

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH-ADULT
PARTNERSHIPS ON ENHANCING LIFE SKILL
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH 4-H

By

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“For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.”

Proverbs 2:6 NIV

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Youth-Adult partnerships are a fostered relationship between youth and adults where both parties have equal potential in making decisions, utilizing skills, mutual learning, and promoting change through civic engagement, program planning and/or community development initiatives” (Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.5).”

Youth-adult partnerships are a youth development technique which can be implemented in all informal education youth organizations. Youth can learn critical thinking, leadership, and decision making skills through participating in a youth-adult partnership. These partnerships allow give youth to develop the organizational skills to identify and address community issues. Adults involved in these partnerships often see youth as competent, caring individuals with a passion to improve their community. Through working in these partnerships adults may realize that youth are a viable resource which is often overlooked. Organizations may benefit through better decision making, and program development which is more relevant to their clientele needs. Communities have benefited from this educational tool through having a base of youth that are equipped to become concerned citizens willing to change society for the better (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, and National 4-H Council, 2003).

Youth-adult partnerships occur when young people and adults become engaged together in their communities. These relationships were between youth and adults where there was mutuality in teaching, learning, and action. Youth-adult partnerships focus on nurturance; they emphasize youth and their contributions rather than problems (Russell, Polen & Tepper, 2002) and are becoming a prevalent topic among youth development organizations (Jones & Perkins, 2000). Previous research has shown that Youth-Adult Partnerships benefit communities and organizations (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, and National 4-H Council, 2003) but, there was a need to conduct research to determine if youth-adult partnerships work to enhance youth life skill development.

Background

In May 2005, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service developed teams of youth with adults in sixteen counties to research water quality and educate the public about water quality issues. One of the goals was to establish a youth-adult partnership in each of the participating county extension programs. The beginning of the Youth-Adult partnership started when the youth volunteered to participate in the environmental program prior to the 2005 Round Up. The first training for these teams was conducted on May 26, 2005 at the Oklahoma 4-H Roundup. During this training, teams learned how to perform well water tests and water-well assessments. Following the initial training, the teams worked in youth-adult partnership to develop individual county plans of action. The action plans allowed the teams to address water quality and environmental issues other than just well water testing. A follow-up training was conducted with the county

Extension Educators the following December, 2005. During this training the educators were trained to further implement youth-adult partnership programming by the researcher. The training participants were taught about various youth-adult relationships according to the Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships (Jones & Perkins, 2004) and the advantages/disadvantages of Youth-Adult partnerships (Russell, Polen, & Tepper, 2002). Following the December training the educators returned to their respective counties and continued their impact team programming.

Problem Statement

If youth development organizations such as the 4-H Youth Development program were going to invest time and resources in creating programs which involve youth-adult partnerships, there was a need to conduct research to determine the effectiveness of this type of programming to develop and enhance youth life skills. There was a limited amount of quantitative research to document the effectiveness of the youth-adult partnership's ability to improve the life skills of participating youth.

Purpose of the Study

Leadership development has been, and continues to be a major goal of the 4-H Youth Development program. As the world enters the 21st century, many youth programs, including 4-H, are focusing on the effectiveness of their leadership training (Seevers, 1995). A historical approach to teaching leadership to 4-H youth had been through life skill development.

“Life skills are the abilities that are useful for living everyday life. They include thinking, doing, and feeling skills. The overall purpose of the life skills approach to leadership training was the development of skills necessary to perform leadership functions in real life” (Miller, 1976).

The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths’ development of life skills. The study further sought to discover if there were perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in youth-adult partnerships.

Objectives for this study

1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults.
3. To discover if there are perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.
4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Scope of the Study

The population for this study was the youth and adults who were involved in the youth-adult teams participating the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact team from May, 2005 to May, 2006. The population consisted of teams of youth and adult partners from sixteen Oklahoma counties. Study respondents from the 16 locations self-selected to participate. A census was used for the study, therefore sampling was not required.

Limitations

For the purpose of this study the following limitations were recognized:

1. It was not possible to control all variables for human subjects. Furthermore, the validity of the results could not be established without some margin of error.
2. The researcher was a participant/observer due to his professional role in this program. This dual role had the potential to introduce bias into the study. The potential bias was minimized through member checks and research review by a panel of experts (Key, 1997; Kreftling, 1991).
3. The youth and adult survey instruments for this research were pre-existing and being implemented as a part of a larger research program conducted by the National 4-H Council Rural Youth Development project: Engaging Youth, Serving Community (Perkins, 2005). Some of the items on the survey instrument were not used in this research for the following reasons: (See Table 3.1)
 - a. The item did not pertain to the selected life skills identified by this research

- b. The item did not have corresponding questions on both the youth and adult questionnaires
- c. The constructs relating to the specific life skills generated a Cronbach's alpha score lower than .70.

Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of this study the following assumptions were made:

1. The 4-H Environmental Impact team members' responses to all questions, questionnaires, and reports were honest and truthful.
2. The study participants were able to accurately recall situations regarding their participation in a youth-adult partnership.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are significant because they potentially affect how youth development programs could be implemented. If the results identify youth-adult partnerships as an effective youth development tool for enhancing life skills, then 4-H programs should implement youth-adult partnerships within their programs.

Definition of Terms

- 4-H Youth Development – “a voluntary educational program that supplements formal school education. It provides real-life experiences and an opportunity for youth to plan their own learning, with parents and other adult to guide them, and evaluate their accomplishments” (SeEVERS, 1995, p. 78).

- Extension Educator – “an individual who works for the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service on the county level, bringing research based information to the residents of their respective county” (Buck, 2004, p.6).
- Impact Program – “a major program highlighted for a four to six year planning period. Extension Educators make a commitment to implement specific program components and evaluate them for specific behavioral outcomes in participants each year of the programming cycle, and to develop programming strength, and expertise in the base program from which the impact comes” (Harriman, 2004, ¶ 4).
- Impact Team – “a group of educators who have chosen to focus on a particular base program” (Buck, 2004, p. 7). In this particular study County Extension Educators chose to focus on programming related to environmental education. Specifically to conduct educational programs on well-water testing to determine well water quality and non-point source pollution.
- Life Skills –“the abilities that are useful for living everyday life; they include thinking, doing, and feeling skills” (Miller, 1976, p. 1).
- Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES) – the ‘front door’ to the University, providing a link between Oklahoma State University and the people of the state in all 77 Oklahoma counties. The OCES represents a federal, state, and county

partnership working since 1914. The mission of OCES is to disseminate information to the people of Oklahoma and encourage the adoption of research-generated knowledge (DASNR, 2006).

- Youth-Adult Partnership – “a fostered relationship between youth and adults where both parties have equal potential in making decisions, utilizing skills, mutual learning, and promoting change through civic engagement, program planning and/or community development initiatives” (Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.5).

- Specified Life Skills Definitions (Hendricks, 1998, p. 29-33)
 - *Leadership* – “to assist the group in meeting its goals by showing or directing along the way; using personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goals.”
 - *Cooperation* – “to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit.”
 - *Contribution to group efforts* – “to give, or supply, along with others for a common purpose.”
 - *Accepting differences* – “to recognize and welcome factors that separate or distinguish one person from another.”
 - *Service learning* – “gaining skill and experience through active participation in organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, and that are coordinated with the school and community; learning linked with real life.”

- *Planning and Organizing* – “a method for doing something that has been thought out ahead of time; how the parts can be put together.”

This introductory chapter dealt with the context of this specific research. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the topic, along with the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, plus the limitations, assumptions, and definitions relevant to this research. The next chapter will review the literature which establishes the basis for this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter summarizes the theoretical and research literature that supports the study. The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The review of literature focuses on two main topics of research; youth-adult partnerships, and life skill development through youth organizations.

What are Youth-Adult Partnerships?

Youth-adult partnerships are an innovation being used increasingly as a key strategy for promoting youth development through youth serving organizations, as well as for building strong youth programs and communities. Youth-adult partnerships have been conceptualized as a way that youth and adults can work collaboratively for program or community action; they are characterized by mutuality and equity in teaching, and learning and serving between youth and adults, as well as equality in decision-making (Camino, 2000, p. 12).

Many terms are used to describe this relationship between youth and adults: Youth in Governance, Youth Engagement, Youth Voice, and Youth-Adult Partnerships. All of these terms refer youth and adults working together equally and collaboratively

(Jones & Perkins, 2004). These relationships exist when adults listen to youth and place value and support in their opinions and decisions. This relationship is a true partnership if youth and adults work together as equals and draw on the each others strengths. The youth-adult partnership does not exist when youth are used as token members or the adult partner discounts the youth input (Jones & Perkins, 2000). This variety of terms was one of the reasons these youth-adult relationships have not been thoroughly researched and defined. The following definition was developed in a recent study:

Youth-Adult Partnership: A fostered relationship between youth and adults where both parties have equal potential in making decisions, utilizing skills, mutual learning and promoting change through civic engagement, program planning and/or community development initiatives (Jones & Perkins, 2004, p. 5).

Youth-adult Partnerships and Youth in Governance are becoming prevalent topics among youth development organizations (Jones & Perkins, 2000). A true partnership was one in which each party has the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions and in which the contribution of each was recognized. A youth-adult partnership is one in which adults work in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs and policies affecting youth (Norman, 2001).

What are the Benefits of Youth-Adult Partnerships?

Research has shown that youth benefit from partnerships with adults when they are seen as individuals who are competent and able to contribute to important decisions that impact their communities. Research also shows that youth involvement in positive social relationships and activities with adults was associated with a decrease in risk

behaviors, stronger communication skills, and leadership experience, increased status and stature in the community and improved competencies and self-esteem (Russell, Polen & Hoffman, 2002).

