to have access to an entirely different form of education through summer camps and 4 H youth programming. These programs filled a massive hole left by my local education system and as a result, I believe in the value of youth programming and summer camps that are centered around providing unique and fun educational opportunities to rural youth, and I also believe they can be further utilized to provide community centered art educational opportunities to rural youth.

While I am aware of and have been witness to how summer camps center those who are cisgender, heterosexual, able–bodied, and white – my awareness does not make

up for the fact that I will be engaging with this study through the lens of someone whom many camps are built for. Finally, my bias for and experience with camps, youth programming, and art education may limit my understanding of outside or internal systemic influences that may influence the viability of using camp spaces/resources to provide robust art education programming to rural communities.

Definition of Terms

> **Summer Camp** – within this study, summer camp will be defined as the physical place in which youth attend typically, but not limited to, during the summer, for an extended period of time, for the intention of participating in a wide range of outdoor experiential educational activities during their time at camp.
>
> **Positive Youth Development** – programs which "strengthen young people's sense of identity, belief in the future, self-regulation, and self-efficacy as well as their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competence." (*Positive youth development,* 2022)
>
> **Social–Emotional Learning** – defined as a "process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions." (*Fundamentals of SEL* 2023)

Community Building – defined as "approaches to improve the well–being of people in a particular community or other geographically defined area" (*Act, Strategies, Community Building*)

Team–Building – defined as "an ongoing process that helps a work group evolve into a cohesive unit. The team members not only share expectations for accomplishing group tasks, but trust and support one another and respect one another's individual differences." (*Team building: Introduction*). Although the definition for this term may be geared for team building in a work setting, I have included this definition because it accurately reflects the core of team-building programs seen in summer camp settings.

Outdoor Experiential Education (OEE) – "Experiential process of learning by doing" which is based primarily outdoors. Emphasis is placed on learning across four types of relationships: interpersonal , intrapersonal, ecosystemic, and ekistic (or human-nature interactions). (Priest, 1986)

Assumptions To Be Debated

- Given that I am comparing three different camps with varying levels of art education programs but which will all be in a rural setting, the role of art education in camp settings will be debated.

- Given that I am researching camp-community relationships across three different camps in rural communities, the impact of camps within rural communities will be debated.

- Given that I am approaching this study as both research and art educator, the transferability of summer art programming to curriculum development in the K-12 classroom will be debated.

Assumptions Not To Be Debated:

- Given that this study is comparing art education across three different camps with different sizes of art education programs, in order to understand the role art education plays in each of the different camp settings, the quality of the art education programming within each camp will not be debated.

Summary / Roadmap of Chapters

Previous research shows that summer camps offer valuable learning experiences to campers, specifically as it relates to social-emotional learning (Sibthorp et al., 2020, Povilaitis et al., 2023, & Burskirk–Cohen, 2015). The research collected in this study seeks to fill the gap between the learning that happens at camp and the learning that happens in the classroom, in an effort to improve both camper and student experiences – specifically as it relates to art education.

In Chapter Two, Review of the Literature, I will briefly introduce the historical context of summer camps in the U.S. and I will then discuss social emotional learning in camp settings and rural community-based art education. Chapter Three, Methodology, reviews the research process and Chapter Four, Results of The Study, shares the data collected in the study as it relates to this study's initial question of understanding the context of art education in camp settings and camp-community partnerships. Finally,

Chapter Five, Discussion and Implications of the Study, reviews and discusses the

findings in this study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This thesis study is an attempt to connect topics that, at face value, do not affect the other; American summer camps, community based curriculum, and rural education. This chapter will explore each of these topics separately, and will then discuss how, together, they create the foundation of this research paper. I begin with a brief history of summer camps and then review the role summer camps play in the development of social–emotional skills in youth. I also look at accessibility and inclusivity in a camp setting – both historically and today. I then briefly discuss Karen–Keifer Boyd's model of community based curriculum and review other models of community based art curriculum in rural art education settings.

Brief History of the American Summer Camp

The earliest summer camps were formed between 1890 –1920 as a response to what was described as "the problem of modern childhood" (Van Slyck, *Introduction*, 2006). In the opening chapter of her text, *A Manufactured Wilderness,* Van Syck outlines a historical timeline in which the creation of early American summer camps were a direct result of the dissatisfaction that many white middle class families had towards the impact industrialization and modernism had on their children's lives. In the eyes of many white middle class Americans, as the "excitement" of colonization whittled away, young white American boys were no longer "tested" by the challenges of forcibly removing people from their native homelands and reclaiming that land as their own (Van Slyck, *Introduction*, 2006).

Additionally, the combination of industrialization, protective labor legislation and compulsory school attendance, meant that not only were more children spending more time in the classroom and less time on family farms, but many of the children in the cities and suburbs also spent less time playing in large outdoor areas (i.e nature). Adding to these parents' concerns, were the newly arriving immigrants who, in their eyes, brought inferior non–American (and non–white) customs and practices (Van Slyck, *Introduction,* 2006). A blunt interpretation could read that as the white American ideal was dying, white middle class Americans were shaking in their boots over what to do next.

Van Slyck points to these factors as possibly leading to the formation of summer camps across the US. Although it's important to note that there are many other factors at play, like the impact the New Deal had on how white Ameriancs began to think about outdoor recreation, and the desire for white middle class Americans to reinforce gender roles and maintain their concept of whiteness. The result was an anti–modernist modernist approach. In the words of Van Syck:

> American summer camps were shaped by modern conceptions of children and childhood, which emphasized reforming gender roles while reinforcing racial hierarchies. The cultural landscape of summer camps reveals that these manufactured versions of the wilderness implicitly worked to support and maintain modern culture. (Van Slyck, p. 224, 2006)

There is a noticeable change in the 1960's in how camps are structured:

> > By about 1960, however, traditional camps seemed to be on the decline, outpaced by camps teaching special skills and eventually outnumbered by day camps (which often functioned as summertime day care centers for

school–age children). Although traditional camps began to enjoy a
renaissance in the late twentieth century, camp – a term now used to
describe any summer experience for youngsters – plays a somewhat
different role in American life. Thus, 1960 serves as the end point for this
study of this older camp type. (Van Slyck, p. xxvii, 2006)

Van Slyck also notes that there are a number of camps that formed in the early
days of summer camps (before the 1960s), that were formed by marginalized and
non–mainstream communities. For example, Black Americans began forming camps for
children of elite black families as early as the 1920s, and Jewish summer camps were
formed as members of Jewish communities sought to "maintain ethnic practices
threatened by modernization and assimilation" (Van Slyck p.xxvi, 2006).

Overtime, more camps were formed by more and more groups, each with their
own personal values influencing the youth development goals of their summer camps.
Camps today are, in some ways, a far cry from their white American value–oriented
origins – as the following sections of this chapter will discuss. However, it is important to
understand that at its core, the American summer camp has always been a tool of social
education for American youth. To view the American summer camp as something as
simple as vacation for youth is to ignore the very structure upon which it was built,
however insidious it may have originally been.

Social-Emotional Learning: CASEL

As the following section will review social-emotional learning in camp settings, I
would first like to introduce and review the key components of social-emotional learning
according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

As its name would suggest, CASEL is an organization built by a collaborative network that was at the forefront of the social-emotional learning movement and which seeks to "help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school" (*Our Mission and Work* 2024).

CASEL defines social-emotional learning (SEL) as "the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (*What is the Casel Framework?* 2023).

The framework of SEL according to CASEL is best understood via the organization's "CASEL Wheel" (Figure 2). This study will focus primarily on the SEL components of Social Awareness, Self Management, and Social Awareness. Figure 3 provides definitions of each of these fundamentals according to CASEL and links each of the components to specific components of SEL experienced at summer camp according to (Povilaitis et al., 2023) which will be discussed further in the following sections.
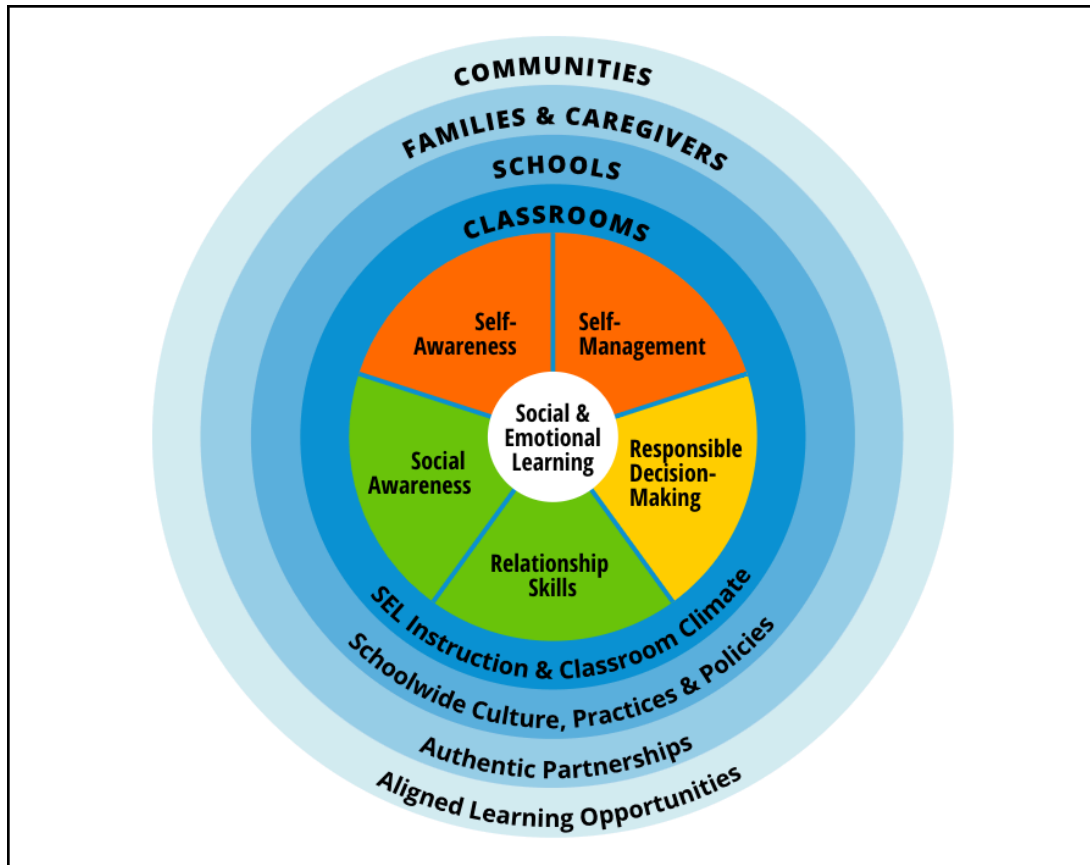
Figure 2: CASEL Wheel (*Fundamentals of SEL* 2023)

CASEL Fundamental	CASEL Fundamental Definition	SEL at Camp (Povilaties, 2023)
Social Awareness	The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts	Team / Community Building
Self-Management	The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.	Independence
Self-Awareness	The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts	Appreciation for Diversity / Difference

Figure 3: (*Fundamentals of SEL* 2023)(Povilaitis, 2023)

Camp and the Development of Social–Emotional Skills

Studies exploring the impact of summer camp on the development of social–emotional skills in youth are extensive. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on three separate sources that each represent the different ways summer camps can influence positive development of social emotional skills in youth.

Creative Arts Therapy in Camp.

To begin the review of the development of social–emotional learning in a camp setting, I will first discuss a review of an intensive two week "creative arts therapy program delivered through a two–week summer day camp" (Buskirk–Cohen, *Abstract,* 2015). In 2015, Burskirk–Cohen evaluated whether such a program "benefited children's support networks and improved their general wellness" (Buskirk–Cohen, *Abstract,* 2015). 12 children participated in this study and ranged in ages from 6–15 years old. Camp activities were intentionally designed to focus on "improving children's self–expression, flexible thinking, problem solving, co–creation, negotiation, and compromise skills." (Buskirk–Cohen, p. 38, 2015). It is also important to note that activities were matched to participants based on previously identified strengths and weaknesses during intake.

Data was collected before and after the program through the reporting of participant behaviors by staff – including camp counselors who were graduate level mental health professionals – and parents. Overall, the findings of this report did support the original thesis that a short term creative arts therapy program could be "beneficial to young children" Buskirk–Cohen, *Abstract,* 2015). In reports from camp staff, growth was observed in the following categories: acting out behaviors, shy/anxious behaviors,

learning problems, frustration tolerance, social assertiveness, task orientation and peer sociability. Improvements reported by both camp staff and parents were acting out behaviors and learning problems.

In conclusion, this study serves as one example of how art education in a camp setting can be combined to create meaningful development of social emotional skills in youth. It is important to note however, that the overall results of this study are a result of very intentional programming that utilizes art therapy practices in a way that many traditional camps may not naturally be equipped to utilize in their programming.

Active Ingredients of Social–Emotional Skill Development in a Camp Setting.

A study in 2020 by Sipthorp et al. looked at what 524 summer camp alumni (aged 18–25) reported learning at camp and what were the elements of camp – or "active ingredients" (Li & Julian, 2012 as cited by Sipthorp et al. 2020) – that alumni claimed were responsible for the reported outcomes. The top reported outcomes were (in descending order): Relationship Skills, Teamwork, Friendship, Independence, Empathy, Compassion and Appreciation of Differences. The top reported "active ingredients" – the elements of a program responsible for target change (Li & Julian, 2012) – were: camp staff or leaders, programming – specifically in how the programming embedded teamwork, "inclusion of leadership opportunities", connection with nature and "the development of outdoor skills" (Sipthorp et al. p. 11, 2020)– and social environment.

In this study, there are some active ingredients that are linked only with one outcome, rather than multiple outcomes. For example, the outcome of independence is linked to the active ingredients of separation in time and space from home environments. The outcome of appreciation for differences (which was the 6th most common outcome

out of 18) is linked to the active ingredient of "exposure to different people" (Sibthorp et al. 2020). As to the outcome of appreciation for differences, it can be inferred that this outcome is highly dependent on the diversity of camp staff and campers across economic status and cultural background as well as the camp's ability to accommodate a wide range of camper needs – based on its linked active ingredient.

Sibthorp et al. also noted that "fun" was a possible additional active ingredient, per this quote from the text:

> The sixth question asked individuals if there was anything else they wanted to discuss regarding the camp experience. The main theme that emerged from this question was that camp was a setting for fun that supported positive affect. Of the 139 unprompted responses received from the study participants, 87 (or 63%) shared their enjoyment of camp (e.g., "It was a great experience to be around kids my age all summer and to just have fun"). This theme was also used to describe other ingredients mentioned earlier. The "fun" leaders/programming/people were an important part of why many active ingredients were impactful. Fun was not coded as a discrete active ingredient due to its pervasive nature; however, fun and positive affect were valued aspects of other active ingredients in the earlier responses." (Sipthorp et al. p. 13, 2020)

Although Sibthorp et al. does not expand on this possible active ingredient further, it can be inferred that fun may be a key active ingredient as a tool of maintaining engagement in campers. Sipthorp et al. even notes that fun "might play a role in capturing campers' interest and it is this interest that compels them to engage with staff, peers, and activities."

In conclusion, this example shows not only how camp may play an important role in the development of social–emotional skills in youth, but also shows the unique factors that may impact said social–emotional development in youth.

Long Term Impact of Camp.

The study by Sipthorp et al. shows us some of the possible learning outcomes campers may gain at camp and what "active ingredients" (Li & Julian, 2012) in camp attribute to those learning outcomes, but what impact can several summers spent at summer camp have on youth from low–income backgrounds (YLIB)? In 2023, Povilatis and Warner set out to answer this question.

In a Likert–style survey of 449 camp alumni who "attended at least one 10–day session at one of seven camp locations from across North America operated by a youth–serving nonprofit, [Tim Hortons Foundation Camps]" (Povilaitis et al., 2023), camp alumni were asked to choose the camp related outcomes that they attributed camp most for the development of. In this study, Povilaitis and Warner used the same list of 18 camp related outcomes as Sibthorp et al. used in their 2020 study previously discussed in this section. The camp related outcomes included in this list are: affinity for nature, appreciation for diversity, being present, college and career orientation, confidence, emotion regulation, empathy and compassion, how to live with peers, identity, independence, leadership, leisure skills, organization, perseverance, relationship skills, responsibility, teamwork, and willingness to try new things.

As a note: Tim Hortons Foundation Camps is an organization based in Ontario, Canada and comprises seven camps, one of which is located in Kentucky. The

organization uses thresholds from both Statistics Canada and the United States Census Bureau to determine the threshold for YLIB who attend their camps.

 After participants ranked their camp outcomes, Alumni were then asked to rank how important their top camp related outcomes were to their current daily lives (Povilaitis et al., 2023)

 The camp related outcomes that received the overall top scores for both "camp's role in development" and "importance…to daily life" were (in descending order): Appreciation for Diversity, Perseverance, Affinity for Nature, Willingness to Try New Things, Being Present and Teamwork (Povilaitis et al., 2023). See Figure 4 for further clarification.

Table 2
Scores for Camp Critical, Importance to Life, and Camp Impact Outcomes

Outcome	Camp Critical M (SD)	Importance to Life M (SD)	Camp Impact M (SD)
Willingness to Try New Things	8.5 (1.8)	8.01 (1.75)	11.8 (2.5)
Affinity for Nature	8.4 (2.0)	8.24 (1.84)	11.8 (2.2)
Perseverance	8.1 (2.0)	8.70 (1.58)	11.9 (2.0)
Being Present	8.0 (2.3)	8.31 (1.85)	11.7 (2.5)
Teamwork	8.0 (2.2)	8.40 (1.74)	11.7 (2.2)
Appreciation for Diversity	7.9 (2.2)	8.94 (1.51)	12.0 (2.2)
Relationship Skills	7.8 (2.3)	8.24 (1.86)	11.5 (2.4)
Self-Confidence	7.7 (2.2)	8.44 (1.82)	11.5 (2.4)
Leadership	7.6 (2.3)	7.83 (2.16)	11.0 (2.7)
Living with Peers	7.6 (2.5)	6.47 (2.75)	10.2 (2.9)
Independence	7.4 (2.4)	8.64 (1.71)	11.5 (2.3)
Empathy	7.3 (2.5)	8.50 (1.77)	11.4 (2.5)
Self-Identity	7.3 (2.5)	8.66 (1.73)	11.5 (2.5)
Responsibility	7.2 (2.4)	8.85 (1.42)	11.5 (2.2)
Leisure Skills	6.8 (2.6)	6.93 (2.51)	9.9 (3.0)
Self-Regulation	6.6 (2.7)	8.40 (1.87)	10.8 (2.7)
Organization	6.1 (2.8)	8.16 (1.98)	10.4 (2.7)
College and Career Orientation	5.4 (3.0)	8.02 (2.31)	9.9 (3.0)

Note. Camp Impact scores demonstrate participants' perceptions of camp's role in outcome development *and* the importance of these outcomes in everyday life. We created camp impact scores by calculating the square root of the sum of each variable squared (range of 0–14.14).

Figure 4: Table Representing Camp Related Outcomes in Povitalits et. al's 2023 study: Table is taken directly from source

In the study, participants were asked the following question: "In what one setting did you primarily develop your [camp outcome]?" (Povilaitis et al. p. 64, 2023) if they gave a high score to the question that asked if camp was "critical to the development" (Povilaitis et al. p. 64, 2023) of said camp related outcome. In these cases, all but one camp related outcome (responsibility) reported camp as "as being the primary setting where they developed most outcomes"(Povilaitis et al.p. 65, 2023). The outcome "responsibility" was linked first to Home and second to Camp.

As stated earlier, studies researching the role of camp in the development of social–emotional skills for youth are extensive. The three studies discussed in this section show that: a) social–emotional skills can be improved in a short, intense environment such as summer camp (Buskirk–Cohen, 2015), b) that art education in camp settings may have unique value as it relates to the development of social-emotional learning skills at summer camp (Buskirk–Cohen, 2015) and c) that summer camp programs can have a long term positive impact on youth (Sibthorp et. al 2020 & Povilaitis et. al 2023).

Rural Education and Community Based Learning: Types of Communities

Before going into depth on rural art education and rural communities, it is important to understand that there is no one definition for what is considered rural. Donovan and Brown (2017) point this out in their working document *Leveraging Change: Increasing Access to Arts Education in Rural Areas* which will be discussed in the next section of this paper. Additionally, according to Gjelten's 1982 *A Typology of Rural School Settings* there are at least five different categories of rural communities:stable rural, depressed rural, high growth rural, reborn rural, and isolated

rural. Figure 5 shows the unique characteristics that make up each of these types of rural communities according to Gjelten.

DEPRESSED RURAL
high economic insecurity and therefore high out migration; typically moderate to high minority populations

STABLE
economically stable and affluent; typically majority white populations

ISOLATED RURAL
communities isolated by the geographic barriers such as water or mountains

GJELTEN'S TYPOLOGY OF RURAL SCHOOL SETTINGS

HIGH GROWTH
communities with high job development but where local infrastructure often stays the same

REBORN RURAL
typically scenic rural area that attracts city–dwellers seeking a rural lifestyle

Figure 5: Visual Representation of the Rural Community Categories as defined by (Gjelten, 1982)

In conclusion, no two rural communities are alike and this should be remembered when reviewing the impact of the different models of community–based learning discussed in the following section. The point of community–based learning is that it reflects the unique interests of the specific community in which it functions. Additionally, it is important to remember the nuance of rural education and that rural communities should not be pigeonholed into predetermined notions of what a typical rural American community must be like.

Community Based Learning in a Rural Setting

During the literature research process, nearly all community based art curriculum sources I found were based in rural communities – the implication possibly being that community based learning (CBL) is the key to successful rural art education. For this reason I will be combining Rural Education and Community Based Learning into one category of this literature review.

In this section I will first introduce Community Based Learning (CBL) by discussing Karen Keifer–Boyd's CBL model shared in her chapter "By The People: A Community Based Art Curriculum" in the book: "Real–World Readings in Art Education." I will also review Patricia A. Bauch's 2001 study "School–Community Partnerships in Rural Schools: Leadership, Renewal and a Sense of Place," which outlines the rural community connections key to a building school–community model. Once I have covered what a CBL model might look like in rural communities, I will review the challenges (and possible solutions) to accessible rural art education as laid out by Donovan and Brown in their working document *Leveraging Change: Increasing Access to Arts Education in Rural Areas*. Finally, I will discuss Clark and Zimmerman's research program, ProjectARTS, and review the three rural settings in which a CBL curriculum model was piloted.

Karen Keifer Boyd's Community–Based Art Curriculum.

In her chapter titled "By The People: A Community– Based Art Curriculum," Karen Keifer Boyd discusses her experience creating a CBL model in Oregon's McKenzie River School District and introduces CBL as a way to build an art curriculum that champions teachers, community members, local artists, and local culture. In 1989,

Keifer–Boyd designed a CBL art curriculum in collaboration with the teachers and community members in the McKenzie River school district. Keifer–Boyd followed a carefully laid out process that first involved planning and piloting potential art lessons directly with classroom teachers. In the text, Keifer–Boyd does not seem to make a distinction between general classroom teachers and art teachers – so it is assumed any teacher in the district who was interested participated in the full process. After the initial planning and piloting phase, Keifer–Boyd turned to community members to build investment and feedback, and then returned to teachers for the final input. Keifer–Boyd also included local artists in the curriculum in order to develop "appreciation in students and other community members for local aesthetics and art making practices" (Keifer–Boyd, p. 162, 2000).

Keifer–Boyd's model was so successful that by 1990 – only a year after the program was implemented– it was deemed the "best in the state" by the State accreditation team (Keifer–Boyd, 2000). Unfortunately, the program's success did not lead to long term sustainability. By 1998 budget cuts, new graduation requirements for in–service teachers that impact in–service trainings, and community demographic changes (i.e. community members leaving the community for better job opportunities, etc.) led to a serious decline in the quality and size of the curriculum program (Keifer–Boyd, 2000). It is important to remember that although the full program was not sustainable due to outside circumstances, there were parts of the curriculum that stayed despite these changes: a 5th grade Quilt Raffle Project, lessons that integrate local aesthetic and environment, and some school teachers who continued teaching their individual art lessons in the classroom.

In conclusion, Keifer–Boyd's CBL model shows the value of a CBL art curriculum in creating a successful art education program in rural schools (notwithstanding economic factors impacting their longevity) and also provides a possible model for how camps and schools can work together in support of rural art education.

Patricia Bauch's School–Community Partnerships.

In Bauch's article "School–Community Partnerships in Rural Schools: Leadership, Renewal and a Sense of Place," Bauch "develops a set of six types of connections in rural communities important to developing an authentic school–community partnership model" (Bauch, p. 205, 2001). The connections are as follows: social capital, sense of place, parent involvement, church ties, school–business–agency relationships, and community as a curricular response. Read below for a brief overview of each connection outline by Bauch:

1. **Social Capital**: based on Coleman's (1987) conceptualization and involves working with social norms and participating in community networks.

2. **Sense of Place**: "involves a rootedness in one's community and the desire to cherish and cultivate one's local community" (Bauch p. 212, 2001 *citing* Howley, Harmon, & Leopald, 1996). Bauch also references Hummon's (1994) argument that a person's worldview is impacted by a person's sense of residence.

3. **Parent Involvement**: Bauch specifically references research that points to the typical smaller size of rural schools correlating to higher parent involvement (Sun, Hobbs, & Elder, 1994 as cited by Bauch 2001) (Bauch, 1992; Bauch & Goldring, 1996 as cited by Bauch 2001) and parent involvement being a key indicator of

student success (e.g., Epstein, 1995; Tompkins & Deloney, 1994 as cited by Bauch 2001).

4. **Church Ties**: "In a recent study of rural communities, I (Bauch, 2001) found that ties between the local church congregation (usually there is only one) and the school are closely linked….The nature of church and school ties needs to be more closely examined to determine how churches contribute to the social capital of a community." (Bauch, p. 214–215, 2001)

5. **School–Business–Agency Relationships**: Bauch specifically points out how different local businesses can be (and often are) capitalized on to fill the funding and personal gaps left by lack of state and federal support.

6. **Community as a Curricular Response**: Bauch specifically refers to sources that point out how "Historical sites, local oral history, geographical formations, wilderness and wildlife experiences, land cultivation and development, forestry, and numerous community activities and events provide authentic learning experiences for students and motivate them to become interested in their communities "(Bauch, p. 216, 2001)

It can be argued that if a rural camp is interested in working directly with those in their local community, these connections can form a roadmap into forming long term partnerships with the local community.

In conclusion – as camps exist in communities – camps can look to these key connections laid out by Bauch, as a possible road map for how to develop meaningful partnerships with local communities. As well as how to work with local communities in the creation of a meaningful CBL art curriculum that is relevant to the local community.

Donovan & Brown, Leveraging Change.

When considering a camp as an extension of school education, one might argue that camps can best serve as said education extension when they best work to meet the needs of their local youth as it relates to art education. In rural communities, this might look like responding to the challenges to accessible art education in rural communities. In their working document titled *Leveraging Change: Increasing Access to Arts Education in Rural Areas* published in 2007 Donovan and Brown lay out these challenges and then provide possible solutions to those challenges– using literature reviews, interviews with rural art educations across the country, and cross sector convenings in order to effectively expand accessibility to art education in rural communities. The challenges identified by Donovan and Brown were as follows: poverty and lack of economic opportunity, geographic distance, the recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators to rural communities, lack of funding for art education, policies that do not support the arts, limited collection and analysis of data (meaning that there are fewer studies and fewer funds allocated to support possible future studies) and lack of representation in creative economy initiatives – meaning that there are simply less people supporting the arts at the table.

The "promising practices and opportunities" (Donovan & Brown, p.9 2020) uncovered were: the creation of rural networks, adopting a differentiated approach to each region, building on rural assets, making effective use of data, employing placemaking strategies to support the arts sector, developing arts–friendly police to create change, using collaboration as a tool to create change, professional development as a tool

to retain teachers, identifying and using resources creatively, and using tech to span geographic distance.

There are at least four promising practices and opportunities outlined by Donovan and Brown that rural camps may look to if they want to expand accessible art education in their local community: the creation of rural networks (CRN), building on rural assets, using collaboration as a tool to create change (CTCC) and identifying and using resources creatively (IURC). I will focus on how camps can build on rural assets.

In the text, Donovan and Brown specifically refer to nature and the natural beauty of rural areas as one rural asset, stating: "The natural beauty and quality of life often draws people to live in rural areas. Artists often are drawn to live and work in rural areas…Communities are using the arts to highlight one of the most important characteristics of rural areas—the natural beauty that often goes hand in hand with a rural context." (Donovan and Brown, p. 45,2020).

To relate this to art education in a camp setting: camps are often designed with the idea of beauty of nature in mind, and have a simple and rustic appeal that draws nature lovers. Additionally, camps exist within communities and could take advantage of their local assets through the formation of community partnerships. This is especially relevant when such partnerships could be formed with local artists, local art museums, and local art educators.

Clark and Zimmerman, ProjectARTS.

The three sources I previously discussed all highlight different components to consider in a CBL art curriculum in rural communities. However, the U.S. is a diverse country with countless subcultures and while many rural communities may share some

similar characteristics and challenges, no two communities are the same and each community has its own strengths and challenges as they relate to quality, accessible art education. The three–year research and development program, ProjectARTS, exemplified this by leading three case studies of community based art curriculum in three different types of rural communities across the U.S. In ProjectARTS, each school worked with the local community in different ways and created an art curriculum that reflected the unique culture of each community. The researchers lead a three–year research and development program called Project ARTS (Arts for Rural Teachers and Students):

> "ProjectARTS (Arts for Rural Teachers and Students) was a three–year research and development program designed to serve students with high interest and abilities in the visual and performing arts, and who attended seven rural elementary schools in the United States. All participating schools served the needs of students from economically disadvantaged and racially and/or ethnically diverse backgrounds. Project ARTS purposes were to identify, in grade three, high interest and ability visual and performing arts students; to implement curricula in the fourth and fifth grades with the same students throughout the project; and to evaluate the successes of these efforts. Local teachers, parents, community members, and ProjectARTS staff developed and implemented identification procedures and arts curricula and conducted assessment strategies." (Clark and Zimmerman, p. 34, 2000)

This program was run in seven different schools across three different rural locations. Each of the three different rural locations were influenced by the different sub–cultural groups making up each site. In the two participating Indiana schools, the

participants were largely people of Scottish–Irish, German and Native American ancestry. Additionally, there were some participants with roots in Southern Appalachia. In New Mexico, one school served a majority Hispanic–American population in northern New Mexico – with family roots going back as far as 1500 in the local area. The second school in New Mexico was located in a pueblo and served entirely Native American students. Finally, the three schools in South Carolina served a largely Gullah population.

In order to develop curriculums that reflected and centered the local culture, each school involved teachers, parents, community members and Project ARTS Staff in the development and implementation of curriculum. Teacher workshops that taught curriculum development were also provided. For a look at examples of the CBL lessons created and taught in the different communities, see Figure 6.

PROJECT ARTS
LESSON AND CURRICULUM EXAMPLES

INDIANA	INDIANA	NEW MEXICO	NORTHERN NEW MEXICO	SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY	SCHOOL GARDEN & FAMILY RECIPES	PUEBLO ARCHITECTURE & LOCAL ARTIST VISITS	MURAL ART	GULLAH STORY TELLING
Students documented schools, homes, families, and places in their community, with assistance from a local photographer. Students also used video cameras to document daily life and community events	Students designed a school garden using landscape architecture and then create a group recipe book with family recipes	Students learned from parents who were local artists. They also visited a local museum and learned about pueblo architecture and traditional art.	Students learned from local artists and observed mural making students then "designed and painted a mural in their school, with a focus on the history of their community"	Students learned the importance of storytelling in other cultures and the role of storytelling in Gullah culture. They then listened to local storytellers "called 'liars' and illustrated and made videos of their stories

Figure 6: ProjectArts example lessons within each participating community

This study also offers insight into the impact community based curriculum can have on the development of positive social–emotional skills in students. For example, selected students from across the sites were able to participate in teleconferencing during the curriculum process and the following quote speaks to the value of creating opportunities to create cross–cultural connections in the classroom:

"Expecting to find each other strange and different, Project ARTS students from rural Indiana and the pueblo were pleased to discover they shared many interests, such as participating in arts experiences, playing basketball, and romping in the snow." (Clark and Zimmerman, p. 38, 2000)

Additionally, the article points out that "for many students, focus on local cultures can become a source of pride, enhanced self–esteem, and validation"(Clark and Zimmerman, p. 38, 2000) and that "when students from rural settings own artistic heritages, and those of their local communities, are incorporated into art curricula, students, parents, teachers and community members can learn to value traditions of their own heritages and those of others" (Clark and Zimmerman, p. 39, 2000).

There is also an interesting connection between this study and the article written by Bauch discussed earlier in this section. Early in her article, Bauch makes that point that as federal investment increased in schools across the US school curriculum and structures, the interests of local communities were decentered:

"Likewise, Thomas Jefferson believed that the economic and political stability of America rested in the political decisions made by communities. In contrast, Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists believed in a system run by an urban elite

that would take a more global view of politics and economics and use its power in the national interest. During the Progressive Era, schools became increasingly professionalized (including a reliance on "experts" and standardization for the sake of efficiency), distancing themselves from parents and the community and establishing centralized bureaucracies no longer controlled by the local community. This came at a time when economic and political power was shifting to urban centers and the influx of immigrants made national leaders wary of providing too much power to local communities. Thus, the state and a nationally controlled urban model of schooling became prominent and were held up as an example for all schooling (Cremin, 1976, 1978). The tension remains today between the desire for local control of schools and the reality of a national culture and agenda. Those who control schools control the aims of schooling" (Bauch, p. 206, 2001)

Clark and Zimmerman spoke to this distance and disconnect between local communities and school curriculum when they reflected that "In each school, the curricula and programs existing prior to Project Arts were based on statewide guidelines and generally ignored the unique historical and cultural backgrounds of the students" (Clark and Zimmerman, p. 35, 2000) – thereby creating an art curriculum in which the student may often not see themselves represented.

In conclusion, this study shows one way that a community–based art curriculum can be valuable for rural communities. Additionally, as camps exist within already established communities, a community–based curriculum could create a pathway for the development of partnerships between camps and their local communities.

Gaps in the Literature

While I was able to find an abundance of sources discussing the role summer camps can play on the development of social–emotional skills in youth, there was only one source that discussed how art making in a camp setting can be utilized to encourage and support the development of social–emotional skills (Buskirk–Cohen, 2015). Additionally, Buskirk–Cohen's source was also the only literature I found that discussed art making in a camp setting. Yet, even that source does not provide a full representation of art making in an overnight summer camp, where the relationship dynamics formed are impacted simply by the time spent with camp peers. There was also no discussion – that this researcher could find in the time available – that discussed the role camps might play in their local communities.

This study seeks to a) review what art making may look like in different overnight camp settings and b) uncover the possible partnerships camps may support with their local communities.

Summary

The literature discussed in this chapter lays out the history of camp's role as a tool for social–emotional development in youth, as well as the role camp's currently play in the development of social–emotional skills in youth. As the research in this thesis is specific to camps in rural communities, the literature also looks at the different nuances of rural communities, from the different types of rural communities to the different assets as well as challenges art education in rural communities may face. Finally, the literature discussed in this section reviews examples of community–based art curriculum in

consideration for what role camps may play in a form of community based curriculum for

rural communities.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Setting

The research was conducted across three summer camps located in rural communities at least 45 minutes outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In order to maintain privacy of returning campers to the best of this study's capacity, each camp will be kept anonymous and referred to only by their pseudonym that will reflect each camp's defining art education program; the following section explains in detail the intention behind the chosen details and also provides a visual representation of said pseudonyms (Figure 7). In addition, the location of each camp will not be disclosed beyond the defining traits of: rural and located at least 45 minutes outside of Philadelphia.

Participating Camps & Description of Pseudonyms.

Figure 7 provides a visual representation of the pseudonyms as described in the following paragraphs. In order to select pseudonyms that accurately represented the role of each camp in this study, the analogy of a Tree was chosen in order to break down each camp's relationship to its art education curriculum – with the Tree representing Art Education. Therefore, the camp assigned the pseudonym "Tree Camp" would be the only participating camp that offered primarily art education as its core camp programming. Art Education at this camp is the center at which this camp is built.

Continuing with the tree metaphor, I will now describe the **Leaf Camp**. The **Leaf Camp** is a traditional summer camp that offers a wide range of summer activities, including Art Education. However, unlike the **Tree Camp**, Art Education is *not* at the core of this camp's programming – it is one piece of a larger whole. A reminder that the

Leaf Camp pseudonym is *not* a judgment on the quality of or importance of Art Education offered at this camp – remember that it is the leaves of a tree that provides shade and shelter.

Now that **Tree Camp** and **Leaf Camp** have been explained in full detail, the **Branch Camp** pseudonym will now be explained – as the pseudonym assigned to it only makes sense in the context of the other two camps. Similar to the **Leaf Camp**, the **Branch Camp** is a traditional summer camp that offers a wide range of activities, including Art Education. However, unlike the **Leaf Camp**, the **Branch Camp** staffs a full Art Department to plan and run the summer Art Education programming, and also houses more art making equipment and a larger art making facility. It is important to note that this is still not a perfect analogy due to the fact that the data shows that art appears to play a similar role at both the Branch and **Leaf Camps**. Additionally, the **Leaf Camp** is a much smaller camp in comparison to the **Branch Camp** and nearly all of their programming is offered on a much smaller scale than the **Branch Camp**, owing simply to its size. From this point forward, the camps will now be discussed in this order: **Tree Camp**, **Branch Camp**, and **Leaf Camp**.

Figure 7: Visual Representation of Participating Camp Pseudonyms
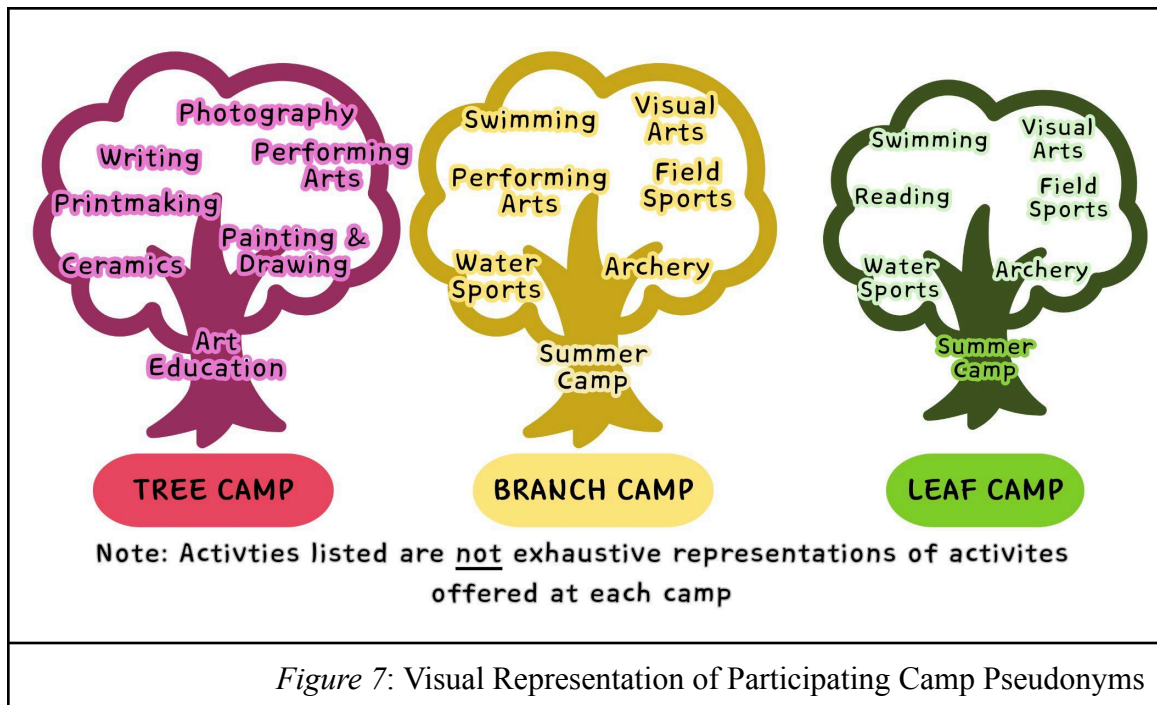
As previously stated, I intentionally chose three camps that offer art education programs across a spectrum of size. It is important to note that this study is *not* providing a statement comparing the <u>quality</u> of art education programs at each camp. While this study will, by its very nature, be comparing the art education programs of each camp, this is not done so in order to rank the programs from "best" to "worst." Rather, this comparison is done in the good faith understanding and belief that human development occurs best in collaborative environments and when we look to our peers for insight in how things might be done *differently*.

Participants.

Due to limitations related to time and availability, the number of participants from each site varied, with the most participants from a site being four and the least

participants from a site being one. Figure 8 provides a detailed description of each

participant from each site.

Camp	Participant	Role / Responsibility	Number of Interviews
Tree Camp	Camp Director	Policy, schedules, hiring, maintaining licensing and accreditation requirements, providing support as "primary problem solver" in the summer"	2
Tree Camp	Curriculum Director	Manages and supervises art* department heads: supporting curriculum, training staff, supporting leadership staff on implementing curriculum and supporting new teachers	2
Camp	Participant	Role / Responsibility	Number of Interviews
Branch Camp	Camp Director	In charge of all things on the girls side of camp: hiring, recruiting campers, retaining staff and campers, events, hiring, curriculum planning, ordering supplies etc.	2
Camp	Participant	Role / Responsibility	Number of Interviews
Leaf Camp	Camp Director	Running summer camp: hiring, training, coordination etc.	2
Leaf Camp	Outdoor Center Director	Runs off season programming with schools and retreat	2

Camp	Participant	Role / Responsibility	Number of Interviews
		groups / Provides additional support during the summer	
Leaf Camp	**Summer Staff Alumni: Camper Advocate (2018 & 2023)**	Provide extra support to campers who may need it and help provide tools to counselors on how to best support campers / Also has worked at the camp across various roles for over 5 years, including as a year round assistant director	1
Leaf Camp	**Summer Staff Alumni: Program Director (2023)**	Planned weekly summer camp program schedules / Also has worked at the camp across various roles for over 5 years, including as a year round assistant director	1
Figure 8: List of participants at each site			

Researcher Role.

My role as a researcher is as a non–participant observer. All data was collected via one site visit per participating site, and interviews with available participants from each site. I had no outside connection with each of the participating sites prior to beginning the researcher–participant path. Each site was cold–emailed with an introductory email that included an offer to meet with the site's director in order to address any concerns prior to agreeing to work with me as a non-participant observer. As part of the initial process, all sites were assured that their anonymity as participants

would be maintained as much as I would be able. A sample of the initial cold email can

be seen in Figure 9**.**

Good Afternoon!

I am a graduate student at Moore College of Art & Design pursuing a teaching certification and Master's degree in Art Education. As part of the graduate program I will be completing a Master's thesis study this spring and have chosen to conduct a series of small case studies researching art education in rural camp settings. **I would love to work with your camp as a case study participant**. For further clarification as to what this case study will look like, I have attached the current abstract for my study as well as the participant consent forms for your organization and a copy of the participant bill of rights, **I would love to chat with you via Zoom to answer any questions or concerns you may have before agreeing to work with me.**

In short, as part of this study, **I will visit each site at least once and interview the program director(s) responsible for art education at least once.** Additionally, depending on each site I may interview a member of summer staff (2023), a camper from the most recent summer (2023), and a member of the local community who has a connection to the camp.

Finally, I have CC'd Lauren Stitcher, the art education program director at Moore as well as my thesis professor, Katherine Lee – so they may be available to you for further clarification as needed. **If you are interested, please let me know your availability, so that we may schedule a time to meet and further discuss.**

I am looking forward to hearing from you,

(Courtney) Paige Colditz, She/Her

Figure 9: Example of Email Template sent to potential participating camp sites

Research Procedure

Once sites agreed to be participants in this study, the first step in the research

process was to complete a site visit. This site visit functioned as a tour of the camp, in

which the guide(s) – often including at least the camp director – provided a tour of the

camp's general area, with special attention paid to any visual art making facilities,

camper art, and community art. It was during these site visits that I collected the majority

of the visual data seen in Chapter 4 – including photos of camper art, community art, and

art making facilities. The site visits functioned as a sort of pre–interview, in that the site

guide(s) would often provide key details about how their camps functioned and how

campers were supported. For example, at each site visit the structure of camper choice

and mental health support was brought up by each of the guide(s). After each site voice

memos were created to summarize the experience and reflect on any of my initial

observations. The data collected at each site informed the final set of questions used as a

guide for the initial interviews with participants. Figures 10 and 11 provides an overview

of the interview guide created for interviews. As a note, the questions asked in each

interview varied based on the participant's experience and knowledge.

Year Round Staff <u>Sample</u> Interview Questions

Camp Programming
1. Briefly describe your role in camp
2. What is your camp mission statement?
3. How does this mission statement influence the programming and structure of the camp?
4. Describe the (Camper Mental Health Support) Role.
   a. When was this role created?
   b. What are the qualifications for this role?

Community
1. Describe the community surrounding your camp
2. In what ways do you work with the local community in support of camp programming? / What outside organizations or community members do you work with in support of camp programming?
3. Have members of the local community expressed interest in camp programming in any way?
4. Describe the community of your camp
   a. Who makes up the community of your camp?
5. What communities do your campers come from? (Local or otherwise)

Year Round Staff Sample Interview Questions

Camp Activities (Funtivities)
1. What are your most popular activities at this camp?
2. What are the most popular art activities at your camp?

Art Education
1. Who creates the art curriculum at this camp?
2. What are the most popular art making mediums / activities at this camp?
    a. Do you notice that these campers enjoy these specific art making activities for a reason?
3. Have you observed any camp led art making activities?
    a. Can you share any observations you made about how campers engaged with the art they made?
    b. Observations about how campers engaged with each other as they made art?
4. Has there been a discussion or expressed interest around expanding the current camp art programming?
5. What would be needed to expand art education at this camp?
6. In your perspective, what role does art making play in a camp setting?
7. In your perspective, what is the purpose of art making a camp setting?

Figure 10: Sample List of Interview Questions

Leaf Camp – Alum Summer Staff: Sample Interview Questions

Camper Advocate Questions
1. Briefly describe your role in camp
2. Tell me more about your role as camper advocate (the camper advocate had worked at the camp over a number of years in a number of different roles, although this interview was specifically about their role as a camper advocate)
3. Any observations about the impact the role the camper advocate has on campers? On staff?
4. Did you ever utilize art making in your role as camper advocate? Or consider it?
5. What were the most popular activities during your time working at camp?
6. Did you observe any art making activities at camp?
    a. What observations did you make about how campers engaged with the activity?
    b. The Materials?
    c. Each other?

7. What is the role of art in summer camp?
8. What is the purpose of art in summer camp?

Program Director Questions
1. Briefly describe your role in camp
2. Explain the process of creating the program schedules at camp
3. Explain the process of creating some of the unique activities at camp
4. What were the most popular activities during your time working at camp?
5. What were the most popular ART activities during your time working at camp?
6. Did you create any art curriculum at this camp?
7. Did you observe any art making activities at camp?
   a. What observations did you make about how campers engaged with the activity?
   b. The Materials?
   c. Each other?
8. In your perspective, what role does art making play in a camp setting?
9. In your perspective, what is the purpose of art making a camp setting?

Figure 11: Sample List of Interview Questions

Interviews with each participant were scheduled after the site visits and on an as–available basis. All interviews took place over Zoom and Google Meets; this ensured that participants were comfortable in their own environment and also made scheduling easier, so that time did not have to be compensated for travel to each site for the interviews. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed for data collection purposes. All participants were notified and provided consent to be recorded.

Ethical Considerations.

Participants were provided with consent forms and a description of the study and provided informed consent to participate. The names of all participants in the study were changed to protect their privacy. Participants did not receive any form of payment for

participating in the study. Participants were able to revoke their consent at any time, in which case all questionnaires and participant information of the student would have been destroyed. All information was stored in a secure computer, and hard copies of information were locked away.

Biases

As a former camper and camp summer staff, I as the researcher have a clear bias in support of summer camp youth development programs. Additionally, as an art educator, I have a bias in support of art education. Combined, these two biases create a much stronger bias in support of quality art education in summer camp and camp youth development programs.

Due to this clear bias, it is important to refer back to the earlier statement that the data collected in this study is *not* collected under the notion of ranking each camp's art education from best to worst. The study was completed through a non judgemental lens, with the understanding that each camp offers quality art education within the structures it has set in place of its own camp programming.

Research Methods

Type of Study and Data Collection.

The data collected in this study was collected via a multisite case study across three summer camps with varying degrees of art education programming – in order to gain a nuanced understanding of what art education in summer camp programs can look like.

Site Visit: Observation and Pre–Interview

The first step in the data collection process was the previously discussed site visit in which I observed the overall facilities of the camp and conducted an informal pre–interview with the site guide(s) who I would later be interviewing. The site visits provided the foundation on which I would conduct the later interviews.

Site Visit: Visual Data

In addition to general observation and conducting an in–formal pre–interview, I also collected visual data during the site visits in the format of photographs of art making facilities, community art and camper art.

Interviews

In total, I conducted 12 interviews from which the bulk of the data used in this study was collected.

Data Analysis: Organization, Coding, and Methods

Visual Data was organized by Community Art , Camper Art and Art Facilities. Data from interviewers were coded deductively across the main themes of: camp programming and structure, community connections, community of camp, art education, and social–emotional learning). The data deduced from interviews were then coded inductively to reveal further themes.

Timeline for the Study.

After my IRB Proposal was improved in January 2024, I began cold emailing potential sites expressing my interest in working with their site in support of my graduate thesis. If a site responded with like interested in participating in the study, I would first schedule a preliminary Zoom meeting with the site in order to introduce myself, further

explain the study, and open the floor for any questions or concerns regarding the study. If by the end of the meeting the site was sure they wanted to participate in the study, I would then schedule a site visit. During this site visit the primary emphasis was on visiting and documenting the art-making facilities of each camp and any art at the camp, but I would also be interested in seeing the full site in order to understand the full context within which art existed at each camp. Additionally, the site visits served as a sort of "pre-interview" in which I would discuss the camp programming and art making at the camp with whoever provided the tour. I would also have consent forms completed at the site visit if they were not completed prior to the visit.

Interviews were scheduled after the site visits and were scheduled based on each individual participant's availability – meaning that there was no specific order in which I would interview participants. The participant list grew during the interview process based on the interview process. Meaning that if an interview participant mentioned a different staff position in relation to art making or program development at the camp, I would then request a meeting with the new potential participants. I would request a meeting by sending an email draft to the camp director who would then forward the email to any potential participants, this was done in order to ensure the privacy of any potential participants. This process resulted in interviews the the two **Leaf Camp** Summer Staff Alumni Participants.

All collected data was organized, analyzed and prepared for the Thesis Submission in July 2024 and Thesis Presentation in August 2024.

Month	Process	Steps Accomplished
December	Proposal Hearing	Submit full proposal as requested and participate in proposal hearing
January	Begin seeking participating site approvals and permissions	As soon as IRB was granted potential sites were contacted with initial letter of inquiry
	Ongoing Literature Review	Continue Literature Review
February	Continue seeking participating site approvals	Sites began to respond to initial letter of inquiry Preliminary Meetings were scheduled and completed with first two sites
	Ongoing Literature Review	Continue Literature Review
March	Continue seeking participating site approvals	Preliminary meeting with final site scheduled and completed
	Begin Field Study	Site Visits for all camps Interviews with participants begin
	Begin Coding	Interviews are transcribed, organized, and lightly coded
	Ongoing Literature Review	Continue Literature Review
April	Complete Field Study	Final interviews with participants
	Analyze, Code, and Organize Data	Interview transcriptions are thoroughly analyzed, coded and organized for data
	Ongoing Literature Review	Complete Literature Review
May– June	Begin and Complete Chapter 4 and 5	Write Chapters 4 and 5 based on collected data
	Edit	Begin edits of all Chapters 1-5

July – August	Finalize Edits	Complete edits of full thesis
	Submit Thesis	Submit thesis for printing
	Thesis Presentation	Complete and present thesis presentation

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to: a) understand how camp art programming supports the development of S.E.D. in youth and b) learn how rural summer camps can work with the local community to provide art programming that supports S.E.D to local youth. In order to answer the first part of my research question, I had to understand the role of art in the bigger picture of camp programming and I was also interested in comparing the programming and structure across three camps with varying levels of art programming – the **Tree Camp**, the **Branch Camp**, and the **Leaf Camp** – in order to understand the full context in which art exists at camps.

Data Collection and Organization

The primary method of collecting data was through interviews, see Figures 10 and 11, In Chapter III, for a rough list of the questions asked in the interviews, and see Figure 8 under *Participants* in Chapter III, for the list of interviewees at each camp and their role at camp. It is important to note that these questions varied depending on each conversation. Each interview was treated like a guided conversation in which I would respond and inquire into anything new that came up during the interview (or site visit) and would also sometimes not ask a question on my list if it did not seem relevant or was already answered during an answer to a previous question. All full time staff were interviewed twice, while the two summer staff alumni were interviewed only once.

Visual data was also collected through photographs taken during site visits. There are three categories of visual data: Art Making Facilities, Camper Art, and Community Art.

Adjustments of Methodology.

Adjustments were made in methodology as it related to lesson observations and potential participants due to limitation of time and potential participant availability.

Adjustment: Observations.

The first adjustment to methodology made was observation of lessons. I had initially hoped to observe any off season art lessons that might have taken place while I was conducting my study. To my knowledge there was no such art lesson or art making activity available for me to observe during the data collecting process.

Adjustment: List of Participants.

The second adjustment made was the list of available participants for interviews. I had initially hoped to interview one from each of the following participant roles in each camp: Camp Director, Summer Staff Alum, and Local Community Member. Due to limited availability and time constraints, I was only able to interview two summer staff alumni from the **Leaf Camp.** Due to time constraints, I was unable to interview a local community member from each of the participating camps.

Review of Participants and Participating Sites.

Site A: Tree Camp		
Description:	Summer camp and arts center that offers year round and summer art programming almost exclusively (the camp also offers one sports camp during the summer). Summer art programs offer classes that range across multiple mediums in both Visual and Performing arts. This camp has a wider range of facilities and equipment devoted to art making – such as a kiln, darkroom, and a large visual art building with four separate classrooms, called the "Art Barn".	
Summary of Camp Values	Safety, fun, community, and personal growth youth–focused, youth–centered, student–led, student–driven, choice–based	
Participant and Roles	**Camp Director** Running Summer Camp: Policy, schedules, hiring, maintaining licensing and accreditation requirements, providing support as "primary problem solver" in the summer"	**Curriculum Director** Manages and supervises art* department heads: supporting curriculum, training staff, supporting leadership staff on implementing curriculum and supporting new teachers
Site B: Branch Camp		
Description:	All girls summer camp that offers traditional summer camp programs with a seasonally staffed arts department. The **Branch Camp** – currently – has an "Art Shed" with two interior rooms for supplies, and houses a kiln and interior sink. The "Art Shed" has an exterior work space for campers that also includes a large outdoor sink with multiple spouts.	
Summary of Camp Values	Youth and Character Development, Camper Empowerment, Teach the Values of: Truth & Honesty, Caring, Respect, Courage, Inclusion, and Responsibility	
Participant and Roles	**Camp Director** In charge of all things on the girls side of camp: hiring, recruiting campers, retaining staff and campers, events, hiring, curriculum planning, ordering supplies etc.	

Site C: Leaf Camp	
Description:	Summer camp – based on a religious and cultural group– that offers traditional summer camp programs that include art activities, but these art activities are limited to basic art supplies and art taught by general supporting counselors. There is a seasonal summer role titled "Art Director," but this role is solely responsible for the maintenance of the "Art Shack" which houses all art supplies and is the place where all art activities are made. This camp has a small "Art Shack" for housing supplies and an attached gazebo as that art making space for campers. The "Art Shack" also has one large sink attached to the exterior.
Summary of Camp Values	Build life skills (social and physical), develop independence, follow religious / cultural core values
Participants and Roles	**Camp Director** Running summer camp: hiring, training, coordination etc. **Outdoor Education Director** Runs off season programming with schools and retreat groups / Provides additional support during the summer **Summer Staff Alum: Camper Advocate** Provide extra support to campers who may need it and help provide tools to counselors on how to best support campers / Also has worked at the camp across various roles for over 5 years, including as a year round assistant director **Summer Staff Alum: Summer Director*** Planned weekly summer camp program schedules / Also has worked at the camp across various roles for over 5 years, including as a year round assistant director etc.

Figure 12: Description of Each Participating Site

Presentation of Data

The following sections will review the five main themes and the sub themes that were uncovered during the data collection process:

1. Curriculum and Program Development

    a. The Impact of Camper Choice

2. Art at Camp

    a. Review of Art Activities at Each Camp

    b. Art Making Facilities

    c. Camper Art

    d. Camp Community Art

3. Community Connections

4. Social-Emotional Learning and Art Making in Camp Settings

5. Camp Community Art

I will summarize this section by discussing the overarching theme of Camp-Classroom Crossover.

Curriculum and Programming Development.

In this section, I will discuss three components of summer camp curriculum development as they appeared in this study and as they relate to art programming:

1. The overall goals of each camp

2. The order in which summer programming curriculum is developed and led

3. How summer art programming is developed and led in each camp.

The general structure of curriculum and program development at each camp will also be discussed in order to be able to understand the context in which the summer art

program functions. This will be more relevant as it relates to the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**, since all curriculum developed at the **Tree Camp** is art curriculum.

Schedule Comparison

Figure 13 shows examples of the summer camp schedule structure of each participating site. Each site provided schedule samples during the data process and in order to maintain privacy to the best of my ability, I rewrote those samples in Figure 13 so that any identifying information could be removed – such as camp labels or unique designs. The language of specific activities or *some* events (such as breaks) may have been omitted or edited in order to further maintain the privacy of each camp. The most relevant part of the schedules is where Camper Choice plays a role, as such, the activities impacted by Camper Choice are marked with an asterisk (*).

Tree Camp: AM		Branch Camp: AM		Leaf Camp: AM	
7:00	Optional AM Activities*	7:00	Wake Up / Cabin Cleanup	8-9:45	Breakfast / Cabin Cleanup
8:00	Breakfast	8-10:00	Breakfast and Camp Meetings	9:45-10:45	Camp Meeting
					Activity Period 1* / Swim Period 1
9:00	Cabin Cleanup	9-10:00	Jr. Daily Choice*	10:45-12	Camp Meeting
			Sr. Daily Choice*		Activity Period 2* / Swim Period 2
9:30-12	Majors & Studio Time*	10-11:00	Jr. Cabin Activity / Swim Period		
			Sr. Skills Club 1*		
		11-12:00	Jr. Cabin Activity / Swim Period		
			Sr. Skills Club 2*		
Tree Camp: PM		**Branch Camp: PM**		**Leaf Camp: PM**	
12-2:00	Lunch Break	1-3:30	Camp Meeting and Lunch Break	12:00	Free Time*
2-5:00	Minors*	3:30-4:30	Jr. Daily Choice*	12:30-3:00	Lunch Break
			Sr. Daily Choice* / Swim Period		
5:00	Free Choice*	4:30-5:30	Jr. Cabin Activity	3-4:00	Camp Meeting
			Sr. Daily Choice / Swim Period		Activity Period 3* / Swim Period 3
6:30	Dinner	5:30-8:00	Camp Meeting & Dinner Break	4-5:15	Camp Meeting
7:30	PM Activity*	8-9:00	PM Activity		Activity Period 4*
9-10:30	Lights Out	9-10:00	Lights Out	5-9:00	Free Time / Dinner / PM Activity / Lights Out

Figure 13: Participating Site Sample Summer Camp Schedules

Tree Camp Curriculum Development

Tree Camp Scheduling and Camper Choice. During registration, **Tree Camp** participants choose a Major (subjects ranging from performing arts to visual arts) and depending on staff availability, campers are placed into their preferred Major's department. During camp, campers spend the first half of their days in their Majors. They first attend an instructional block and then spend the rest of the morning in a studio block dedicated to camper art making. In the afternoon, campers then attend Minor classes which can vary year to year but historically have ranged in topics from experimental art making to color theory to folk dancing.

Tree Camp Curriculum Development. The **Tree Camp** curriculum for the summer programs is first developed by the camp director and curriculum director who work together to design a loose framework. Teachers then design lessons according to that framework (Figure 14).

Interviewer:	Who creates the art curriculum at this camp?
Camp Director:	Myself and the other year round team – direct assistant director, and…the director of curriculum for the larger organization – work on a general framework in terms of like, here's the approach that we want you to take. Here's a lesson plan with… the steps that we want you to fill out.And here's an overview of what kind of generally this two week painting class or this four week theater class has looked like in the past. **Here's the stuff that's important to us. And then we hand it over to the department heads and the seasonal instructors to kind of mad–lib like fill in the blanks with things that feel good to them.**

Figure 14: Excerpt from interview with **Tree Camp** Camp Director

It is relevant to note the camper–staff collaboration is also encouraged as a sort of post–development curriculum development in the form of a non–hierarchical classroom environment (Figure 15).

Interviewer:	...Are there any moments that you have specifically observed in the classroom of this [non–hierarchical learning] happening and how it impacted either the student or the staff member?
Camp Director:	...And there's just this…level playing field where I think like I really do feel like it's more noticeable when it's not happening and you're like, ooh, this doesn't feel right, you know? And like kids will report that, like we'll have campers who will be like, ... I have this idea for a set build and whoever the teacher is... won't listen to my ideas... So then we'll go and support that moment of like, hey, have we all shared our ideas? Can we talk about this? So I think even our campers will notice it if it doesn't go the right way.

Figure 15: Excerpt from interview with **Tree Camp** Curriculum
Director

Tree Camp Curriculum Goals. The general curriculum goals are to help campers build confidence in their work and skills. The slight expectation being the four week long summer programs offered by the **Tree Camp**, in which campers also prepare for final performances and presentations of final work.

Branch Camp Curriculum Development

Branch Camp Scheduling and Camper Choice. The **Branch Camp** schedule
has five activity blocks and camper choice within each block is tiered by age group. The
camp's youngest age group (nine to eleven) have partial activity choice and choose two
activities out of the five activity blocks. While the camp's oldest age group (12–16) have
full activity choice and also sign up for club's in which they can participate in progressive
activities and skill–building. The camp director pointed out the intention in this
difference is to encourage their younger campers to try new things (Figure 16).

Interviewer:	(Screen Sharing sample schedule) …So first, just describe to me a little bit briefly what I'm seeing here.
Camp Director:	...so that is a template of our schedule… We have different programming layouts for our juniors and our seniors. Our juniors are ages six to eleven. Our seniors are 12 to 16. So our juniors, they get to pick two of their own periods based on their interests and passions. Then we schedule a village swim. We also schedule two other daily activities. **The thought process is our younger campers are newer to camps. We want them to kind of experience a little bit of everything and go out of their comfort zone.** Our kids that are older are more introspective and able to decide better for themselves what they want to pursue. So they pick all of their activities except for their swim period. So the difference too in

	the activities is that the juniors when they pick a choice activity, it's one hour for one day and then the next day they pick all new choice activities. The seniors, it's a little bit different because they pick a club and it's more of a progressive. So they'll pick their first period activity and they'll do that same activity for 2 to 3 days and then it'll change so it's more of a progressive activity where they get to dive deeper into it and work on it through several sessions So that's kind of the general gist of our schedule.

Figure 16: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp** Director

Branch Camp Curriculum Development: Staff Choice and Camp Values. The **Branch Camp** follows a similar order of curriculum development and implementation: the camp director and executive director create a loose framework and the summer staff then create lessons within that framework. However the camp director and executive director refer to the American Camp Association Standards when creating the curriculum framework. Additionally, part of curriculum development at the **Branch Camp** is also leaving room for summer staff to be creative when creating different activities (Figure 17).

Interviewer:	…are the roles different as far as staffing for who leads the club versus who leads like the general activities or is it all the same?
Camp Director:	It's kind of all the same. So when we hire staff, they're hired as a cabin counselor and an activity specialist. So they could be running junior choice activities and senior choice activities, just on different periods. So we really encourage our staff to be creative, come up with new ideas, new choice activities, tapping into their passions and their skills

	and sharing them out with the campers, but also kind of getting a pulse on what the campers really want to do.
	So a lot of our choice activities kind of evolve and have a natural progression. Something that's kind of taken off in one of our areas is like cryptid hunting. So like in nature, they'll go hunting for like some mythical creature. So it could be anything as far as like Bigfoot … or it gets… really silly with… the Kool–Aid man and things like that. And the kids get really into it.
	So that's a lot of fun. Same thing with our arts. They tap into … some TikTok trends or things that they're seeing out in pop culture. So last summer we added slip cast molds because a lot of the trends were like blind molds. So we thought that would be fun to get into.
	And then this year we're seeing a lot of a trend with…resin pours. So we're trying to incorporate some of that into our programming this summer.
Interviewer:	What do you mean by not limiting the creativity of the staff?
Camp Director:	So we give them a framework to touch on and teach and lesson plan, but also with our choice activities, we allow them to be as creative as they want. So they can come to the table with brand new ideas for a club or a choice activity, and they work with our leadership team to kind of hone in those ideas. So nothing's off limits as long as…we can afford to order the supplies and things like that, they can really come to the table with anything.
	We had some people really be into nature. So they came to the table with a club called Parks and Recreation because they liked the show. So then they designed this whole… world and they had to build infrastructures and all this different stuff and it ended up being called Ducktopia…It just became like really fun and inclusive, but that was

	an idea that a staff member came to the table with, and then it took on a life of its own once it got into the camper hands too. So it's really cool, cause everybody has kind of that shared ownership of creating new programs and traditions. And it just starts to become part of their identity….But yeah, we really encourage everyone to be creative and think outside the box. We do have our character ed framework, so there's different goals that the kids have to hit. So we encourage them to tie those things into their activities. But as far as how to get there, we're completely open–ended. We like them to kind of tap into their passions and share them out with the campers.
Interviewer:	So who creates the art curriculum at your camp?
Camp Director:	So we kind of compile it, myself and the executive director, but we do follow ACA standards. So that's the American Camp Association. So they give out standards to guide our programming. So using the standards, we flesh out the programs that we have and then the staff can develop new ideas within that framework.

Figure 17: Excerpt from interview with **Branch Camp** Director

The **Branch Camp** has a character framework built into their curriculum development that is divided into five characteristics or traits. Each of these traits are each linked to a character quality that is represented by either a person linked to the camp's history, an important moment in time in the camp's history, or speaks to the camp's general spirit. Additionally, each of these traits are also linked to a specific set of activities and behaviors (Figure 18).
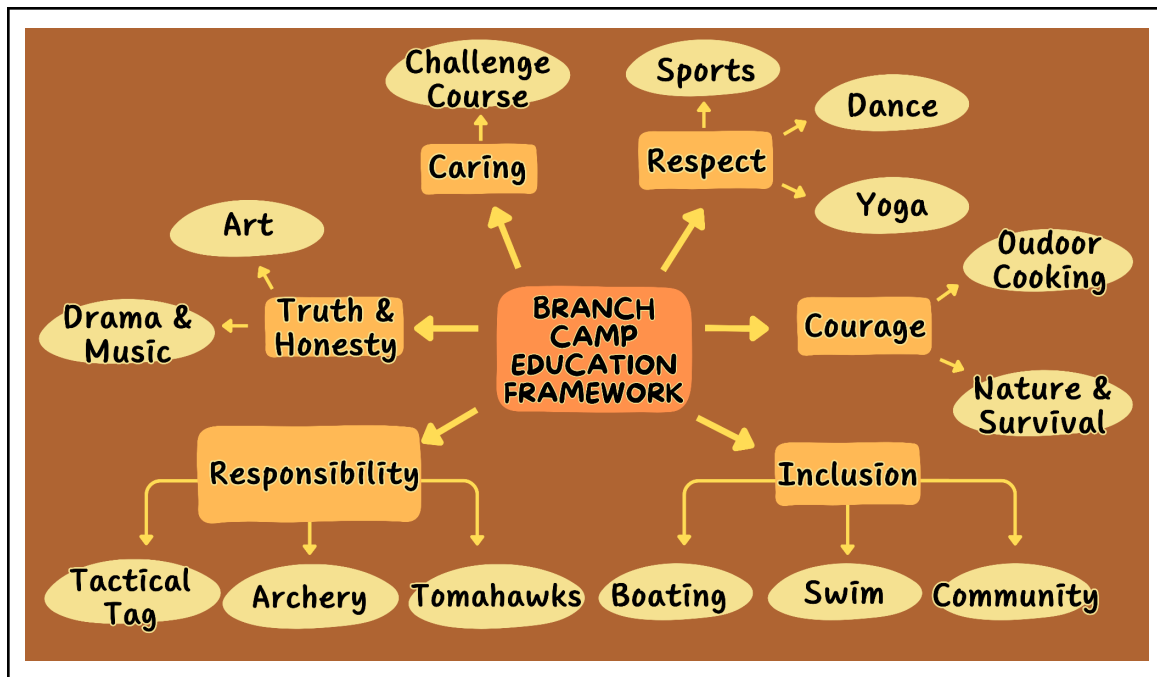
Figure 18: Summary of **Branch Camp** Character Education Framework

The Arts (including performing arts and visual arts) is linked to the character trait "Honesty," due to the nature of self expression and reflection identified in creative activities (Figure 19).

Interviewer:	Can you tell me a little bit about linking [the Arts] to [Truth and Honesty] ? …And that's specifically where we have…art, drama and music.
Camp Director:	So art is such a healing and connecting activity. So with [title for Truth and Honesty category], the goal is for truth, upholding honesty, and aiming to understand. So not only is art a great self–expression and self–exploration and being creative and out of their comfort zone, it can be therapeutic. And then on the receiving end of seeing and experiencing the art that someone else has created, it's kind of the

same experience but on the flip side, where we're now seeing different perspectives and seeing different art and different emotion. And it's just… a really great bonding experience and something that helps build understanding and community in our camp.
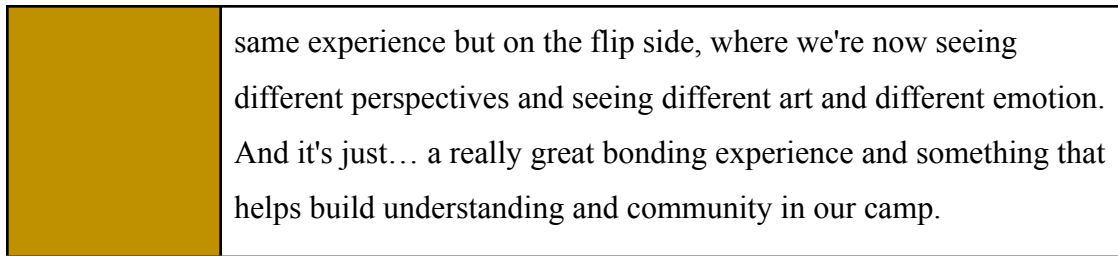
Figure 19: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp** Director

Branch Camp Art Programming Structure. During summer programming the **Branch Camp** has its own Art Department that is filled by an Art Director and ten to twelve cabin counselors. The camp has two kilns that are only used during the camp's two week long sessions. During this time, the staff in the Art Department rotate the upkeep and maintenance of the kiln during firing.

Leaf Camp Camp Curriculum Development

Leaf Camp Curriculum Development. Compared to the **Tree Camp** and **Branch Camp**, the **Leaf Camp** directors have a slightly more hands off approach to curriculum development as it appears that the summer curriculum (programming) is fully developed by summer staff. The exception to this would be the already existing skill development programs and the adventure program that campers would have signed up for during camper registration.

However, there are structures already in place that reflect the camp's programming goals– such as a daily schedule that is largely camper choice (Figure 20), structuring a way to teach responsibility through "crew duties," and incorporating camp's cultural and religious group's root values.

Interviewer:	…how does this mission statement influence the programming and structure of the camp?
Camp Director:	….we have a very… open structure in terms of… activities. So you know, kids are very free to choose what they want to do. We do free choice programming, so we'll have essentially a list of activities that are available that kids can pick and choose from for different activity periods… It's not something that they're forced into doing.
	…Everything is kind of …almost camper–run in a way, where I think I talked about… how we have crews at camp which are like the groups that kids eat in when they are in the dining hall they sit at tables with their crew. It's all gender, mixed ages, so they get kind of like interactions with kids outside of like their core cabin group. And we have what we call….crew duties, so kids will do essentially chores with their crews where they'll do things. Like they'll wash the dishes, they'll … water the plants around camp, they'll take out the trash.
	…We don't have janitorial staff at camp. It's very much like the counselors and the kids are pitching in to help make the community… that they want to see and want to live in. So we have... a very high value on… community as a whole.
	…We're a [cultural and religious group] camp. Our values are based on… [cultural and religious group's values] So we… take all of that and put it into what we do as a camp. So…it shows in our crew duties. We have a crew duty called stewardship, which is just kids going around, making sure everything like, you know, they sweep off our docks, they, you know, take the trash out in our little arts and crafts hut….They make sure… everything is…looking nice, pick up any trash they see around around the

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>campus.

So we put… a high value on "you know, this is your community, we want you to put the work into it to make it some place that you want to be and are proud of being at."</td></tr>
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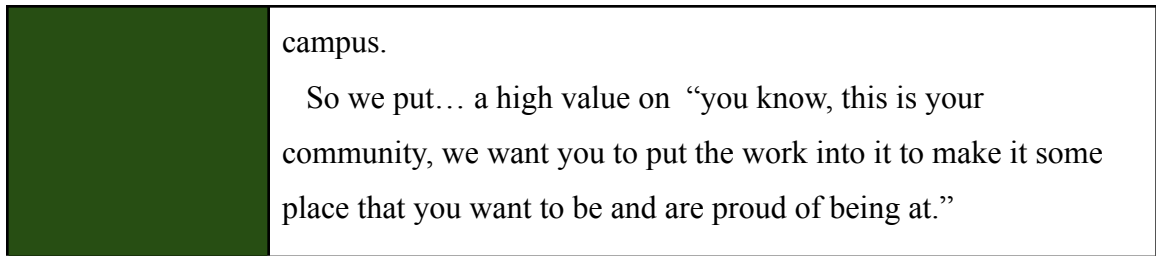
Figure 20: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Director

Leaf Camp Schedule Planning – Camper Choice. The **Leaf Camp**'s general summer camp programming is scheduled week to week by the summer program director (SPD). The camp has four official activity blocks throughout the day and each activity block is typically filled with four to six different activities based on the following categories: Sports, Weird, Arts, Chill, Kid (S.W.A.C.K). The SPD alum also mentioned a sixth unofficial activity block that has recently been in the works, called Summer School. See (Figure 21) for a look at each of these activity blocks. Additionally, each camper is put into swim groups that rotate during the first three periods of the day.

Leaf Camp Activity Block	Description	Example Activities
S (Sports)	Any activity that centers physical activity	Rugby, Tag, Shoe Golf, Waterball etc
W (Weird)	Any novel idea that a counselor may come up with that may not fit into the other categories* *activities may sometimes be art adjacent, but are not explicitly art activities	Dishwasher Simulator, Completing Camp Records etc.
A (Arts)	Any art activity that takes place at the Art Shack	Collages, Friendship Bracelets, watercolors etc.
C (Chill)	Activities designed for any camper who may need a more quiet and relaxing activity. Also usually geared for older kids who may just want an opportunity to chill out and socialize	Group reading, nail painting etc
K (Kids)	Activities geared towards the youngest age groups (activity is open to all ages)	Sandbox activities, making fairy houses
S (Summer School)	Activities where a counselor can lead a discussion or teach any topic they are passionate about and interested in sharing*	Learn a Language (started by counselors from Mexico who wanted to teach Spanish). May also include the specialized skill building programs such as canoe or archery etc.

Figure 21: Description of **Leaf Camp** Activity Blocks

Before each activity block, all campers attend a large meeting in which the counselors share what activity they are teaching (sometimes via a skit) and afterwards the campers choose which activity they want to participate in. Camper choice is limited only by an attendance limit .

The SPD creates the weekly schedule based on the activity blocks and also based on summer staff input and camper engagement (Figure 22):

Interviewer:	So in your role as program director, could you explain the process of creating the program schedules?
Alum Program Director:	So over the years, that acronym expanded to mean, it was SWAC by the end, and that was sports. The W stood for weird, which is how we affectionately refer to activities that can't really be categorized as anything other than just strange and goofy and something you would only ever do at camp. And those are things that would just kind of either pop out of my brain or something that like a counselor would come and say, "I have this great idea for this wacky activity where like, we take a clean and empty trash can and we put it over the kid's head and spray soap on them and then spray the hose and spin the trash can around to make a dishwasher simulator." That was something that a counselor really, really wanted to do and ended up running it and had so much fun and the kids were having a blast just getting covered in soap and sprayed with a cold hose while a trash can shook on their head. ….if you have the buy–in, they will love anything you do. So, as I'm sure you can tell, those are some of the most popular and fun activities. So you know, you really want those to go well. So sports, weird, arts and crafts again, and then again chill and kid–oriented.

Figure 22: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Alum Program Director

Leaf Camp Art Programming. The **Leaf Camp** has an Arts and Crafts Director (ACD) for the summer program, however the ACD is only responsible for the maintenance of the **Leaf Camp** and keeping stock of the art supplies. All summer staff

have the option to teach any art lesson they choose throughout the summer. As stated

earlier, all weekly schedules are created based on camper engagement and staff input, and

often summer staffers will come up with novel activities. An example of this is the

dishwasher simulation activity previously mentioned called "Hobart Simulator." A

summer staffer was inspired by the camp's industrial grade "Hobart" dishwasher, and

wanted to recreate this for campers by using an empty (presumably clean) trashcan and a

water hose to simulate the Hobart dishwasher for campers (Figure 22).

Due to this method of scheduling and curriculum development, the **Leaf Camp**'s

art programming is a much more fluid curriculum that is heavily influenced by the

creativity of the summer staff and the engagement of the campers.

Integration of Camper Choice and Summer Staff Choice. Each camp had a

form of camper choice integrated in their programing and also integrated a form of

counselor (or summer staff) choice in their programming. I was interested in investigating

the motivations behind the choice to integrate *both* camper choice and counselor choice

into each camp's program development and I was also curious what the observed impact

this choice may have on campers. Figure 23 reviews these findings across each camp.

Camp	Camper Choice Integration	Counselor Choice Integration	Purpose & Impact
Tree Camp	– Campers choose major and minors – Campers choose how they engage with the daily lessons and are able to work independently from the daily lesson – Developmentally appropriate risk taking (supported access to use of	– Counselors design lessons based on framework – Camper–Counselor collaboration in the classroom or theater is encouraged and championed by directors	– Intended to reduce pressure on campers and encourage the creative process – Build camper independence

	various tools)		
Tree Camp Quotes	Camp Director: "It's a choice–based curriculum. So all of our campers get to choose the things that they're involved in every day. … all of our campers are choosing all of their own classes. We don't separate campers based on age or skill level." "The goal [on camper choice, intergenerational learning, non competitive environment, and developmentally appropriate risk taking] is to encourage folks to learn about themselves and the world around them through art and do it in a way that …feels enjoyable and not like a chore."		
Branch Camp	– Tiered by age group – challenge by choice: campers learn about the "Growth Zone" and the importance of exploring outside of comfort zones	– Counselors design lessons based on framework – Counselors are encouraged to develop and lead original lessons	– Support camper well being – Support camper SEL
Branch Camp Quotes on Camper Choice	Camp Director: "They really love the changes. While we push "challenge by choice" and try to get the kids to explore and grow – especially post pandemic – there's a lot of anxiety around..the unknown. So we're just trying to support camper needs, building up their social emotional learning ….. So really giving the kids input into their day and structuring their day has been really beneficial for them and for the staff, because it lets everybody kind of tap into what they're needing at that moment. And then kids who are working on or have more self–reflection skills, they're able to… balance their day… with high energy and low energy activities and kind of think about what their energy levels and their needs are at different points in the day. So they're able to think even farther in the past, like what do I want to do and what do I need? So it really is a nice tool for the kids to explore and harness like who they are and what they're passionate about, but also support their mental health needs too."		
Leaf Camp	– Campers have four activity blocks with four to six activities to choose from – Campers are divided into groups that rotate swim periods during the morning activity blocks	– Schedules are collaboratively created pretween program directors and camp counselors – Counselors are encouraged to	– Encourages camper engagement in activities – Support camper well being

		develop and lead novel activities	– Support camper SEL
Leaf Camp Quotes on Camper Choice	Camp Director: "...Kids are typically engaged because we are a free choice…programming camp. Kids aren't …forced into going to an art activity,... it's not just like, "All right everyone, it is time for arts and crafts, we are going to sit and do arts and crafts for the next hour." And it's not like they're given something like, "All right, everyone, today we're doing pottery and we're making this bowl and everyone's doing the same thing." That way, kids that aren't as into, …" like, oh, I don't wanna sit here and make this bowl. Oh, I don't want to sit here and do this." "Well, here, you know, if you don't want to go to pom pom party, you don't have to go to pom pom party", but the kids that want to go will go and will get engaged and do it because it's something that it's like, "Oh, this looks cool to me. This looks fun to me. I want to engage with this. I want to do it."		

Figure 23: Comparison Chart of Camper Choice at Each Participating Site

Art at Camp

This section reviews the following components of Art at Camp, as revealed by the data: Camp Art Activities, Camp Art Making Facilities, Camper Art, and Camp Community Art. Each section will review and compare each of these components across each camp.

Camp Art Activities. Figure 25 provides a brief overview of the art activities offered at each camp; this is not an exhaustive list, since activities may vary year by year based on staff availability, access to tools and materials, or camper interest. During interviews, I asked participants what art activities they observed to be the most popular; the most popular activities at each camp (according to participant observations) are marked in Figure 25 with an asterisk.

It is interesting to note that friendship bracelets were overwhelmingly viewed as the most popular activities at both the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**. Identifying the most popular art activities at the **Tree Camp** were a little more difficult to identify. This may be due to the camp's major/minor program in which campers pre choose their preferred way of making art. Additionally the **Tree Camp's** structure of camper choice within the major programs – in which campers are free to choose how they wish to engage with their major's daily lessons– makes it a little more difficult to determine the most popular activities or majors within the camp (Figure 24).

Interviewer:	Within these art–making mediums [across all of the different…art making sections], what are the most common or popular art–making activities?
Camp Director:	I think based on the way that our curriculum is structured, it's a little difficult to answer that question the way it's phrased. So I'll say that, you know, we mostly teach techniques and skills, and there are no kind of like dictated activities or projects associated with them. It's all very camper led. …If there are ten kids in a ceramics class and each of them has a different idea about the kind of stuff that they want to make and the skills that they want to work on, they're going to end up with ten completely different activities and works

Figure 24: Excerpt from Interview with **Tree Camp** Director

However, both the Camp Director and Curriculum Director singled out Photography and Ceramics as the most popular visual art making mediums, with the activities that may elicit the most obvious excitement in each being camera obscura and

throwing on the wheel. The reasons for the popularity of the Photography and Ceramics major is unclear although the Camp Director pointed it out that it may be due to the novelty of each; the camp offers one of the few darkrooms in the area and offers a well rounded ceramics program with access to various different ways of firing clay such as wood firing and raku firing.

The activities listed in Figure 25 are divided by the camp's majors and they are only *examples* of *possible* activities, since camper engagement and staff choice play such a large role in the lesson development at the **Tree Camp** and the same can be said for the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**. While some activities (like friendship bracelets) are typically always in the **Branch Camp's** and **Leaf Camp's** schedules at least once, there are other activities that may only reflect the summer staff ideas, camper interest, or even supply availability of that particular year.

Examples of Art Activities Offered at Each Camp

Tree Camp Art Activities

Visual Art → Drawing / Painting, Weaving, Printmaking, Ceramics*

Photography → Black & White Film, Camera Obscura*

Environmental Arts → Ecology, Fauna, Gardening

Media Arts → Digital Video, Sound Recording, *Some* Animation

Technical Theatre → Light & Sound Design, Prop & Costume Making, Special Effects Makeup*

Theatre Performance → Music, Drama

Creative Writing → Non-Fiction, Short Stories, Poetry, Jounralism

Leaf Camp Art Activities

Collage*

Drawing & Painting → Watercolors

Pet Rocks

Jewlery Making → Lizard Gators*, Hemp Jewelry, Friendship Bracelets*

Tie Dye

Cat / Gods Eye

Novelty → Pipe Cleaner Zoo, Pom Pom Party, Paper Bag Puppets

Branch Camp Art Activities

Ceramics → Slip Cast, Handbuilding

Drawing & Painting

Wood Art Making → Wood Burning

Leather Working

Performing Arts → Drama, Music, Storymaking

Tie Dye

Jewlery Making → Lanyards, Friendship Bracelets*

Figure 25: Examples of Art Activities Offered at Each Participating Site
Most popular activities are marked with an asterisk (*).

Camp Art Making Facilities. This section will review and compare the Art Making Facilities across each camp.

A Note About Editing Photo Data. The next few sections will include photos from each site – most of which were taken by the researcher on site visits and some of which were submitted by participants upon researcher request. There were quite a few photos taken that included identifying information; mainly names of previous campers, summer staff, or general participants. In order to protect their identity and maintain the anonymity of the participating camps within my best ability as the researcher, any of the identifying information was covered or removed via digital editing. Any edits that were made to any of the following photos only included removing or blurring names.

Tree Camp Art Making Facilities. The **Tree Camp** utilized a large building – affectionately referred to as the Art Barn – divided into 3 sections to house the majority of its visual arts department. Room 1, seen in Figure 26, is used as the main ceramics room during the summer and as the camp's general room for the Charter school housed at the camp. Room 2, seen in Figure 26 is used for mosaic making, mixed media, up cycling, as well as fibers. There is also a smaller classroom located just off Room 2, (not shown). Room 3, seen in Figure 26, is used for botanical art, drawing, and painting. It is also important to note that the functions of each room may fluctuate with each summer, across years, or even throughout the year. The point is that the **Tree Camp** has these facilities that can function in this way, and that currently function in this way.

A wood–fire kiln is located just outside of the Art Barn (not pictured). A Gas Kiln is also located just outside of the Art Barn (not pictured), but is no longer in use due to cost and risk. The **Tree Camp** is currently considering converting this kiln into a Salt

Kiln. The camp also houses a black and white dark room separate from the Art Barn (not pictured).

I would also like to note the costume making department (not pictured) and the camp's prop making department (not pictured). Although these departments are technically a part of the Performing Arts department, they share the visual arts nature of creatively making something with physical objects in order to express an idea.

It also may be relevant to point out that the camp director of the **Branch Camp** often referred to the camp as a "musical place" (evoking a performative arts nature) and the Summer Staff Program Directorat the **Leaf Camp** Camp referenced the Art Shack when mentioning creating costumes for skits put on by counselors.

Tree Camp: Art Making Facility, Art Barn

Room 1, Art Barn

Room 2, Art Barn

Room 3, Art Barn

Figure 26: **Tree Camp***, Art Barn*

*Branch Camp **Art Making Facility***. Before I discuss the **Branch Camp** Art Making Facility, it should first be pointed out that the current Art Making Facility will soon be demolished and replaced with a newer facility. The facility is being demolished for various upkeep reasons, including that the current layout of this facility is functionally difficult during the summer time. The current layout requires that campers be outside, while whoever is teaching the art lesson must be inside to maintain materials etc. According to the camp director, the new layout will include interior classrooms and will be designed so that whoever is teaching the art lessons can much more easily support campers. Additionally, when I visited the site, the Art Making Facility had recently been broken into and vandalized. So most of the art on the building is covered by paint that was thrown on the walls during the break in.

For the sake of comprehension I will refer to the facility in the **Branch Camp** as an Art Shed. The exterior of the Art Shed has a space for campers on the front facing side, seen in Figure 27, and also has a washing station for campers, Figure 27. There are entrances to the interior rooms (only accessible to staff members) of the Art Shed on the side of the Art Shed (not pictured). The front of the Art Shed has large windows that open up to the campers outside (Figure 27), so that counselors may still be accessible to campers while maintaining access to supplies and storage.

Inside, the Art Shed has two large rooms for storage (Figure 27)and a smaller room for two kilns (not pictured). There is also a small sink (Figure 27) located in the corner of the front interior room that opens up to campers via the windows seen in Figure 27.

Branch Camp Art Making Facilities: Art Shed

Art Shed Front Exterior
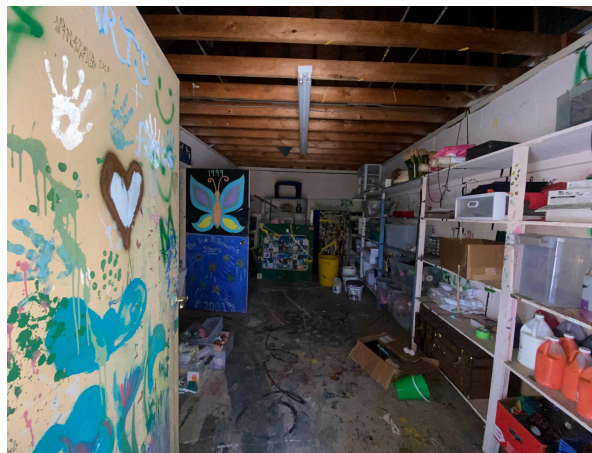
Art Shed Front Interior 1
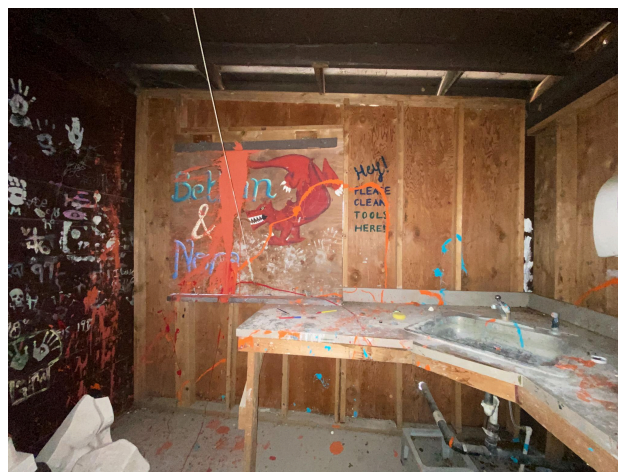
Art Shed Front Interior 2

Figure 27: **Branch Camp** Art Shed

Leaf Camp Art Making Facility. The **Leaf Camp's** art making facility is made up of a large deck with a covered work space for campers and a small shed (art shack) for supplies. Attached to the supply shed (art shack) is a large sink (Figure 28). Inside the Art Shack is a small work table and friendship bracelet supply station and large shelves for supplies (Figure 29). Additionally, Figure 29 shows an organization system that was created by a former summer staffer and has seemingly stayed after. Finally, the camp utilizes a sheet pan rack from the camp kitchen as a form of temporary camper art storage, (Figure 28).

Leaf Camp Art Making Facility: Exterior

Art Shack Exterior

Art Shack Exterior, Sink and Art Storage

Figure 28: **Leaf Camp's** "Art Shack" Exterior

Leaf Camp Art Making Facility: Interior

Art Shack Interior |
|

Interior Work Table and Friendship Bracelet Station |
| *Figure 29:* **Leaf Camp's** "Art Shack" Interior |

Camper Art. Before looking at the camper art seen at each camp, it is important to remind the reader that any camper art documented is camper art that has been left at the camp and is stored during the off season. The camper art was documented in the state available at each camp.

Tree Camp Camper Art. All camper art documented was art that was stored in the Art Barn classrooms. The artwork was also a mix of camper art and student art from the arts integration charter school that uses the camp facilities. Another important note is that the art teacher for the charter school has also worked as a visual arts department head during the summer camp programs, indicating that the student work may be representative of the artwork created during summer programs as well. Artwork documented included cardboard sculptures (Figure 30), paper mache masks (not pictured), yarn paintings (Figure 30), cyanotype prints (not pictured), and camper art that appeared to be used to create a larger classroom art installation (not pictured).

It is important to note that there was much more camper art across all art making facilities at this camp. I have only included these references to show the range of camper art at the site.

Additionally, the art documented at the **Tree Camp** may have been created by either the summer campers or students who attended the Arts Integration Charter School that utilized the camp's facilities (discussed in further detail later). However, the Art Teacher for the Arts Integration Charter school also worked as a teacher during the summer camp programs. So the art documented may still be reflective of the art created during the summer camp programs.

Tree Camp Camper / Student Art Examples

Figure 30: **Tree Camp**, Camper / Participant Art Samples

Branch Camp Camper Art. The camper art available at the **Branch Camp** were watercolor paintings and wood paintings (Figure 31).

Branch Camp Camper Art Examples

Figure 31: **Branch Camp**, Camper / Participant Art Samples

Leaf Camp Camper Art. The camper art available at the **Leaf Camp** included paintings stored as decoration in the Art Shack and rocks painted at the end of the previous summer for the Memorial Garden (Figure 32).

Leaf Camp Camper Art Examples

Figure 32: **Leaf Camp**, Camper Art Samples

Community Art. Despite art playing different roles at each camp, Community (or Public) Art was present at each camp. This section provides a brief overview of the different community art seen at each camp.

Tree Camp Community Art. Unsurprisingly, the **Tree Camp** was bursting with Community Art – with every building having some sort of Public Mural painted by campers and summer staff, or camper art seen throughout camp offices (Figure 33) .

Tree Camp: Community Art

Tree Camp Community Art – Mural
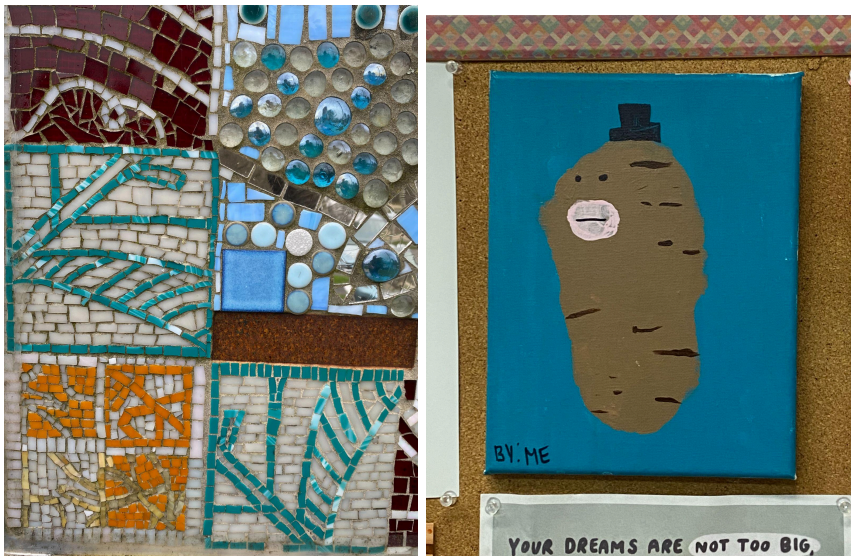
Tree Camp Community Art – Closeup of Mosaic and Camper Art Stored in Camp Office

Figure 48: **Tree Camp** Community Art

Branch Camp Community Art. The **Branch Camp** also had a large amount of

community art, often created by summer staff. For example, the **Branch Camp** summer

staff have a tradition of signing the building associated with their assigned department.

Each department interprets this tradition differently but the camp's lifeguard shack seen

in Figure 49 is an example of the artistic experience showing up in all departments of summer staff.

Creative Signs can also be seen all over the camp. Some are small tree signs created by campers like the ones seen in Figure 49 and others are larger signs attached to the outside of a Gaga Ball Pit like the one seen in Figure 49. I would like to point out the relevance of the Camp Song sign in Figure 49 as it relates to camp community and culture. This sign depicts creative expressions of popular camp songs: Princess Pat, Little Red Wagon, and Weenie Man.

Branch Camp: Community Art

Branch Camp Community Art – Lifeguard Shack

Branch Camp Community Art – Tree Signs

Branch Camp Community Art – Artistic Interpretation of Popular Camp Songs

Figure 49: **Branch Camp** Community Art

Leaf Camp Community Art. The **Leaf Camp** had a smaller amount of community art – although this may be due to its smaller size, as it was the smallest participating camp. Similar to the **Branch Camp**, the **Leaf Camp** had painted tree signs, (Figure 50)**.**

According to the Camp Director, these signs are used during the summers during camp assemblies. After counselors explained the activities available, each would disperse to a specific tree (i.e "The Lorax Tree"), and campers would then go to the counselor (or tree) to decide the activity they wished to participate in during that activity block.

The **Leaf Camp** also had a Community (or Public) Mural, (Figure 50). This mural is located in the camp's "Art Shack" and was painted by a former summer staffer.

I also decided to include a picture of a "Canoe Rules" sign in the Camp Community Art section, (Figure 50). I am including this sign because a) it represents the unique camp aesthetic and b) the green background, yellow writing, and drawing of the canoe indicate an intention to creatively convey said camp aesthetic. Note: the sign is soon to be repainted, due to the obvious wear on the upper right corner.

Leaf Camp: Community Art

Photos of Tree Signs at Leaf Camp

Leaf Camp, Community Mural and Canoe Rules Sign

Figure 50: **Leaf Camp** Community Art

Community Connections.

      This section will review the components of Community Connections uncovered

across each camp. First I will discuss the role of Year Round Camp Programming as it

relates to Camp-Community Partnerships. I will then compare Camp-Community

Connections across each camp and will then discuss the theme of Camp as a Micro-Community that was uncovered in the data collection process.

Community Partnerships and Year Round Programming. Before discussing community partnerships further, it is important to point out that most community partnerships at all three camps impact the year round programming more than they impact the summer camp programming. This is especially relevant considering that the **Tree Camp** Curriculum Director and **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director are both primarily responsible for the off season programming at each camp. Both of these roles tend to be directed more towards outside visiting groups or community partnerships, while the Camp Directors at both camps tend to focus more on managing and planning summer camp programming.

Comparison of Overall Camp–Community Connections. Responses from participants revealed a stark contrast in the role community partnerships play in the **Tree Camp**'s programming compared to the programming at both the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**. The **Tree Camp** partnered with numerous local and regional organizations, while in contrast, both the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp** had considerably fewer community partnerships.This contrast seemed to be due to the **Tree Camp**'s unique offerings as a specialty camp with one of the few art facilities of its size in the general area.

Additionally, the local community surrounding the **Tree Camp** seems to be very familiar with, at the bare minimum, the existence of the camp in their community. Meanwhile, both camp directors at the **Leaf Camp** and **Branch Camp** stated that they often meet members of the local community who have not heard of the camp in their community (Figures 53 and 58).

This does not mean that **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp** do not partner or work with local organizations or schools, rather that partnerships just play a different role at these camps than it does at the **Tree Camp**.

Tree Camp and Community Partnerships. Ironically, although the **Tree Camp** has the most direct partnerships with organizations across their general area, this does not translate to feeling connected to their immediate local community (Figure 51).

Interviewer:	So it sounds like you guys have a lot of connections with other organizations that are around your camp. …Does that translate to feeling connected to your local community?
Curriculum Director:	No, I don't think so. **I think it's a gap we're closing** and I think everyone wants it to close more quickly than it's closing. I think that again there is…still quite **a divide between our summer program and our year–round programming.** And so I think I said this last time, but like we have a pretty solid team right now that I think sees and recognizes and acknowledges that gap and really wants to bridge it as much as possible, which historically, only two years ago, we had two separate websites for year–round programming and summer programming….So, there was not always this trying to bridge that gap, right? So, we're trying to find scholarships to get kids in our community to camp. You know…there are a handful of [charter school] kids who come to camp, not as many as we would like, but again, that's definitely financial. But also parents who are making that splurge because their kids are benefiting so much from what they're experiencing here. So it becomes a priority for them. So, you know, I think in some ways, Sure, I think we're growing, like we have library programs

now in neighboring communities that we didn't have previously. So I think we're slowly starting to build that up. **I do think [the] pandemic…put a wrench in a lot of efforts that were made…prior to that.**

   …I think sleepaway camps probably are traditionally a destination spot for folks, you know, so…maybe compared to other camps we actually are connected to our community. I just always want it to be better and more. …

   But yeah, so I think we probably are doing well. The fact that …our local hospitals have worked with us… I don't know….I just want it all, like I want it to be better and bigger.
So, you know, and I definitely can see growth. That's something that I know that it's growing and improving. So that's really nice.
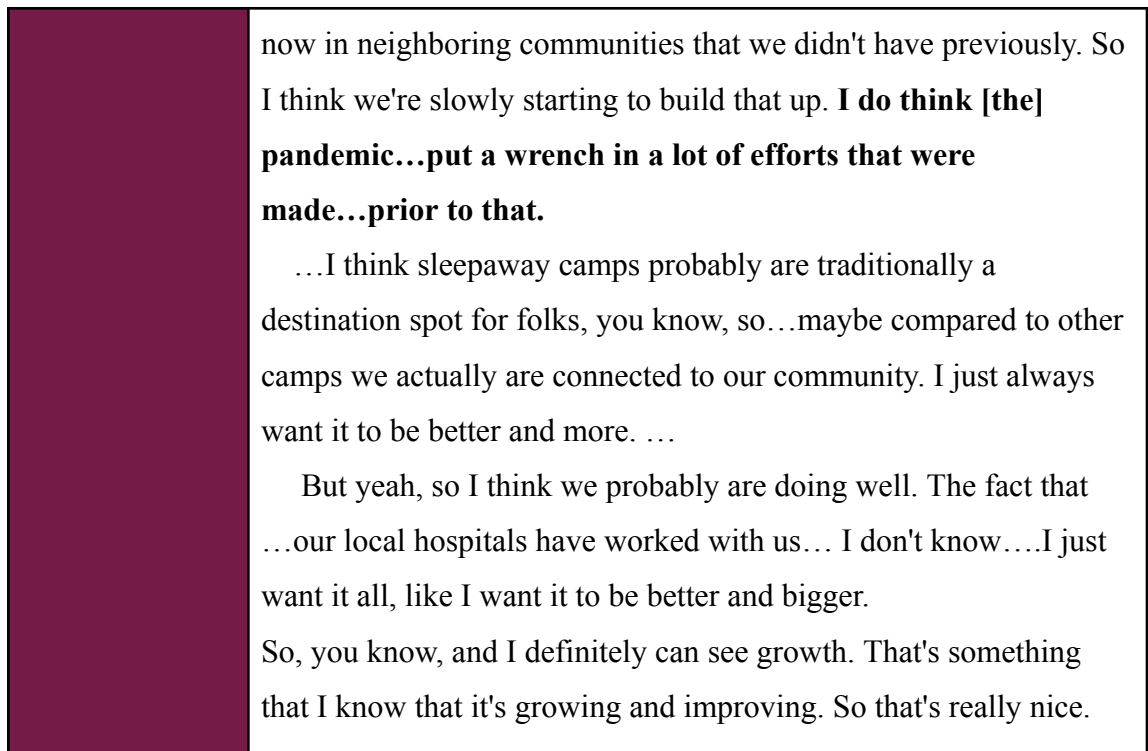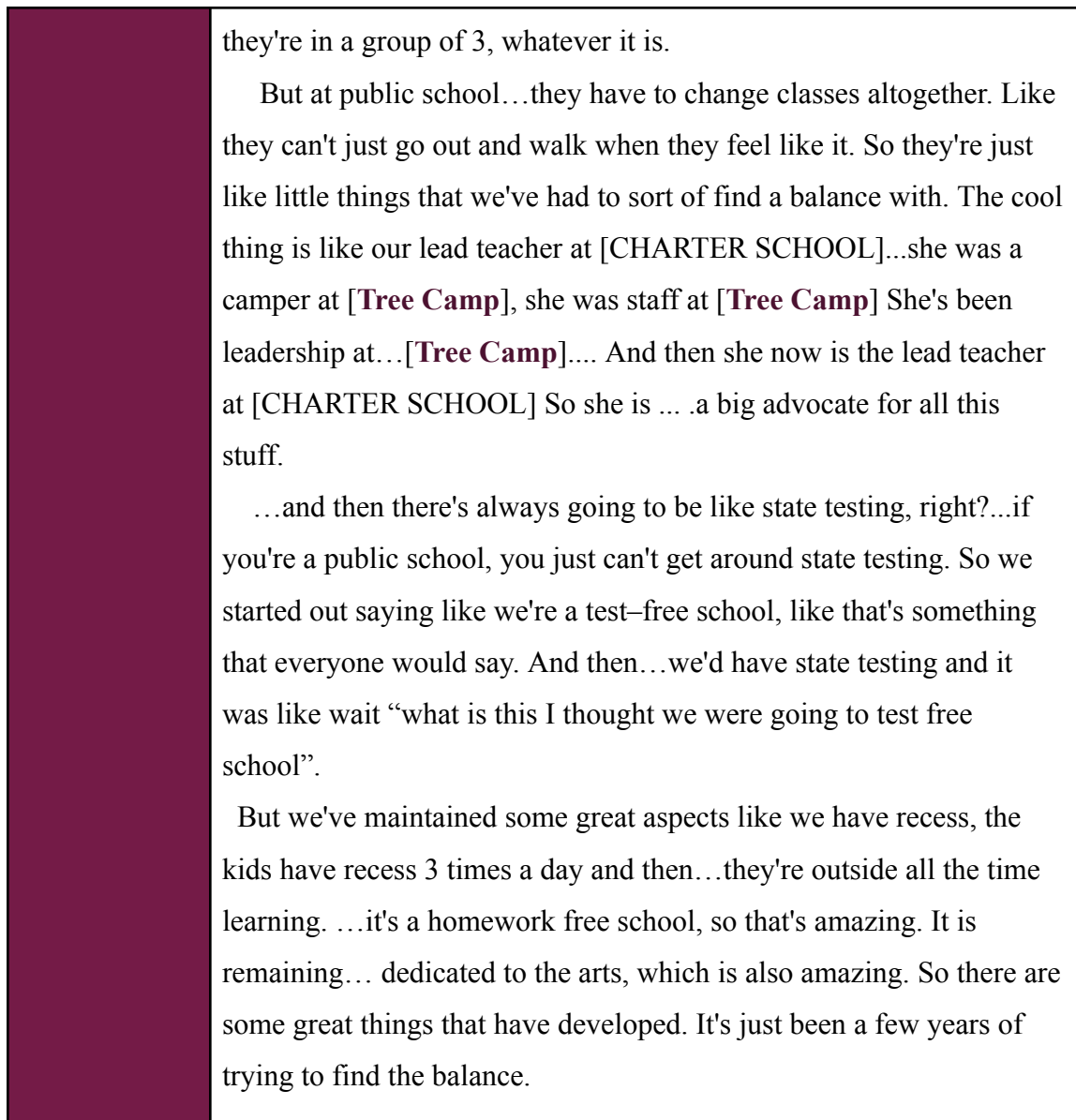
Figure 51: Excerpt from Interview with **Tree Camp** Curriculum Director

The most notable community partnership at the **Tree Camp** would be the arts integration charter school that rents out the **Tree Camp** facilities as its school building during the off season. The charter school is especially relevant in this study as it relates to expanding access to arts education to rural youth. In many ways, the school functions as an extension of the camp's summer camp programming: the head art teacher is the head of the summer camp's visual arts program and a former executive director played a role in the formation of the school. Additionally, the school was originally created with the intention of connecting the summer programming with the year round programming (Figure 52). However, as Figure 52 shows, public charter schools face limits that summer camps may not need to contend with.

Interviewer:	Was the formation of the [charter school], was that like an – [**Tree Camp**] and their board collaboration?
Curriculum Director:	So, yes, it was more of our, it was really more of our …old executive directors …thing. And I think the board took a little convincing. I don't know that our board really understood the undertaking it would be to open a school. And I don't think the staff understood either…. But yes, it was really supposed to be a way to connect camp to the year, right? So all the benefits and wonderful things that camp can bring and [**Tree Camp**] has a really successful more than 60 year program, and so that was the goal. And then it shifts because nobody really understood what a public charter would mean, I think. Like, being a public school, there's just not, you can't do everything the way you do at camp. So that's been sort of our, like, internal and external battle, if that makes any sense.
Interviewer:	Would you mind expanding on that a little bit more…?
Curriculum Director:	Yeah... silly things like climbing trees, right – which I'm so silly – but our kids at camp climb trees. They love to climb trees, but at a public school, that's…a insurance liability problem and they're not allowed to let kids climb trees. And so, you know, we kind of started with this…very open campus….we had just a lot more freedom that ...as time went on and leadership at the school shifted, we had to kind of start to walk some of that back. You know kids really can't move about– we're 115 acres– and kids can't move about campus – well middle schoolers can't move about campus – unsupervised. But at camp our kids are not necessarily unsupervised, but…they have the freedom to move about campus without a teacher with them, right? We know where they're going, we have eyes on them, they're with… friends, So like

they're in a group of 3, whatever it is.

But at public school…they have to change classes altogether. Like they can't just go out and walk when they feel like it. So they're just like little things that we've had to sort of find a balance with. The cool thing is like our lead teacher at [CHARTER SCHOOL]...she was a camper at [**Tree Camp**], she was staff at [**Tree Camp**] She's been leadership at…[**Tree Camp**].... And then she now is the lead teacher at [CHARTER SCHOOL] So she is ... .a big advocate for all this stuff.

…and then there's always going to be like state testing, right?...if you're a public school, you just can't get around state testing. So we started out saying like we're a test–free school, like that's something that everyone would say. And then…we'd have state testing and it was like wait "what is this I thought we were going to test free school".

But we've maintained some great aspects like we have recess, the kids have recess 3 times a day and then…they're outside all the time learning. …it's a homework free school, so that's amazing. It is remaining… dedicated to the arts, which is also amazing. So there are some great things that have developed. It's just been a few years of trying to find the balance.

Figure 52: Excerpt from Interview with **Tree Camp**, Curriculum Director

*Branch Camp **and Community Partnerships**.* As stated earlier, the **Branch Camp** does not appear to have a strong presence in their immediate community (Figure 53), but that does not mean they do not work with local organizations or have community partnerships.

Camp Director:	…Cause honestly…it's really surprising. …We do these community outreach activities and so many times people are like, "Oh, I just live in [NEIGHBOR TOWN]. I didn't even know you existed or that you were there. I drive by there all the time."

Figure 53: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp**, Camp Director

The partnerships at **Branch Camp** resemble more closely that of a Retailer–Consumer relationship in which interested groups rent out the facilities for event hosting. However, the camp does partner with local schools in support of outdoor educational programming (Figure 55) and in support of offering care for children on scheduled school closings (Figure 54).

Camp Director:	**We also have schools out programs that are in the local schools and that runs during the school year**. And then in the offseason we have an outdoor center that runs special interest groups. So it's often like school groups, nonprofit groups, boy scouts, girl scouts, things like that, and people can even…book a wedding or a family reunion here. So we kind of do a little bit of everything.

Figure 54: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp**, Camp Director

Interviewer:	So have any of…the local community members ever reached out to your camp for anything?
Camp Director:	Yeah, so we work closely with a lot of local school districts. ….I believe it's … in [STATE] the … curriculum includes outdoor education and the local habitats…in the [GENERAL AREA].So a lot of schools partner with us to have their [STUDENTS] come out and experience camp and do our outdoor education programming. So we've built partnerships that way. We also have people reach out to us to partner with them for… local fundraisers and silent auction baskets. We just partnered on a fundraiser for a young boy who's battling cancer…So there's a lot of like reciprocal partnerships that happen. And then, so the schools often come, and then as in return, like we also will reach out to them when we're promoting our summer programs. We reach out to their staff, sometimes people are looking for summer work. But that was also something that we talked about at our retreat, was that building those partnerships with the schools is so important right now because research has shown that kids who thrive at camp, thrive at school and vice versa. Like if we're all in the business of helping and supporting and growing and thriving kids, working as a village helps that happen so much better.

Figure 55: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp,** Camp Director

Additionally, the camp has funding partnerships with organizations in order to support campers from the greater Philadelphia area attend summer camp (Figures 56 and 57).

Camp Director:	We also have partnerships with the [scholarship] that helps get kids from inner–city settings out into camp.

Figure 56: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp**, Camp Director

Interviewer:	You've mentioned your [scholarship] and you mentioned your scholarships camp fund. Oh, the partnerships to help kids from [greater Philadelphia area] come into your camp? Who are those partnerships with? Tell me more about those partnerships.
Camp Director:	So our main one is with the [SCHOLARSHIP FUND]. Let me see if I can find the other name I forget on the scholarship. But we've also, those programs have also recently expanded into [NEARBY CITY] communities as well. So last summer we had a lot of kids come through [SCHOLARSHIP FUND] from [NEARBY CITY] . And actually we presented about our camp, providing information about the programs we offer at one of their board meetings.

Figure 57: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp**, Camp Director

Leaf Camp* and *Community Partnerships. Similarly to the **Branch Camp**, the **Leaf Camp** does not have a strong presence in their immediate community, with both the Camp Director and Outdoor Education Director (O.E.D) commenting on meeting locals who were not aware of the camp's existence (Figures 58 and 59).

Camp Director:	We are located essentially kind of back in the woods along the creek. We're actually right next to a housing development, which is very funny because in the summertime, when all the leaves are on the tree, obviously when you came, you know, the leaves were all

	off the trees, you probably saw all the houses right there. In the summertime, you can't see anything and kids think like, oh my gosh, I'm in the middle of nowhere, I'm back in the woods, when in reality, like, a hundred yards away, there's a whole neighborhood we're in like suburbia basically and there's just like you know there's a Wawa like five minutes away you know it's we're very much like in a in a suburban setting but we are the camp itself is really like kind of tucked back so much so that like people who have lived in [TOWN] for like their whole life don't know about us. They don't know we're here. I've, you know, I've had conversations with people at …local stores and …I'll be wearing… a [**LEAF CAMP**] sweatshirt and they'll be like, "oh [**LEAF CAMP**] is like, where are you guys located?" I'm like, "oh, ... we're five minutes from here. We're…right around the corner. We're on [CAMP] Road." And they're like, "you're on [CAMP] Road. I've never seen you guys before. I've never heard of you." Like, they just don't know us because we're just so tucked back and like just in our own kind of world.
Outdoor Education Director:	It's funny because a lot of our local community doesn't even know that we're here… it's fascinating because I would think there would be a lot more like [general local area] campers or people from this like local area. But a lot of our population comes from Philly area. …we don't do a ton with the community around here.

Figure 58: Excerpt from Interviews with **Leaf** Camp Director and O.E.D

However, the **Leaf** Camp does have a neighbor–like presence with the neighborhood that immediately surrounds the camp and shares the camp's creek (Figure 59).

Outdoor Education Director:	I've spoken to – we have like a I guess it's considered like a retirement, like assisted living community next to us that kind of is on the other side of the creek. So they have the creek and they have been reaching out to kind of partner with us with clearing the creek. They've been asking us how we clear the creek because they're experiencing issues where they can't use the creek because it's blocked off and issues with the town and getting the creek cleared. That's really the only type of community interaction I've experienced so far, like local community interaction that I've experienced so far, is when it kind of comes to the creek. Sometimes people call us with questions about how we maintain our creek area because people are able to pass through. But yeah, the creek is really the only thing that draws us to the local community that I've been a part of so far.
Interviewer:	…That almost seems more neighborly and… almost like they view you more as a neighbor than (O.E.D– yes), like an organization or business to work with.
Outdoor Education Director:	…Exactly. …Even the neighborhood next door. … like in the winter, we had some kids over here sledding, which were like, whatever, but you know, you don't hear much from them. They don't really hear from us. It's kind of like we're here, they're here. And that's kind of how I've seen and heard. I haven't heard of any, you know, issues or anything else that we've kind of had with the community. I mean, we have a Main Street nearby that, you know, again, like people just are very surprised to hear that we're even here as a camp.

Figure 59: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** O.E.D

Camp as a Micro–Community. Although I did not find strong and intentional community partnerships at both of the traditional camps, I did consistently find evidence that pointed to intentional community building built into summer programming at all three camps. Figure 60 provides quotes from participants from each camp discussing intentional community building. Additionally, each camp did function as a micro–community that included camp and staff alum, parents, and other invested parties (Figure 61).

Intentional Community Building	
Tree Camp Quote 1: (Camp Director)	In photography and visual arts, when they have gallery shows, everybody gets to hang their artist statement and their name, and then everybody also gets a little envelope like pinned to the wall next to their wall text. And then as folks come through the gallery spaces – … in an effort to really engage campers in the experience of…a gallery walk – we ask them to…write notes to their friends or to…people they don't know, but whose work they're really interested in. And so some of it is like feedback notes and some of it is warm fuzzies and some of it is just like, "wow, this is so incredible, like I'm really impressed by this, you did such a great job with X, Y, or Z" And I love watching all of the art and photo campers leave like with their box full of work, like reading their …envelope full of feedback. They really, you know, it's taken us a little while to figure out how to…elevate the visual arts presentation experience to feel as important as the performing arts one because then you know everyone is like in the theater for an hour watching the dance performance. It's a very captive audience, but it's not really like that for the gallery walks. **And so that is one of the ways that**

	we have found to be very successful in…engaging the whole camp community in appreciating and reflecting back to our visual artists what an incredible job they've done.
Tree Camp Quote 2: (Camp Director)	**Quote 2 (Camp Director):** …in the bunks on the first night…we asked the counselors to sit down and do community agreements with their campers in the bunk. So there are some…baseline stuff that we pre print on the sheets and we say like, you know, "these are part of being here, you've already opted into these things because you signed that behavior agreement online", and it's stuff like, you know, the bullying and harassment stuff. No – you know, if even one person in the bunk is uncomfortable with seeing another person naked, then everyone is changing in private – there's no conversation about that, that just is how it is. But then the bunk gets to add other expectations that they would like to hold each other to, and they get to have discussions about what's going to feel good and what's going to feel supportive. And every bunk agreement ends up looking a little bit different. **And so it's very tailored to the specific community in that bunk.**

Branch Camp Quote 1:	(discussing why Truth and Honesty is linked to art making in camp's character framework) So not only is art a great self–expression and self–exploration and being creative and out of their comfort zone, It can be therapeutic. And then on the receiving end of seeing and experiencing the art that someone else has created, it's kind of the same experience but on the flip side, where we're now seeing different perspectives and seeing different art and different emotion. **And it's just like a really great bonding experience and something that helps build understanding and community in our camp.**
Branch Camp Quote 2:	The community at camp specifically, we're very inclusive, very high energy, most of us. Our mealtimes are filled with music and dancing and creative expression…. like the kids are always dancing and it's amazing because they leave with such a sense of community that like they're all in tears when it's time to go home. But many of us build friendships that last a lifetime and some of them even bridge over into other countries and stuff. It's really a unique experience.

Branch Camp Quote 3:	(Responding to question: What are some observations you've made about how campers are interacting with each other during the art–making process?) Yeah, I find that it's like a tool of communication and …building community and supporting each other and self–expression. A lot of kids that have trauma or things that they're wrestling with, it's easier to create art or do things rather than to express yourself rather than words. So really being able to kind of …see inside someone's heart and soul and…build empathy and a better understanding for each other. That's been really great to see with the kids and really building each other up.
Leaf Camp Quote 1: Camp Director	(referencing crew duties discussed in **FIGURE 10**) We have a crew duty called stewardship, which is just kids going around, making sure everything like, you know, they sweep off our docks, they…take the trash out in our little arts and crafts hut. … They make sure…everything is…looking nice, pick up any trash they see… around the campus. **So we put…a high value on…you know this is your community, we want you to put the work into it to make it some place that you want to be and are proud of being at.**

Leaf Camp Quote 2: Camp Director	I definitely see kids being …more accountable for …themselves and their peers. So you know, …if a kid…throws a piece of trash on the ground or something, ….I've seen other kids be like, " hey pick that up" or like, .. "hey you shouldn't like throw that there" I definitely start to see campers…take a… bit more pride in…their environment. And like, **"oh, yeah, this is like, our space. And this is a special space for us. And like, we want it to be nice and like a place that we are…happy to be in and proud of being in".**

Figure 60: Excerpts from Participant Interviews

Camp as Micro–Community	
Tree Camp (Camp Director):	…And so I'd certainly consider those people part of the community (discussing year round staff). I think that we also do develop really good relationships, really close relationships with a lot of the caregivers of our campers. And so in thinking about…how far out…our community reaches, I think there's a lot of caregivers that would consider themselves also part of our community. And there's a lot of caregivers who wouldn't, who…know that their kid has a great time here and they love sending their campers here, but don't necessarily engage in…the stuff that we're doing or, you know, engage with us on social media or things like that. So I think that's kind of like, lots of folks opt in and out of that… **But definitely I'd say that like the campers and our summer staff, you know, are the ones who are doing most of the culture building**. So when I think about…the community of

	[Tree Camp], Those are the people that I think of first. (Interviewer): Is there a community of alumni that are invested in the camp? Oh sure, yes. Also alumni. I guess it's hard for me to remember that a lot of them are not campers or staff anymore because I still think of them as campers in those categories. Yeah, there's a really lovely alumni community that has very deep roots in this region.
Branch Camp (Camp Director):	Yeah, so when we hire our staff, they're put into a home department and then they're also a cabin counselor. Because in the past we had done where there were general counselors that would travel with the kids…But yeah, that way the staff…knows what they're doing. We're optimizing their skill set. And then also it builds a type of a community within the department. It's really cool, at the end of the summer we have our staff banquet, and…each of the directors kind of recognizes their team and gives a sentimental little token or gift that…either it can start as…an inside joke or some kind of token that…they identify with as their team. So…sometimes they design …shirts for their department or …something like that but yet it becomes like a little family.
Leaf Camp (Camp Director):	…I think our community is incredibly supportive and incredibly invested in camp. … Occasionally – we have the creek –if the water levels rise too high we'll get water in camp will flood, you know, some of the cabins will get water in them, it's nothing severe, but it's just like

enough to be like "all right we got to clean things up we got to… spend a couple days like tidying up and… making sure everything's like good and ready to go" and …if we, you …make a social media post about it or something, we'll have people in the community reaching out and saying "how can I help, how can I assist, do you need anything, do you need supplies, do you need help, do you need, you know, like whatever it may be? "

We've gotten some of our vehicles from community members in the past…

…We had a fire happen a couple of years ago that burned down our maintenance building. This was off season, it was not during the summer, but we got a huge reach out from the community … we got so many tools we got so many, just like anything that we needed. …So we got a huge donation from…people in our community…

(Interviewer:...Who makes up the community of your camp?)

I mean, we've got the kids, obviously, we've got staff, we've got the parents, we've got, you know, who else? Trying to think of…core general community members…we're a [religious / cultural group] camp so we're associated with the local [religious / cultural]… they're also people who reach out to us. We've utilized them in the past for support either…during the summer or …off season if we need something. You know, we have schools that are a part of our community….When we're not doing summer programming, we do off season. So we have schools that come and spend time here, do like day programming, or we have people come for …overnight trips.

And, you know, we've had the same, sometimes like the same

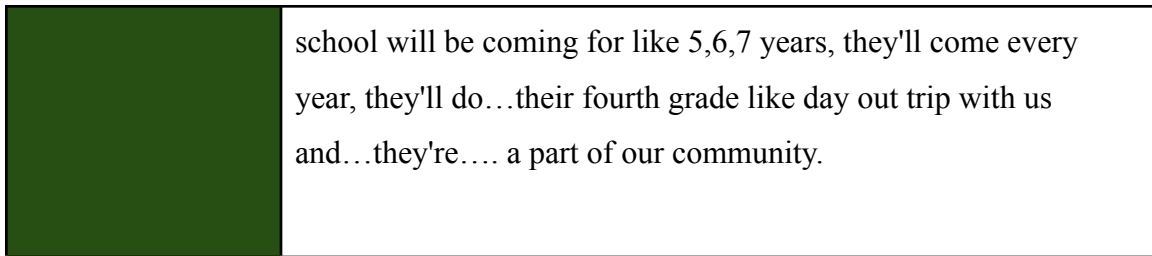| | school will be coming for like 5,6,7 years, they'll come every year, they'll do…their fourth grade like day out trip with us and…they're…. a part of our community. |

Figure 61: Excerpts from Participant Interviews

Social–Emotional Learning (SEL) and Art Making in a Camp Setting

This section will introduce and review the data findings as they relate to social-emotional learning (SEL) and art making in a camp setting. Specifically, the following subsections will cover:

1. How the observed camper behaviors during art making correlate with specific fundamentals of SEL – according to CASEL (*Fundamentals of SEL* 2023) .

2. The art room as a uniquely social environment in camp settings

3. The **Tree Camp's** practice of peer / intergenerational learning, the role accessibility plays in the **Tree Camp's** practices, and how this relates to the fundamental of SEL

4. A comparison of each camp's "Mental Health Support Role" (MHSR), staffed during the summer season

Although the latter subsection regarding the summer staffer MHSR is not directly related to art making, I decided to include the data related to this position in order to accomplish the overall goal of this study – which is to understand the *full* context of the camp environment in which camp art making exists. Additionally, Figure 63 provides an example for how art making *may* be utilized by a camp's MHSR.

SEL Fundamentals and Camp Art Making. During interviews, participants were asked to reflect on their observations of how campers a) engaged with the art making process and b) engaged with each other during the art making process. Overwhelmingly the responses were related to the social emotional learning fundamentals of social awareness, self–management, and self–awareness (Figures 62 and 63).

Social Awareness	
Tree Camp (Curriculum Director):	… I think some kids gravitate towards kids they know and want to gossip and…talk…while they're working. Some kids take kind of like, calm and refuge in art spaces and wanna work more independently and so don't necessarily seek out interactions during certain classes. I mean, I always joke that… the art room is where you get the best gossip. …When I was…head of visual arts, I would just love to sit at my desk and listen because I just feel like I knew so much because I think, … kids get caught up in the process and then they just…chat and they're not…checking themselves a little bit. So I think… there's a lot of … don't know if it's like passive community building, but …it's… not playing…team building games, but kids are …figuring it out on their own and just kind of building community as they're creating, which is really nice to see.
Branch Camp (Camp Director):	**Quote 1:** So it's really been great and the kids are…very supportive of each other and encouraging. **Quote 2:** …I think a common thread is that… they didn't realize they were capable of creating art and making beautiful

	things, so really…tapping into those skills and empowering people to see what they're capable of has been like a common theme. **And it's really helpful that the campers are so encouraging too**…because honestly, like the kids value their peers' advice and…feedback more than they value ours.
Leaf Camp (Summer Staff Alum, Program Director):	They were often very social. It was rare to go down to an arts and crafts activity where everybody was just …quiet and focused…on their own thing. … Well there were plenty of times a kid would go to an arts and crafts activity just to be social because they didn't really want to do anything else. And you know we would always try to push them to participate in the craft and we would say, look, I get you just want to hang out with your friends, but have this piece of paper in front of you, just try, just do something instead of just sitting here. … they were spots where a lot of ….the camp–wide jokes would come out of those activities because you just….have kids sitting there riffing off of ideas. …. I noticed that at those activities, the second one [Comic Book Making], because of the way that kids are able to be social and sit at these round tables and all be just joking around…They're not even necessarily talking about what they are doing or making, but they're just sitting there and riffing off of each other, riffing with a counselor, and then... Yeah, whatever joke might come out of that might end up in an announcement that the counselor makes at a meal, and then it's something that everybody is saying. ….camp culture….spreads really fast like that. So….I think it's a combination of the arts and crafts activities and those weird activities where a lot of those camp–wide jokes

	happen. Because as a result…. you're seeing signs everywhere, you're seeing people's paintings, you're seeing the art that people are making and you think, oh, like that's that's funny….

Figure 62: Excerpts from Participant Interviews

Self–Management and Self–Awareness	
TreeCamp (Camp Director):	I think we do a really great job encouraging and supporting campers in …asking questions about their own art making… But it's that kind of…. self–reflection and…questioning your own kind of intents and execution… we don't have staff going around being like, "Wow, that looks like a cat. Amazing. Tell me about this thing that you made." Tell me about, you know, your thought process. Like, I'd love to learn about why you chose these colors.
Branch Camp (Camp Director):	And a lot of them use it as a way of self–expression. So some of the kids that have so much going on in their minds and things, and just don't know how to get it out, art is a great way to do that, and a tool for us to …get to know our campers.
Leaf Camp (Summer Staff Alum, Camper Advocate):	**(Responding to question: Did you ever utilize art making in your role as camper advocate?)** Sure, when I had a kid who …is homesick…one of the tools in my tool bed is like, we take a long, slow walk over to [ART SHACK] and I bring them in and break a rule and they can come in to the actual…art shed and look at all of the things in there and how many magical things that we can make and let them choose an art activity that we're going to do together and just be present and talk about camp and talk about the things

	that they might actually be excited about in a few days when this feels better. Because…**I love a good mirror side–by–side activity to…help with an emotional processing moment, having something to do with your hands, having like this vague distraction while we're also talking about hard things, like wonderful tool in the tool belt, lizardgators.**

Figure 63: Excerpts from Participant Interviews

The Social Art Room. Another theme gleaned from the data was the concept of the "Social Art Room". As pointed out by both the **Tree Camp** Curriculum Director and the **Leaf Camp** Summer Staff Alum, the Camp Art Room is a uniquely social space (Figure 62). Additionally, the **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director observed the Camp Art Room as a uniquely social space as well (Figure 64) – a reminder that, at the time of our interviews, the Outdoor Center Director had worked primarily with visiting groups during the offseason, with age groups ranging from youth to adults.

Leaf Camp Outdoor Education Director:	"... you have three different tables set up but it's … an enclosed enough area that like, you know, people would talk to their partner next to them or across to them or something but it was also kind of like, **general conversation was had as well throughout a certain point,**...you know, you talk to the person next to you… but in general, like, if… a comment was made to the group, …everybody was kind of interacting and interacting in to the extent that they wanted to interact in.
Interviewer:	Is that kind of… large group, kind of interaction and

	discussion that you're describing. Is that something that you see specifically in art making or do you see that in other activities as well?
Leaf Camp Outdoor Education Director:	In others as well, but art making is the only one where they are all seated together and kind of doing the same thing. Like even in high ropes, each person plays a different role. In Big Swing [High Course Challenge], each person plays a different role. In archery, not everybody's going at once. **So I think it's like the one time**, aside from canoeing, which again, people have different roles whether in the front or the back, **where everybody's kind of doing the same thing in some regard.** Maybe not the same way, but they're kind of working on the same thing, and they're all seated, and they're all in the same state. A lot of our other activities involve a lot more like encouragement and cheering each other on, where that one's kind of just like, **it's an independent activity that you can interact with other people during.**

Figure 64: Excerpts from Interview with **Leaf Camp** OED

The Social Art Room: Friendship Bracelets & Collages. During the data collection process two art activities were brought up as being uniquely social: Friendship Bracelets and Collages. Before discussing these two activities further, I would like to emphasize that this discussion on friendship bracelets and collages is limited to the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**, as these activities were not discussed in interviews with the **Tree Camp**.

In interviews with the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**, both stated that friendship bracelets were the most popular art activity, with the **Leaf Camp** Camper Advocate Alum even stating the importance of intentionally scheduling a commonly popular activity during the same activity block as the friendship bracelets in order to ensure the art activity was not overwhelmed (Figure 65).

Interviewer:	So what observations did you make about how the campers engaged with the art making activity or with the materials… specifically behaviors as it relates to their engagement with the activity that they're doing.
Camper Advocate:	Oh, you've got the art crowd. They're mostly there for the social, being social, chatting, like **friendship bracelets always attracts an enormous number of kids**. **And so whenever the program director puts friendship bracelets on the schedule, they have to put other really attractive activities in the same period, or we would have all of camp at friendship bracelets.** And that's a supervision, like insanity. …and that's just like the chatty campers who want to sit down and…be weaving their friendship [bracelets], you know what I'm talking about. Like, they're there to… to vibe and be social with their friends and like, you know, just have lots and lots of time they wouldn't have otherwise.

Figure 65: Excerpt From Interview with **Leaf Camp** Alum, Camper Advocate

Further inquiry showed that the uniquely social nature of friendship bracelets may correlate to its popularity (Figure 66). Friendship bracelet making is also an activity that continues outside of the camp art room, and again, this may be due to its innately social

nature (Figure 66). A similar observation was made about collage making in the **Leaf Camp** (Figure 67).

Interviewer:	…[redacted] said that…friendship bracelets tend to be really popular as far as art making activities, like you'll have like 30 kids at that. Was that your experience as well during the last two weeks?
Outdoor Education Director:	Yes, And it definitely stems beyond that. I mean, once the kids are done at the actual event, you'll see them all walking around with…tape and…string hanging from them. So then …they'll tape it to like any part of their body and just…walk around with it. So yeah, I think that's a lot of people's – like if they don't necessarily like the other activities going on and they just want to do something more chill – that's kind of the one that they'll go to just to kind of… relax and do. …friendship bracelets is also one that… **a lot of them are like, trying to get their friends to do the activities with them.** So it's like, you know, **a group will go to that one together….they can hang out and chat**.

Figure 66: Excerpt From Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Education Director

Interviewer:	What was it about collages that they [campers] really enjoyed?
Summer Staff Alum, Program Director:	Collages is a very social activity because so much of it is flipping through the magazines and saying, "Oh my God, look at this photo. This is so crazy." "Oh, what can we do with this letter?" And all of that. It can be a group thing. It can also be your own private thing…

Figure 67: Excerpt From Interview with **Leaf Camp** Summer Staff Alum, Summer Program Director

Peer and Intergenerational Learning and Accessibility in the Tree Camp Art Room. The Tree Camp integrated (somewhat informally) a practice of peer and intergenerational learning into their programming structure (Figure 68). The practice of peer learning and intergenerational learning is not just limited to having classes with mixed ages and skills, but it also requires ensuring the camp facilities and summer working hours are accessible across age groups in order to allow for teachers of varied age ranges in the classroom (Figure 69). Additionally, the Tree Camp integrates a practice of supporting developmentally–appropriate risk taking that is dependent on ensuring facilities and general practices are accessible to all campers, to the best of the camp's ability(Figure 70). The practice of supporting developmentally–appropriate risk taking is also linked to the camp's practice of peer and intergenerational learning in their classrooms (Figure 70).

Camp Director:	**(Discussing how the camp mission impacts the programming and structure of the camp)** …peer learning and kind of intergenerational learning is very important to our mission. It's …really built in to our approach and so **making sure that there are true beginners and also folks who've been doing this for the whole time they've been coming to camp in the same space creates a lot of opportunity for connection**, either through the learning or the art medium itself, or just because you have a ten year old sitting next to a 16 year old, both working on the same skill, developing the same skill together.

Figure 68: Excerpt From Interview with Tree Camp, Camp Director

Camp Director:	**(Discussing how peer and intergenerational learning shows up at the camp)**
	Yeah, so intergenerational learning, I think, is a little bit harder to find on camp because, you know, most of our staff are either college students or in their 20s in some capacity.
	And so the most obvious place that intergenerational learning shows up is that it is our older staff who are instructing the classes. But also, among our staff, we certainly do have a range of ages. We've got folks on staff who are in their 50s or 60s and also folks on staff who are 19. And so that is really important to us. A lot of camps are not accessible to folks who are older, either because of mobility issues or because of the time requirements or the live on site requirements.
	And so we work really hard to make being on our staff, like physically accessible to people ,[and] accessible via scheduling needs to people. We have a lot of staff who live locally, who come to teach, and then don't do bunk counselor responsibilities. And so that's definitely part of it.

Figure 69: Excerpt From Interview with **Tree Camp**, Camp Director

Interviewer:	I wonder if you could expand on that here about what exactly creating space for developmentally appropriate risk–taking looks like at your camp.
Camp Director:	Yeah, I think on the tour, I'd talk specifically about our technical theater classes and how a lot of what our campers are learning in the general technical theater class or the like set design and construction class is use of power tools. And I have in the past had caregivers ask me like, well, if my ten year old signs up for this class, they're not

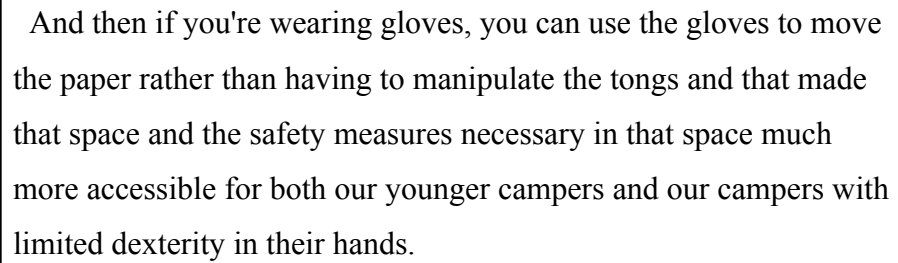going to be using a table saw, are they? But they totally are, because that is a skill that is teachable.

And, you know – outside of any kind of like, behavioral safety concerns that we might have, which has certainly come up in the past – if our instructors are teaching proper use of PPE in a way that is…accessible to an eight or a nine or a ten–year–old, then there's no reason that that camper can't learn how to safely use a power tool or a table saw or other kind of equipment that might be considered a little more dangerous than other equipment.

…

We have four kind of programs on camp that I consistently need to report on as our highest risk activities and those are technical theater because of all of the power tools, the pool because of the risk of drowning, ceramics because of the kiln, and photography because of the chemicals – and all of our age groups have access to those classes**. It is built into the curriculum and into the program that on the first day of class they are discussing safety procedures,** and if it is a class that requires some use of PPE, that they are discussing the appropriate use of PPE.

And as an example, in photography, when you're working in a dark room, there are tongs that you're supposed to use to move the print from each chemical to the next. And what we were finding is that our littles [youngest campers] either…didn't have…the dexterity necessary to … use the tongs in a way that was functional, or they would just forget all the time. So we said, okay, let's figure something else out. And so we started asking everyone to put on gloves when they went into the dark room, or the folks who like consistently could not remember or could not use the tongs for whatever reason, just wear gloves.

And then if you're wearing gloves, you can use the gloves to move the paper rather than having to manipulate the tongs and that made that space and the safety measures necessary in that space much more accessible for both our younger campers and our campers with limited dexterity in their hands.

Figure 70: Excerpt From Interview with **Tree Camp**, Camp Director

Supporting Social–Emotional Learning: Mental Health Support Role. Each camp had a summer staff position that functioned as a form of Mental Health Support (henceforth referred to as MHSR, Mental Health Support Role). While the MHSR is not directly linked to art making at each camp, I did investigate what this role looks like at each camp. I was led by a) the desire to better understand the larger picture of each camp, in order to better understand art's place in each camp and b) the understanding a person's (camper) emotional and mental well being impacts how they interact with their environment (camp).

Tree Camp Mental Health Support Role (MHSR). The **Tree Camp** MHSR was informally introduced between 2019–2021, but was formalized in early 2022. When the role was initially created it was only filled by one person, however the role has now expanded to two positions over the last two years. The role appears to have been created as a direct result of a post–COVID reality that involves telehealth use. As a result, one of the **Tree Camp** MHSR's responsibilities is providing additional support and aftercare to campers post telehealth appointments.The **Tree Camp** MHSR is also meant to help relieve bunk counselors who may not be equipped to appropriately support specific mental health needs of campers (Figure 71).

Tree Camp, Camp Director:	So when I came on in…**January of 22, we kind of formalized this role…** **…our approach draws campers to us who may have more emotional or behavioral support needs than the campers at a lot of other camps.** And just because our approach is so flexible and so based on,...campers being able to advocate for themselves, campers being able to tell us what they need **– often we saw that our bunk counselors were spending a lot of time with … one out of their 12 campers who…needed a lot of extra support. …** And it was too much of an ask task to try to train them, to prepare them to have those kinds of conversations with campers with higher social emotional needs. So we said, great, **let's try to find someone who already has this knowledge, who could come to us and be specifically in support of campers who need a lot of conversation in the morning to get them feeling ready and okay to participate in their day**. **We also post–2021 have seen a huge increase in the amount of camper families who are requesting that their camper continue to engage in telehealth services while their camper was at camp –** and so we wanted to make that happen somehow – and in order to make that happen, we really needed somebody who was dedicated to organizing and scheduling those calls and tracking the campers down and supporting the campers maybe after they were done with their therapy appointments or counseling appointments. Cause a lot of stuff can come up – sometimes it doesn't, sometimes it does – you got campers for whom like, "Oh, this is a totally regular part of my day and I'm fine. And I'm just going to go back to class now." **And then you also have campers who are …devastated for an hour after their appointments. And so we really wanted somebody who was very focused on those needs.**

Figure 70.A: Excerpt from Interview with **Tree Camp**, Camp Director

According to the camp director, the **Tree Camp** MHSR is typically either a licensed mental health professional or someone with an educational background, such as a student studying social work.

Branch Camp Mental Health Support Role (MHSR). Similar to the **Tree Camp** MHSR, the **Branch Camp** MHSR was created in 2021 as a post–pandemic response (Figure 71).

Branch Camp, Camp Director:	So **post–pandemic we saw the need for more support, not only for the campers and staff while they're here, but also for the parents.** So we started two new positions.
	So we have a mental health support person… that's **typically somebody with a counseling license and experience**, and they're there to help support the needs of the campers and the staff. And then we also have a **parent liaison** that <u>helps support camper success, but also the parents – because after several years of the pandemic…</u>this is often like a huge step for the whole family, for a camper to come overnight for a week or two weeks. *And we find that if kids are on the phone with their families, they get more homesick.* So having that kind of liaison in an intermediate person to support the camper, but also keep the family in the loop and supported is such a great asset.

Figure 71: Excerpt from Interview with **Branch Camp**, Camp Director

When discussing this role, the Camp Director actually referenced two positions created to support camper mental health – a parent liaison and a mental health specialist (MHS). Due to time limitations, I prioritized investigating the MHS role, but also inquired about the responsibilities of the Parent Liaison.

The Parent Liaison functions as an intermediary between parents and campers on matters of homesickness and helping campers transition to camp life. The MHS provides support in camper conflict resolution or may provide mini lessons or play therapy sessions. The MHS is also responsible for coaching staff and oversees the mentor program for first and second year summer staff.

According to the Camp Director, the MHS is typically filled by someone with a counseling license and experience.

Leaf Camp Mental Health Support Role (MHSR). Unlike the MHSR at the **Branch Camp** and the **Tree Camp**, the MHSR at the **Leaf Camp** is a much more informal role and is actually titled the "Camper Advocate" (CA). The CA was also created prior to COVID. According to the interviewed participants, the role had existed informally for an unspecified amount of time and was known as the "Homesick Specialist." The role was formalized in 2008 and renamed as the "Camper Advocate."

According to the Camp Director and a summer staff alum who worked as a camper advocate, the primary responsibilities of the CA are to help campers adjust to camp (hence the former title of "Homesick Specialist") and also help with camper conflict resolution. The alum CA also pointed out how the CA is also responsible for helping cabin counselors learn how to better support their campers (Figure 72). The alum CA also referenced a practice called "Cabin Check Ins" created by a CA in 2018 and seems to have stayed as a practice –this practice involves the CA checking in on each camper cabin and giving campers a space to share any difficulties or concerns with the CA. As the role is informal, the CA is typically filled by someone who has general experience working with children and a general knowledge of how to support campers.

Leaf Camp, Summer Staff Alum, Camper Advocate:	….One of the main things about Camper Advocate too, **is helping…guide and teach the counselors to work with the kids that are having that struggle.** It's also about coordinating the support that all the staffers are giving. **Everyone needs to be in the loop – who needs to be in the loop – about this kid who is struggling with staying in an activity and not wandering off into the woods, for example, who's struggling with …frustration that's coming out on counselors or peers, [or] the kid who has …sensory sensitivities and our camp is mainly sand and they have sensory sensitivities with sand.** What can we do to…work together, figure this out and give this kid what they need so that they can also have fun at camp? … \n\n ……a large part of my job is…checking in with counselors and making sure that…they have the tools in their tool belt to…guide these kids and give these kids what they need. Like, I feel like I'm doing my job best when we're reaching the end–ish of the summer, and I have way less to do. That means I did my job right.

Figure 72: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Summer Staff Alum, Camper Advocate (CA)

Summary of Presentation of Data: Camp–Classroom Crossover

To close this section, I would like to briefly introduce the camp–classroom crossover I observed throughout much of the research. This will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, so for now I will review the ways different schools were already working with each camp and taking advantage of each camp's unique strengths. The camp–classroom crossover observed at the **Tree Camp** was already

discussed when I covered the Arts Integration Charter School it supports– and which very much functions as a sort of extension of its summer camp programs (Figure 52). The camp–classroom crossover at the **Branch Camp** was also already introduced under Community Partnerships – how local schools work with the camp in order to support its Outdoor Education curriculum and the ways in which the camp offers "schools out" care on scheduled days when the local schools are closed. Due to limited time, that is the extent of the camp-classroom related data I collected from the **Tree Camp** and **Branch Camp**. However, I was able to discover more camp-classroom crossover related data from the **Leaf Camp**.

This difference in data collection could also be attributed to the size difference of the **Tree Camp** and **Branch Camp** in comparison to the size of the **Leaf Camp**: each of the former camps were fairly large organizations as compared to the **Leaf Camp**.

Leaf Camp: Using Outdoor Education to Build Community in the Classroom. As discussed in (Community Partnerships), the most significant "community partnership" at the **Leaf Camp** appeared to be with visiting groups that would rent out the camp's facilities during the off season – including various school groups. The Outdoor Center Director was responsible for hosting and running these visits according to each group's needs, so I took some time to inquire about the schools groups – mainly how they used the camp's facilities and any observations the Outdoor Center Director could make about the impact of the visits on the groups. Overall the stated goals relate to the S.E.L development of relationship skills *and* social awareness: mainly community building (Figure 73).

Interviewer:	…When the schools reach out to you to plan this [visits], are they stating any goals or purpose of the trip?
Outdoor Center Director:	Yeah, I usually ask them,... "What are your goals?" So we know, especially with the smaller groups, if we're able to just do one big team building group, with that, you know, the bigger groups is kind of like, there's only so much we can do with them, you know? So we have to just kind of work through the time we have, but the smaller groups, we are able to kind of, you know, if they want to work on team building within a grade, you know, we can figure out a way to kind of focus on that with them a little bit more.
Interviewer:	…Is there a pattern within the goals and purposes or is it like a wide range of goals and purposes?
Outdoor Center Director:	It's usually the same thing… community, teamwork, communication, trust. It usually falls within…that kind of realm

Figure 73: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

The two primary observations made seem to be about how teacher involvement impacts student engagement (Figure 74), and how quickly change can be observed in a small amount of time (Figure 75) – although it is harder to determine how long this behavioral change sticks after the students return to the classroom.

Interviewer:	Can you tell me any…behavioral observations about these [school] groups?
Outdoor Center Director:	Yeah, so one thing we really noticed…in the fall– that was my first season – it is the teachers day off kind of, but their level of involvement in the groups and their level of just kind of like their excitement to be there really matters. We had one group where….We asked that a teacher is…nearby where each rotation is just in case, …their kids are unruly. They're not gonna listen to us, they're gonna listen to their teacher. So we had one group where…the teachers were never anywhere near the kids and the kids, you could tell the kids, the buy–in was hard, the kids' behaviors were bad, it was hard to get anybody on track. But when you have those teachers who are there or who are encouraging or who are just giving those – those kids that they know need that little extra push – that little push, it makes a world of a difference in our groups, especially for team building. But all around… us being able to do what we do…the teacher or chaperone involvement is really important. That's really the biggest thing – honestly – I feel like that really determines a group's behaviors off the bat is when the teachers come in….
Interviewer:	So if I were to interpret that, would it be fair to say that the student engagement in the activities really depends on the level of engagement of the teachers?
Outdoor Center Director:	…Yeah. I think so…

Figure 74: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Interviewer:	… have you noticed any differences in the groups when they first arrive versus when they leave?
Outdoor Center Director:	Yeah, absolutely. …So school groups are a little bit harder because you …they're kind of arriving at nine, and then they're running to the bus by one or two. So it's kind of hard to see. Usually within our small groups [school groups divided into small groups for activity rotation], we can see – especially when usually [camp director] or I are the ones who are running the team building portion – and usually in that hour or 15 minutes that we're with them we can kind of see a change. … Like there's always like that one group that you're just like, you know, you watch their cohesion during just that one period that you have with them, but that's really all you get to see. For the overnights, you definitely, I see, I've seen like group[s] come together, but I've seen a lot of like individuals kind of shift after their experience. Unfortunately, it's only one night usually, so it's not a ton of time, but you know from the day they arrived and the day they leave, like some kids kind of mellow out a little bit. Or you know, you might see they maybe just seem a little bit more comfortable with each other going back into the classroom.
Interviewer:	So you talk a little bit about in small groups and team building activities but I'm curious like what are the specific behaviors [shifts] that you're observing?
Outdoor Center Director:	Yeah, so usually like when we start team building, we'll start…with... a field activity. And then we have a couple of those, those few courses that we do, like the Whale Watch, Balance Beam and things like that. And through those, you kind of see

them, it's almost like they catch on to what we're doing. Like, "okay, they're trying to get us to communicate with each other." "They're trying to get us to talk to each other."

So they, they just, you can see them start to communicate more with each other.

It's also very helpful in terms of behavior when there's always… most of the time… there's one kid in the group who…is the leader, kind of takes charge. That's also very helpful behaviorally in groups when you have that – not too much – but kind of like every once in a while you get that kid in the group that takes charge, but also is very encouraging for others to like, come on team, like get the team together.

So when you're able to get them to kind of buy in and start that communication and team building, and you see that they kind of are getting it, like "We need to work together or this isn't going to happen", then that's really, that's kind of the progression you see…
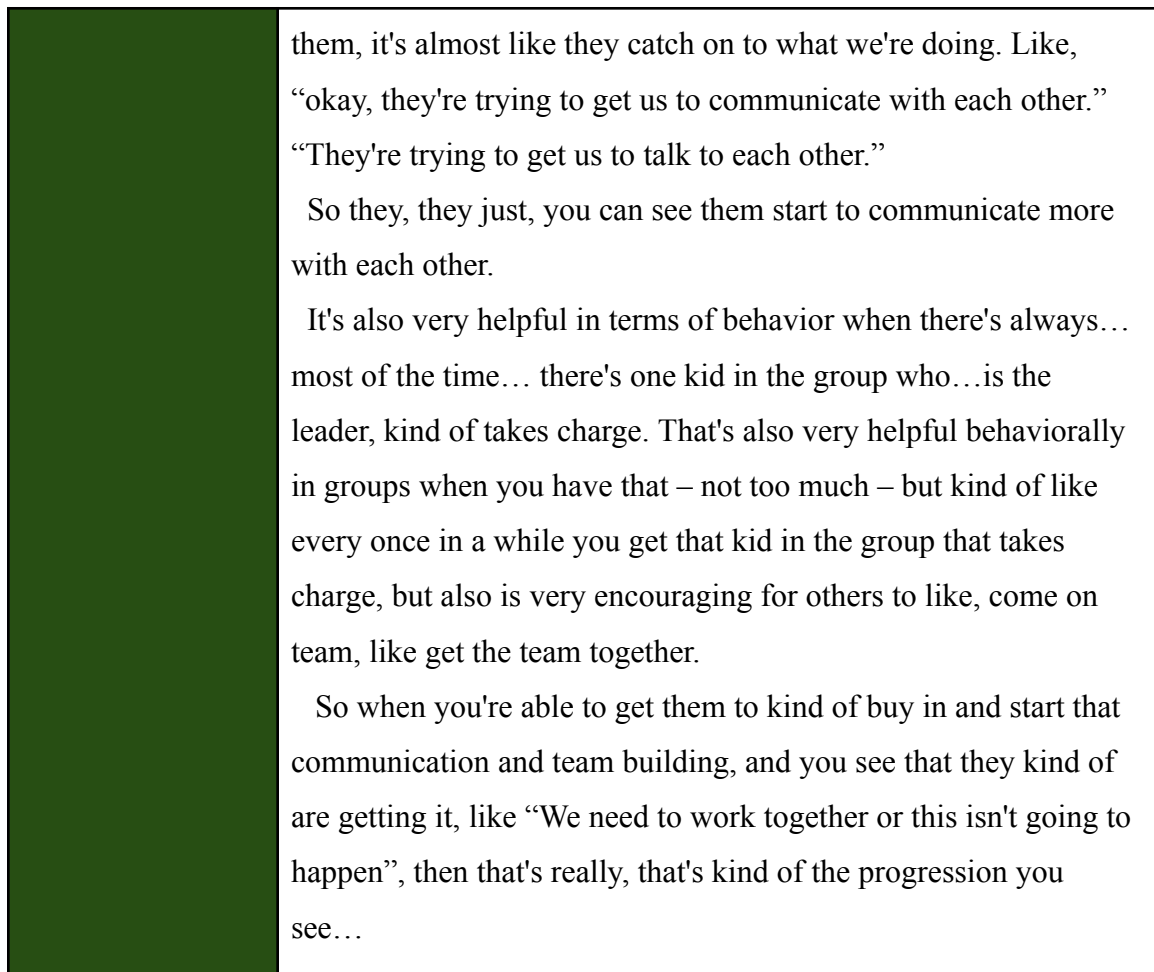
Figure 75: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Additionally, the Outdoor Center Director pointed out that when school leaders take responsibility for dividing students into small groups for team building activities (as opposed to allowing students to pick their own groups, leading students to stick with their already established friendship), this small change can encourage students to positively interact with others who they may not be familiar with (Figure 76).

Interviewer:	...You've already kind of talked about this a little bit, but I'm curious if there was any kind of other observations or discussions that you observed that talked or that covered how the activities at the camp translated to the classroom?
Outdoor Center Director:	What also really depends on how things transfer and how the group goes, is how the teachers break up the groups. So if they break up the groups, and most of them do try, some of them come very prepared. Like they have their groups in mind and they have them in mind because they want… they just kind of integrate everybody together and kind of be a one big inclusion thing. So when they do that, I feel like that is really helpful when they really put time into the groups. I feel like you see a lot with those because… they're not with their friends. They have to talk to each other, talk to people who maybe they didn't really talk to before. …You can tell…when they talk to each other on the regular or like when they're just like "Okay, I know you because you're in my class and I don't really talk to you, but I kind of know about you…" So I think that's something really nice that they get out of it. When the teachers are thoughtful in …the students that they put together in a group, it can help just create a little bit more, like maybe they didn't really talk to that person before and they'll talk to them when they get back to school now because they were in the same group together. So that's something else that I think they could take back to the classroom.

Figure 76: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Additionally, the Outdoor Center Director also shared an observation about the correlation between teacher trust and student empowerment in team building activities (Figure 77).

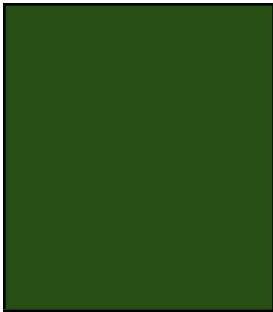| Interviewer:	So what are some other observations that you've made about… the impact of a teacher interacting or …completing the team building activity along with the students?
Outdoor Center Director:	Yeah, I think a lot of the kids like to see it. One of them [activity] that usually – if we do have an odd number – we need them [teacher] to participate in, involves them being blindfolded. So usually the teachers get very nervous for that because they're like, "Oh my gosh, I don't want to do anything to pair this up," but the kids get really excited to see…their teachers getting blindfolded too. And I think it also kind of empowers the kid that's paired up with them too, like, "Oh, I'm leading my teacher who's blindfolded." And It's usually once the teacher takes a blindfold off, it's usually a nice moment between the teacher and that student who is leading them because they're like, "You did it, you know, thank you. I was trusting you." So that's always cool when they're like, "Okay, I'll do it." Even though you can kind of tell they're uncomfortable, but they do it anyways. I think the kids like to see that.

Figure 77: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Finally, the Outdoor Center Director was also able to share a little about how teachers have previously used the Outdoor Education activities to provide a lesson connecting the lessons learned back to the classroom (Figure 78).

Outdoor Center Director:	Sometimes…and that doesn't happen often, but some of the overnight groups, they come really early and then…they only have so many kids, so our rotations go faster. But so, then we have a little bit of extra time built in. And… I personally love when…a teacher wants to do a lesson in there…I think that's [a] great,...way to transfer classroom to here. And also it provides an hour of programming, but some don't. They're just kind of like "Yeah, we're here, like, let's do stuff." And so we usually, you know, we'll give them a decent break time.
Interviewer:	So what are some of the lessons that you've seen teachers teach at the camp?
Outdoor Center Director:	…One of them I remember, she, it was actually, it was one of my favorites. I don't really know what the lesson was, but she transferred the lesson to the closing. They were an overnight group. And she, they had some sort of, I forget what she gave them, they gave them some sort of thing. It was just a lot about community and team building and just having, you know, being a group together. And then she brought it into like their closing … from their session. So right before they left, they had a big circle and they…rounded it all out together. Unfortunately I don't really know what it was about…but she kind of rounded it all out for the whole experience that they can take back to the classroom. So I love that because like we can we debrief…. but when they can really take it back to their classroom, that's when it's, you know, the best. They haven't been actual I only remember one other one. I think they're just more about working together and

	things like that. There's not really educational or it's like a fun, I think one group may have done like a fun math game or something that was like, that the kids enjoy doing. So just things that they enjoy doing, but that they're also trying to work on in their classroom.

Figure 78: Excerpt from Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Data Analysis

Coding Strategies Used and What They Revealed.

As seen in Figures 10 and 11, I started the data collection process deductively coding via my questions (camp programming and structure, community connections, community of camp, art education, and social–emotional learning). After each interview, I would use an online AI transcription service to transcribe each recorded interview and I would then review the transcription while listening to the recording, in order to account for any errors.

I then reviewed each transcript and coded using primarily deductive reasoning. After reviewing and highlighting the digital transcription copies, I eventually printed out each interview so that I could manually cut out interview sections according to the relevant themes and determine which themes occurred (and how) at each camp, and if any themes stood alone. This helped me to first visualize how each seemingly separate theme connected in order to create a fuller picture of the context in which art exists at camps. This practice also helped me to determine other themes that I had not yet discovered, like camp as a micro–community and camp as a creative environment. This also helped to separate the social emotional learning development that happened at art making activities versus across general camp programming.

At the conclusion of my coding, I had four larger themes of Camp Structure and Programming, Art at Camp, Art and SEL, and Mental Health Support. See Figures 81 and 82 for a look at how each of these larger themes divided into smaller sub–themes.
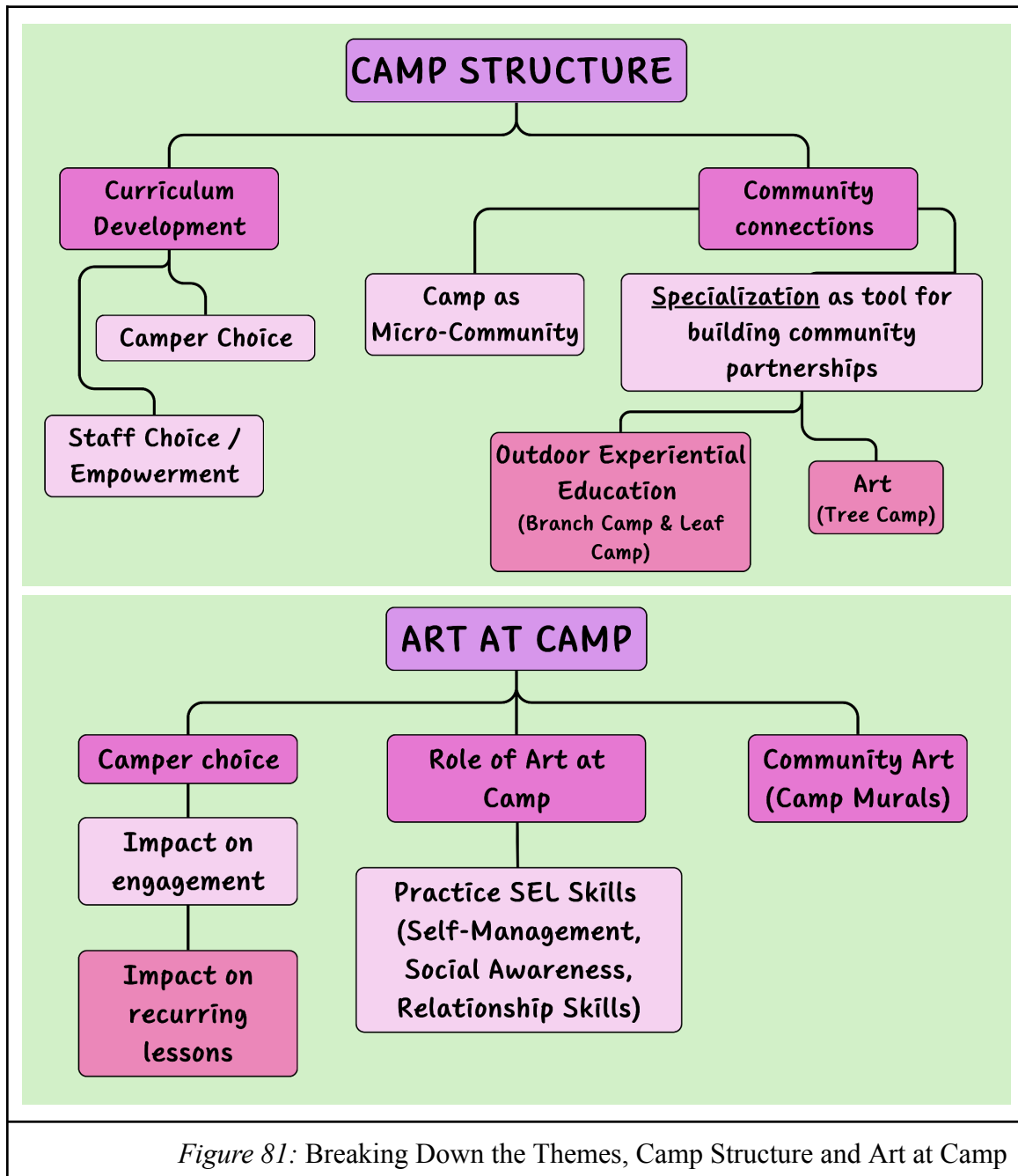

Figure 81: Breaking Down the Themes, Camp Structure and Art at Camp

Figure 82: Breaking Down the Themes, Art & Sel and Mental Health Support
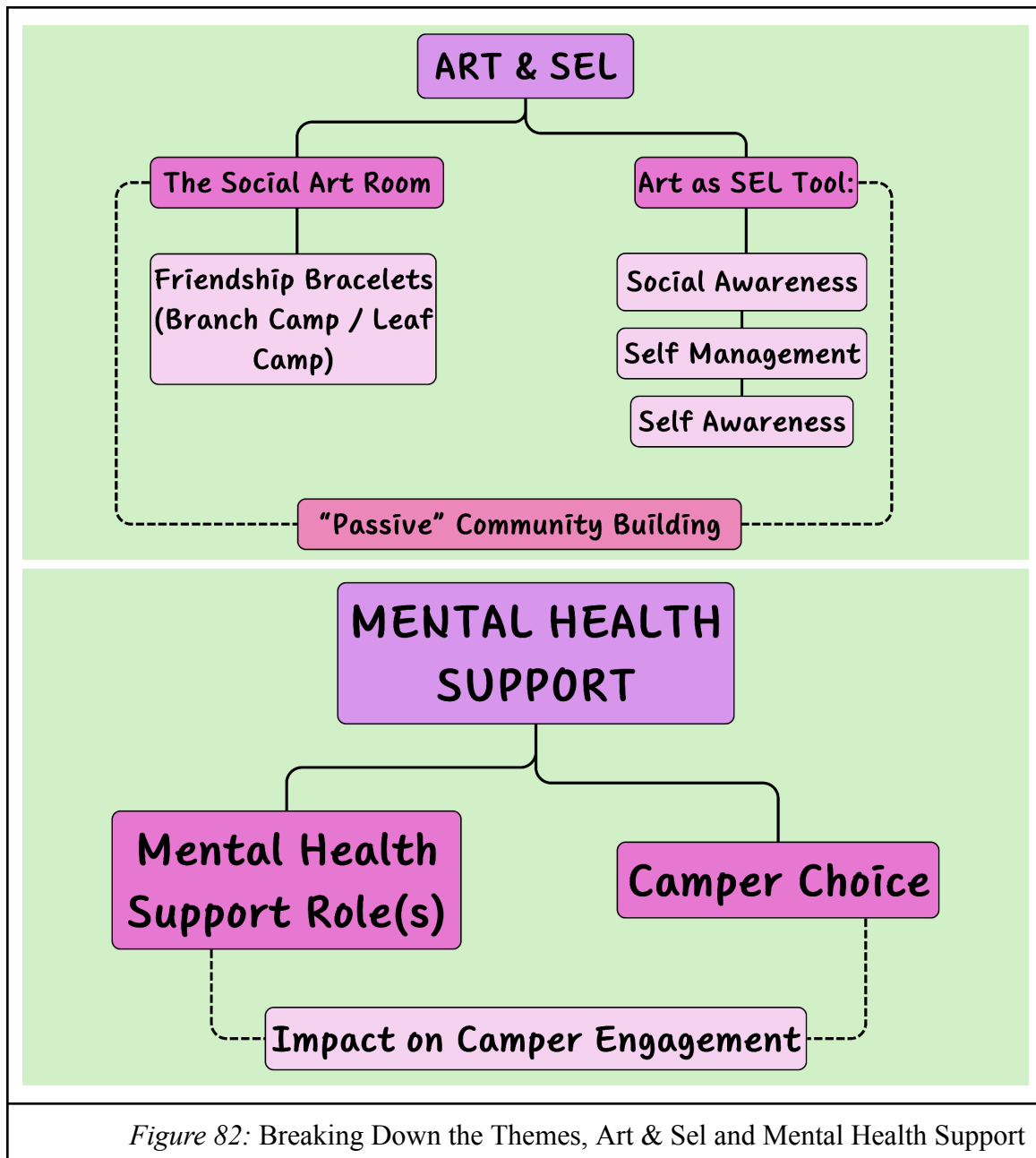
Coding Visual and Written Data. I also collected data via the photographic

documentation of each site during my site visit. The photographs taken were then split

into three categories: Art Making Facilities, Community Art, and Camper Art (Figures

28-50).

I also referred to samples of summer camp schedules available from each site (Figure 13), first in order to understand the context in which art exists at each camp. These schedules also offered insight into the different ways the camp's values reflected in their programming – such as how camper choice fit into each camp's structure.

Connecting Data Themes.

As stated earlier, coding led to five seemingly separate major themes: Camp Structure and Programming, Art at Camp, Art and S.E.L, and Mental Health Support. At first glance, it may appear that the themes of the data collected and shared in this chapter may be too distinct from each other to truly be related beyond their common connection of camp. However – as I have stated multiple times throughout this chapter – in order to truly understand what artmaking looks like at each camp, I must first understand the full context of which art making exists in a camp.

Under Camp Structure, I was able to learn more about how summer curriculum is developed and led at each camp – thereby allowing me to understand how the art curriculum is created and led at each camp. For example, each camp follows the same process of curriculum development in which some form of a larger curriculum is developed by the camp directors, which then leads to smaller and more individual curriculum (or lessons) being developed and led by summer staff – but this looks different at each camp. At the **Tree Camp**, a team of the year–round staff creates a general curriculum that is provided to teachers who then develop their own lessons based on the key points of that curriculum. Similarly, at the **Branch Camp** a team of year–round staff also create a curriculum framework for summer staff and department heads to refer to in the development of curriculum and lessons throughout the summer. At

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the **Leaf Camp**, curriculum development looks slightly different – with the summer staff taking nearly full responsibility for the development of the summer curriculum.

Understanding the data under Camp Structure and Programming was key to helping me to understand the data under Art at Camp – specifically how Art Activities, Camp as a Creative Environment (through Summer Staff Empowerment), and Camper Choice help to form a feedback loop that influences how the camp art curriculum develops over time (Figure 83).
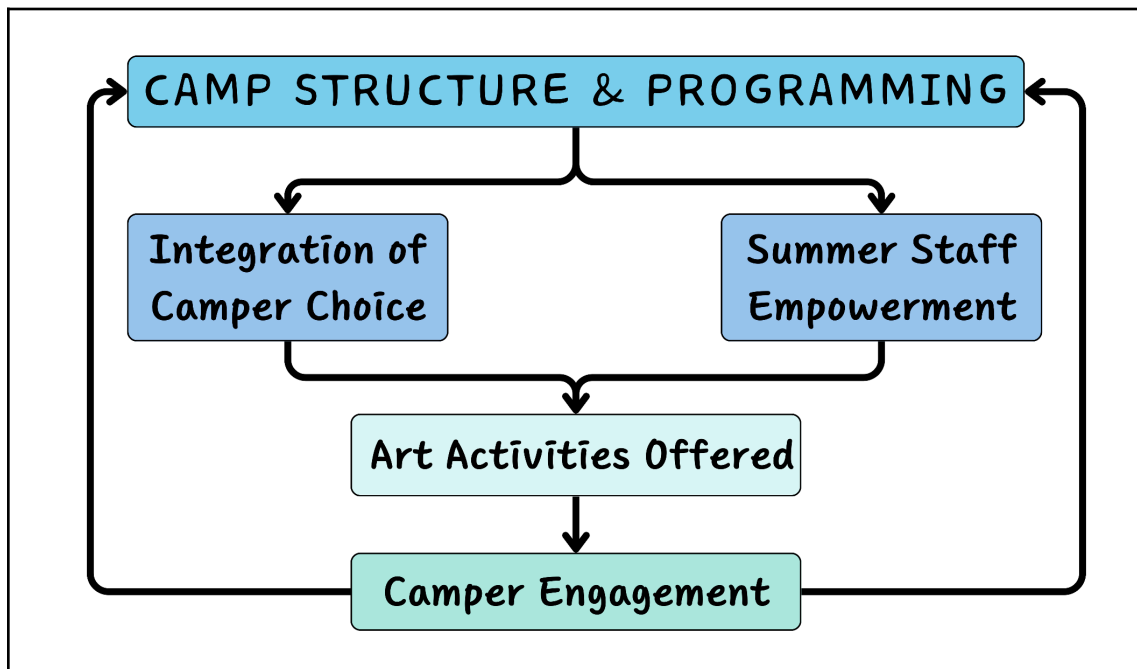

Figure 83: Camp Art Curriculum Feedback Loop

Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings of this study revealed how camps might support SEL in campers, the role of camper choice in camp curriculum development, how camp art-making supports SEL in campers, and how specialization can be used as a tool for developing community partnerships.

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In relation to SEL at summer camp, this study revealed a few key SEL supports built into each of the camp programming structures – specifically camper choice and providing a Mental Health Support Staff (or MHSR) available to campers – with camper choice existing as a tool that encourages camper empowerment and autonomy, while the MHSR at each camp ensures that campers have a safe space to work through difficult experiences ranging from homesickness to processing difficult emotions.

Camper choice played a key role in curriculum development at each camp. The curriculum development at each camp is consistently influenced by each camp's character development values, camper choice, and finally, by summer staff who are encouraged to develop their own activities based on each camp's overall curriculum or programming structure. Most importantly, camper choice, camper engagement, and summer staff choice seemed to have the biggest impact on either the specific activities offered or how camp programming was structured.

This study also revealed that art making in camp settings seems to play a key role in camper SEL. When looking at how SEL is connected to art making in camp settings, the most consistent finding across is that art activities appear to be unique in the way they offer opportunities for campers to practice social behaviors and building community. Leading me to culminate this distinct trait as "The Social Art Room".

Finally, this study also looked at community partnerships across each camp. The number of community partnerships and connections across each camp varied - with the **Tree Camp** having an overwhelming amount of community partnerships and a clear presence in its immediate community. Meanwhile, while both the **Branch Camp** and the **Leaf Camp** do have various partnerships with schools and outside organizations,

interviews with directors at both camps revealed a "hidden presence" in their immediate communities – with the directors of each camps stating that they would meet people from the local community who were not even aware of the camp's existence.

However, when I looked at the partnerships that did exist across each camp, the camps' specializations (the **Tree Camp**'s specialization in art education and the **Branch Camp**'s and **Leaf Camp'**s specialization in Outdoor Experiential Education) were consistent in being the key to these partnerships.

Importantly, each camp did still have community partnerships within their own camp "micro-communities" – with these micro-communities often comprised of camp staff (full time and summer staff) camp alumni (summer staff and campers) as well as caregivers of current and former campers.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

Introduction and Review of Findings

The primary themes uncovered in this study were camper mental health support, the art room as a social environment, camp as a micro–community and novelty impacting community partnerships across each camp. Figure 84 outlines how each theme presented itself in this study.

Figure 84: Review of Themes Discovered in the Research
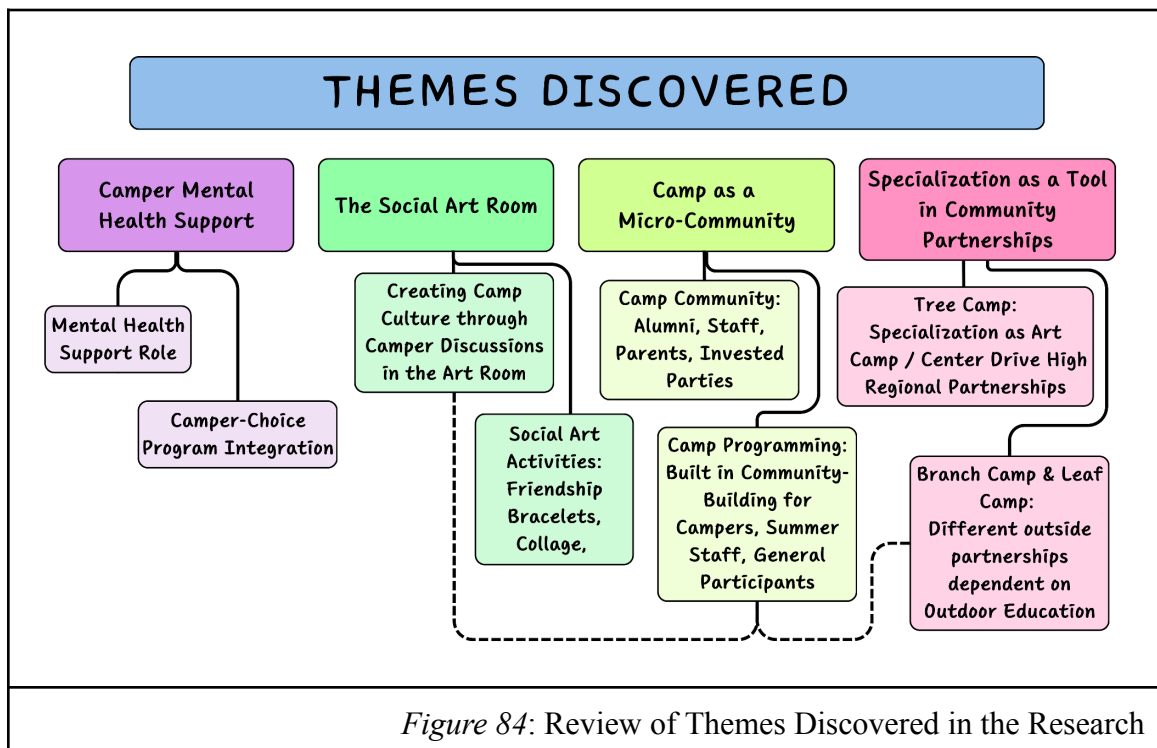
Despite the initial heart of this study being based on how to use community based curriculum in a camp setting, the findings and themes discussed in this study are actually most relevant in how they relate to the classroom art educator. Figure 85 outlines how the different themes relate to the art classroom.

Figure 85: Connecting Discovered Themes to the K–12 Classroom
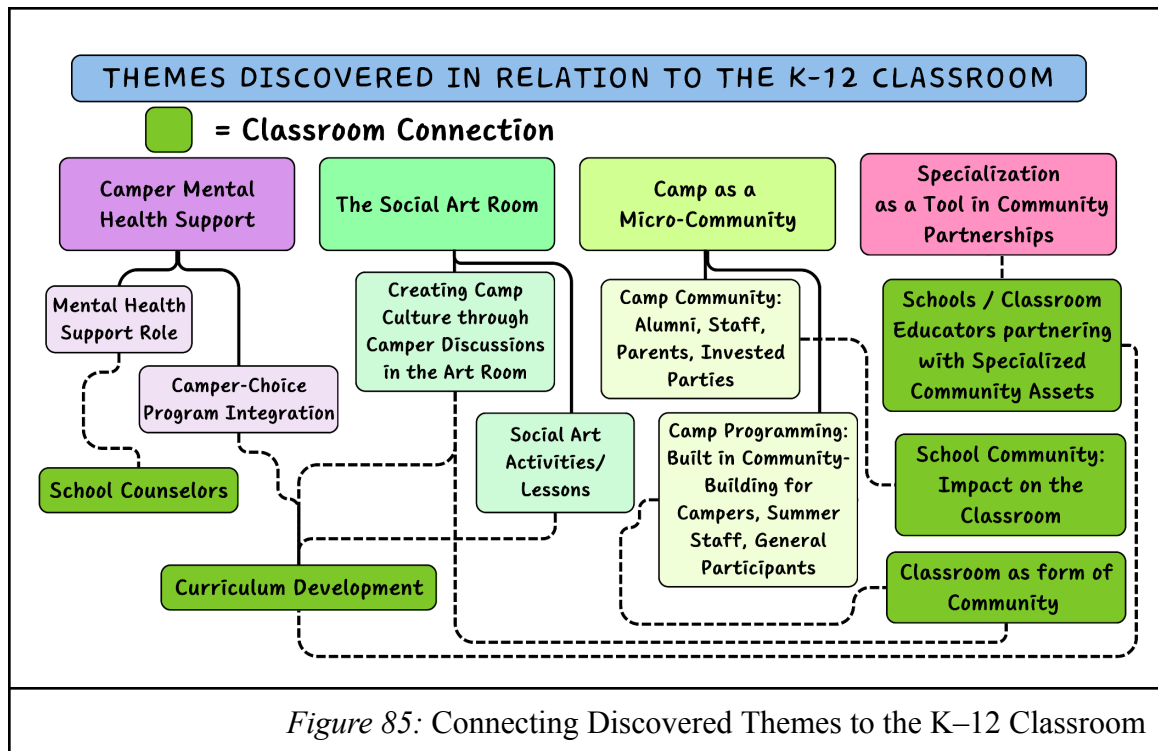
I would also point out the feedback loop shown in Figure 83, in which camp (or in this case, student) choice *and* staff (or in this case, teacher) creativity work *together* to influence the art activities (or in this case, lessons) offered, which then impact the level of camper (or in this case, student) engagement.

Finally, to return to the initial foundation of this study, although two out of the three camps studied in this research had little to no presence in their immediate local community, that does not mean that those camps existed as virtual islands to the outside world. Both the **Branch Camp** and the **Leaf Camp** worked with outside organizations, and most importantly, they both worked with schools in support of the development of social–emotional skills. This combined with the extensive regional and local partnerships of the **Tree Camp**, leads me to believe that the key to camp–community partnerships is in harnessing their unique strengths, whether it be outdoor education or art education.

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Findings In Context of Research Questions.

The section will break down how the findings in this research related to the research questions that drove this research, in which I asked: how camp art programming supports the development of social–emotional skills in youth and how rural camps and classroom teachers can work together in support of art programming that supports social–emotional development in youth.

Art Making in a Camp Setting and its Impact on the Development of Social–Emotional Skills in Campers.

In the first half of my research question I asked: In what ways does camp art programming support the development of social–emotional skills in campers? In full, this research went beyond how camp art programming supports the development of social–emotional skills in youth: art making at camp was just one part of a larger structure that supports the development of social–emotional skills. Namely, the integration of a Camper Mental Health Support Role (MHSR) at each camp, as well as utilizing various forms of Camper Choice to empower campers in their daily participation at camp – which also allows them to reflect on their personal needs throughout the day. Additionally, factors such as the MHSR and Camper Choice may also function in a larger system in which behavior expectations are frontloaded via registration agreements and cabin agreements, and they are also seen to function in environments in which an idea of "care for the greater community" is built into camp programming.

Art making fits into the greater wheel of the development of social–emotional skills at camp as a place to *practice* social interactions. When reviewing the larger picture of camp programming, the Camp Art Room becomes a space where campers can just *be*, and the creative process is a key part of that. As the director at the **Branch Camp** pointed out, art is a place of self–expression and a space to reflect on and share one's personal truths (Figure 19). Additionally, both the **Leaf Camp**'s Summer Staff Alum Program Director *and* the **Tree Camp**'s Curriculum Coordinator pointed out the social activity during art making, in a way that suggests that the environment of art making encourages social behavior (Figure 86).

Leaf Camp	Tree Camp
They [campers] were often very social [during art]. It was rare to go down to an arts and crafts activity where everybody was just …quiet and focused in on their own thing. … But oftentimes they were really social…. Well there were plenty of times a kid would go to an arts and crafts activity just to be social because they didn't really want to do anything else.	I mean, I always joke that…the art room is where you get the best gossip. …When I was, …head of visual arts, I would just love to sit at my desk and listen because I just feel like I knew so much because I think, you know, ….kids get caught up in the process and then they just….chat and they're not like checking themselves a little bit. So I think…there's a lot of like, I don't know if it's…passive community building, but….it's not like, ….team building games, but kids are like, figuring it out on their own and just kind of building community as they're creating, which is really nice to see.
Figure 86: Excerpt From Participant Interviews, Social Art Making	

The **Leaf Camp's** Outdoor Center Director perspective on art making at camp is interesting in this context given that it is art making that seems to be the only space that elicits this unique type of social behavior in campers or participants (Figure 87).

| Leaf Camp |
|---|
| …usually… [in] high ropes…people are usually talking about high ropes or talking about heights or talking about something related to…the concept of high ropes. Where…I feel like when you're doing an art activity the conversation could definitely be related to art, but it could just go anywhere as well. … things just kind of start flowing out and…I've overheard conversations kind of [have] nothing to do with the art that they're doing, while doing you know over there. Whereas high ropes I find, I mean, not all the time, but usually it's about the activity that's happening, you know, something related to the equipment or something like that. |

Figure 87: Excerpt From Interview with **Leaf Camp** Outdoor Center Director

Figure 88 shows how each of these factors interact with one another in the support of development of social–emotional skills across each camp setting. In conclusion, it would appear that one key role that art making may play in the development of social–emotional skills in campers is in creating an environment for campers to participate in *passive community building.*

Figure 88: Overview of Development of SEL in Campers
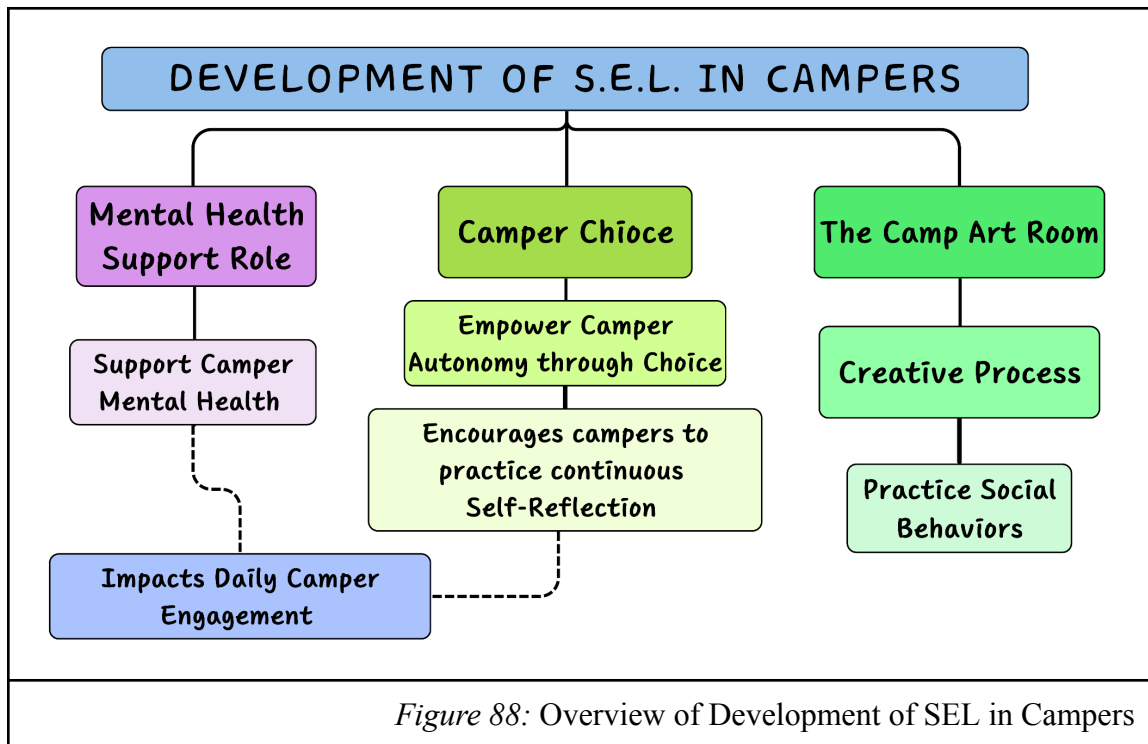
Camp–School Partnerships in Support of Rural Art Education.

The second part of my research question asked: how might rural camps and local community classroom teachers work together to provide art programming that further supports social–emotional development in local youth? Overall, the findings did suggest a consistent form of partnership across each camp was the partnership between the camp and the classroom (Figure 89).

Figure 89: Camp-Community Partnership Examples Across Participating Sites
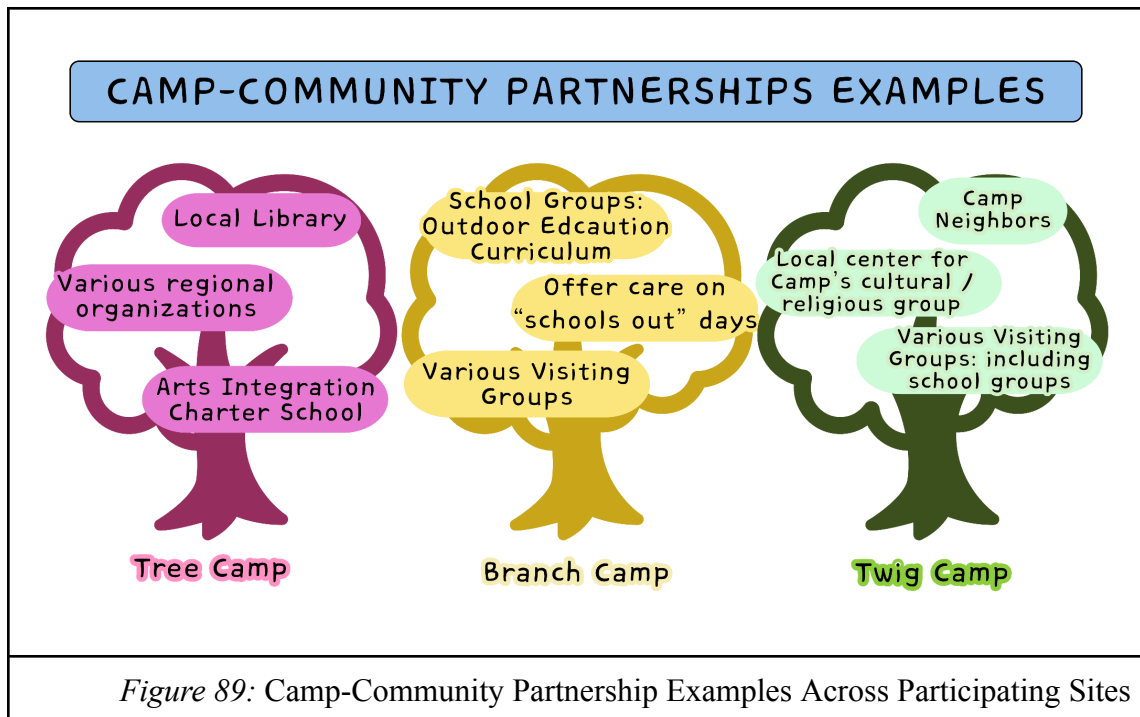
This consistency suggests that partnerships between schools and camps may – and already do – form naturally, but not specifically as it relates to art education.

Findings In Context of Literature Sources

Development of Social–Emotional Skills in Camp Settings: Povilaitis and Sibthorp et al.

Figure 90 links the previously discussed findings of the Social Art Room and Camper Choice & Empowerment to the camp related outcomes discussed in Povilaitis et. al 2023 and Sibthorp et. al 2020.

Figure 90: Camp Related Outcomes in Relation to This Study's Findings
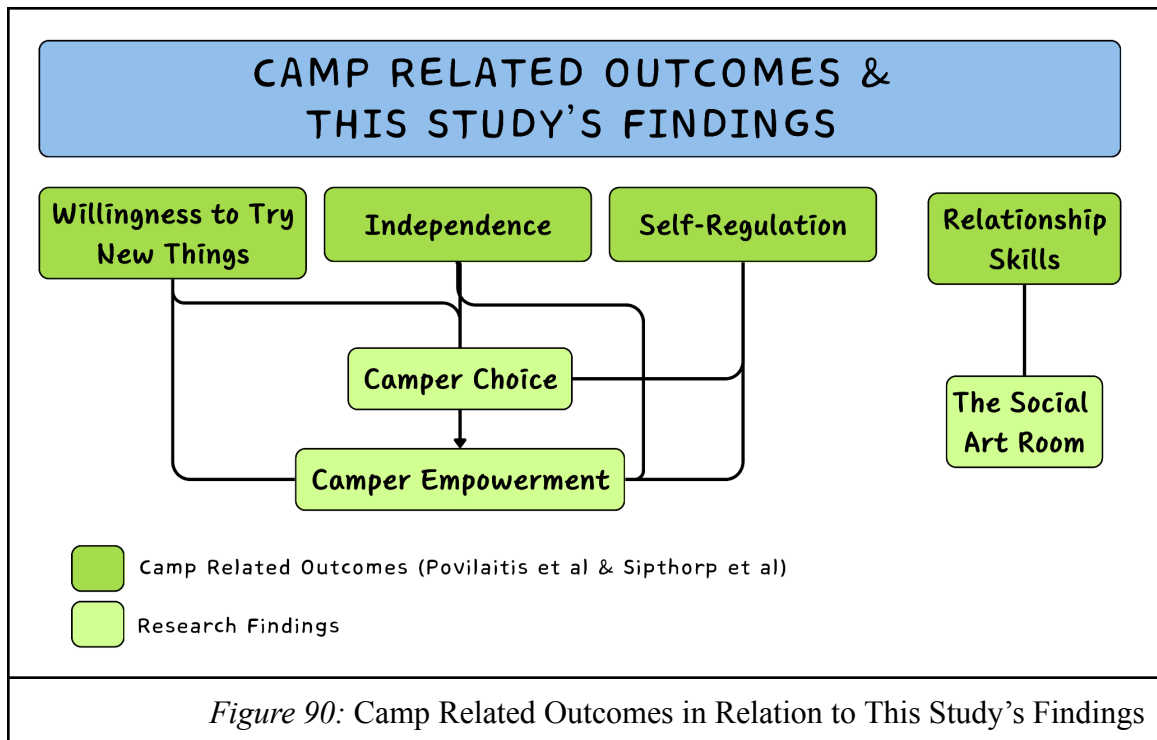
Findings In Context of Research Environment, The Rural Summer Camp

Depending on a camp's interest in creating stronger partnerships with the local community, the discussed findings would suggest that camps can take advantage of their team–building programming structures in order to develop stronger partnerships with the local community. However, that finding is only relevant based on the two traditional camps studied in this research. A more holistic look at the findings in this study, that would include the findings from the **Tree Camp** alongside the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**, would suggest that they key to developing partnerships with the local community would be in reflecting on an individual camp's key (and unique) strengths and harnessing that in partnership with local organizations.

Findings In Context of Research as Self and Practitioner: Reflections as a Pre–Service Educator

As a researcher, art educator, believer in the power of community, and self–professed camp–enthusiast, the findings in this study impact my teaching pedagogy and encourage me to find ways to combine the ethos of camp art making with the intentional curriculum structure found in the K–12 classroom. Figure 91 visualizes how I could combine the findings of this study into my teaching pedagogy.

Figure 91: Fitting Research Findings into Teaching Pedagogy
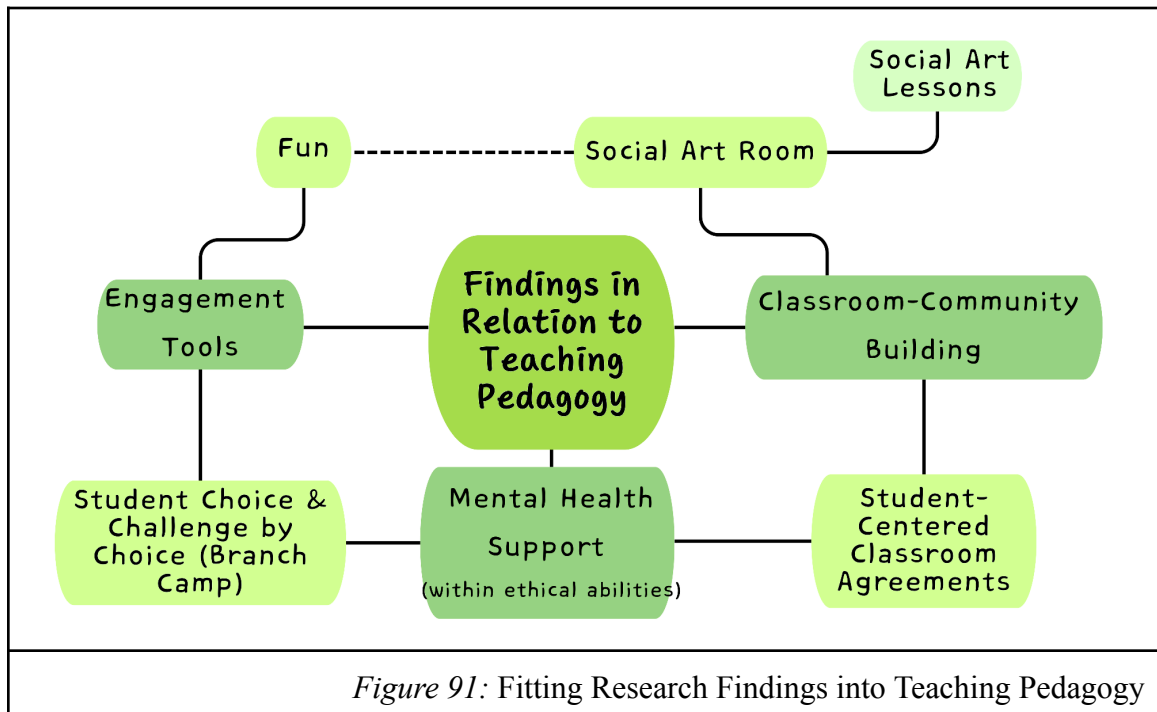
Implications for the Field and Further Research: Classroom–Camp Crossover

Field: The Art Educator's Classroom.

The findings in this study suggests that camps and classrooms may have more to learn from each other that may be commonly believed. Classroom educators can look to examples of camper–choice integration across camps and how engagement is improved by simply empowering campers to choose what and how they spend their day. This does become more difficult in a public K–12 classroom where federal and state standards dictate the level of choice students are afforded in subject matter, but this does not mean that teachers should rule out student–choice in the classroom entirely. Students may not necessarily have choice over subject matter, but they can be provided with choice over *how* they learn or engage with a subject matter. Art educators particularly can refer to a teaching methodology of Teaching for Artistic Behaviors (T.A.B.) when looking for ways to bring in choice in the K–12 art room.

Further Research: Classroom – Camp Crossover.

Additionally, a sense of community may impact how students show up in the classroom – and by extension how they engage with subject matter and materials – and the findings in the study show how primed many camps may be to work directly with classroom teachers in helping build community in the classroom. This poses another question not answered in this study: how can the community practices found across summer camps be used to build community in the K–12 Art Room, and what effect can that have on students in the art room?

Further Research: Camp–Community Partnerships.

Although the findings in this study provide ample insight into the community connections of each camp, they still do not speak to a general consensus of the general impact of camps across the U.S, in relation to the impact – or lack thereof – they have on their surrounding local communities. This study also suffers from a severe limitation of rural community diversity. As Gjleten pointed out, there are at least six "archetypes" of rural communities across the U.S alone, and the research in this study was unable to define what type exactly each rural community may have "fit" into.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, several key findings and implications emerged that are relevant to both camp professionals and classroom educators.

First, Camper Choice played a key role in the overall development of curriculum and summer schedules at each camp. The overall intention behind the integration of Camper Choice appeared to be to encourage camper empowerment and autonomy in how they spend their days at each camp and how they engage with the various lessons and activities available throughout the day. Interestingly,the idea of choice was also extended to the summer staff at each camp, as summer staff were encouraged to – perhaps even challenged – to develop camp activities and lessons based on each camp's given framework. In relation to art making, camper choice (as well as staff choice) means that the art activities across each camp may have greater meaning and value to the campers who participate in them, because the art activities reflect their own interests.

Secondly, this study also reinforces the understanding that camps offer unique learning opportunities, particularly as it relates to team / community building, and art may play a unique role in camps as a space to facilitate passive community building among campers. This finding is especially interesting in relation to classroom teaching, as it indicates the possible benefits of camp-school partnerships.

Finally, specialization appears to be the key to building community partnerships in camp settings. Whether the specialization be art making, as seen in the **Tree Camp**, or Outdoor Experiential Education, as seen in the **Branch Camp** and **Leaf Camp**.

Moving forward I would encourage both classroom educators and camp professionals to seek out the other, so that they may take advantage of each other's unique strengths in order to support the learning of the youth in which they teach.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION AND CONSENT

RESEARCH SITE CONSENT FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I, _____, give permission to Courtney Colditz to conduct a case-study at _____ during the Spring of 2024 in order to fulfill the requirements of her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I have been provided a copy of the Participant Bill of Rights and understand my rights. I understand that this project is intended to research art education practices in a rural camp setting, the effect of camp art education on social-emotional learning, and community-based art education curriculum in a camp setting.

I understand that Courntey Colditz will be a researcher who will be collecting data using various methods including participant observations, semi-structured interviews with clients and staff, which may be video recorded, and documentation of artwork.

 Guardian Signature: _____

 Date: _____

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

MOORE COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN
M.A. THESIS CONSENT FORM
RESEARCH SITE SUPPORT FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I, _____, give permission to Courtney Colditz to interview me and observe any lessons I may lead during the Spring of 2024 in order to fulfill the requirements of her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I have been provided a copy of the Participant Bill of Rights and understand my rights. I understand that this project is intended to research art education practices in a rural camp setting, the effect of camp art education on social-emotional learning, and community-based art education curriculum in a camp setting.

I understand that Courntey Colditz will be a researcher who will be collecting data using various methods including participant observations, semi-structured interviews with clients and staff, which may be video recorded, and documentation of artwork.

Guardian Signature:
_____

Date:
_____

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

MOORE COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF ART EDUCATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that investigates the role of art education in a rural camp setting and the impact of camp art education on social-emotional development in a rural camp setting. It is hoped valuable information on how camps in rural settings can work with local communities to expand access to art education for local youth. For this study, you will participate in research sessions over about 2 months. These sessions will include lightly structured interviews in order to collect data about the topic of this study. Participation will in no way impact your regular school or professional schedule, vocational training, or access to any programs offered at the camp with which you are associated. I will not be asking to view any of your personal information such as IEPs, behavior programs or anything protected by HIPPA.

During all research sessions, you will be audio recorded. These audio recordings will provide information that I will use in writing my thesis and the audio recordings will be destroyed upon the completion of my study. This study will take place at the
_____ and I, Courtney Paige Colditz, will conduct the research study.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Participation in the study is completely voluntary. There will be no effect on your standing at _____ should you decide not to participate in this study. The dialogues around art making experiences and social-emotional development for the study will be the same for all the **minor participants** in the study. The research has the same amount of risk you will encounter during a usual art or classroom activity. However, if you feel uncomfortable at any point in this study you can pull out of the study without penalty or repercussions. The benefits from the study include expanding insight into what art education looks like in a camp setting, how social-emotional development is impacted by camp art education, as well as sharing your personal perspective as it relates to the relevance of art education in a rural camp setting.

PAYMENTS: There will be no payments for you for participation in this study.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Subject's confidentiality will be preserved. I am the sole researcher of this study. For the collation (collection and assembly of data), analysis and reporting of all data, all of the participants will be assigned a pseudonym to prevent individuals from being identified. The camp name will also be changed. Any charts used

in my thesis or presentations will be coded. The audio recordings will be destroyed upon the completion of my thesis. I will reserve the right to use the data and photographs of student artwork but the students' identity will continue to remain confidential.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in the study will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour for interviews.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED: The results of the study will be used in drawing conclusions from the investigation on the role of art education in a rural camp setting, the impact of camp art education on social-emotional development in a rural camp setting, and how camps in rural settings can work with local communities to expand access to art education for local youth. The study will be reported in the form of a thesis which serves to fulfill my requirements for a master's degree in Art Education.

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

PARTICIPANT BILL OF RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Courtney Paige Colditz

Research Title: The Role of Community-Based Art Education in Rural Camp Setting

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future employment or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is (717) 882-8642.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I will contact Lauren Stichter, Director of Art Education, at 215-965-4034 or lstichter@moore.edu.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- If audio recording is part of this research,
    - I ( ) consent to be audio recorded.
    - I ( ) do NOT consent to being audio recorded.

The written and audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the program faculty.
- Written and audio taped materials,
    - ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
    - ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

MOORE COLLEGE OF
ART & DESIGN
IRB APPROVED DATE

1/24/24