Little research has been done on the effects that youth-adult partnerships have on youth, adults, organizations, or the processes that these partnerships effect. Research provides some evidence, however, that partnering with youth and respecting their ability to contribute may provide important protective factors for young people. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (a division of the National 4-H Council) conducted one of the few existing studies on the effect of youth-adult partnerships. The study showed that “involving young people in decision making provides them with the essential opportunities and supports (i.e. challenge, relevancy, voice, cause based action, skill building, adult structure and affirmation) that were consistently shown to help young people achieve mastery, compassion, and health” (Norman, 2001, p.1).

Youth as Decision Makers, a Strategy for Youth Engagement in Governance and Decision-making in Recreation, a report by the Laidlaw Foundation (2000) cited seven reasons for youth engagement.

1. Skill Development: youth could learn and develop important social and leadership skills
2. Social Interaction: youth could meet people and develop relationships
3. Better Decision-making: organizations could make better decisions on youth-related matters – youth provided a “reality check,” and “ “creativity, energy and fresh perspectives”

4. Better Strategy and Implementation: organizations could develop and implement strategies more smoothly and effectively
5. Better return on investment: resources spent on youth may be more likely to result in desired outcomes
6. Reduced conflict and mistrust: building bridges between youth and adults, and combating negative perceptions, and stereotypes of youth
7. A more civil and participatory society: youth were equipped to become more active members in their communities (Wright, 2000, p. 9).

Research results from the report on Youth in Decision-Making; Impact of youth on adults, and organizations (Innovation Center, 2003) provided numerous ways adults benefit from meaningful youth involvement:

- “Adults experienced the competence of youth first-hand, and began to perceive young people as legitimate, crucial contributors to organizational decision-making processes. Some adults unknowingly bought into the stereotype of the disaffected, antisocial youth, but their direct experience with competent youth contradicted their stereotypes, and forced reconsideration.
- Working with youth served to enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the organization.
- Adults felt more effective and more confident in working with, and relating to youth.

Adults came to understand the needs, and concerns of youth, and became more attuned to programming issues, making them more likely to reach outside of the

organization and share their new knowledge, and insights. They gained a stronger sense of community connectedness” (Innovation Center, 2003, p. 1-2).

This feeling of community emanated directly from the following processes:

- “The adults began to see young people less as stereotypes and more as contributors,
 - The adults were personally engaged by the commitment of the young people,
 - The adults gained mastery through working collaboratively with youth.
- Consequently, the adults began to feel connected, and gained a shared identity with the youth as well as an attachment to the organization” (Innovation Center, 2003, p.2).

Disadvantages of Youth-Adult Partnerships

Research conducted by the Innovation Center (2003) has also identified several challenges to effective youth participation in decision making:

- “Lack of knowledge – Many youth had not been involved in decision-making previously. There was a basic knowledge that must be gained to be involved in decision-making
- Unwillingness to get involved – Because they have not been invited to the table before, many youth were skeptical that their voice and vote would count.
- Lack of support network – Simply bringing youth to the table was not enough. Early on, concerted efforts should be made to ensure they succeed.

- Unclear roles – Structure and clarity about functions, and responsibilities are essential.
- Unique needs – Organizations must also pay attention to the unique scheduling, transportation, and financial constraints that are often associated with being young” (Innovation Center, 2003, p.5).

“An additional disadvantage of youth-adult partnerships was time. It takes more time for a youth organization leaders to partner with youth than it does to make a decision, and begin implementation of the decision. However, involving youth in the process makes for better, youth centered decisions” (Innovation Center, 2003, p.5).

Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships

The Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships builds upon the knowledge base from the community youth development framework, intergenerational studies, mentoring, and the limited empirical evidence on youth-adult partnerships. Within the Continuum there are several types of youth-adult relationships, ranging from those where adults have total control and youth participate only, to situations where youth were the leaders with minimal guidance from adults (Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.7).



Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.7

Figure 2.1 Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships within Programs/Neighborhood Projects

The Continuum model allowed those engaged in participatory learning to identify, and understand not only partnerships, but various youth-adult relationships that they may experience. The Continuum provided a tangible explanation of a youth-adult partnership, youth and adult participants were given the opportunity to determine if there program should move from a collaboration (e.g., adult-led or youth-led) toward a partnership based on their goals (Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.7-8), as seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Categories of the Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships

Adult-Centered Leadership

- Consists of programs that were conceived and driven completely by adults
 - Activities include school/formal education where youth were instructed by adults
 - Community programs where adults plan and implement, while youth only participate
-

Adult-Led Collaboration

- Programs or situations where adults provide some guidance for youth
 - More camaraderie among youth and adults as opposed to adult-centered leadership
 - Youth voice was considered in the decision-making process, but adults most often make final decisions
 - Adults remain in power and were the driving force in making the relationship a meaningful success
-

Youth-Adult Partnership

- Point of stasis where a partnership was achieved between youth and adults
 - Youth and adult participants have equal chances in utilizing skills, decision-making and independently carrying out tasks to reach common goals
 - Youth and adults acknowledge learning from one another through participation
 - Balance between youth involvement, adult involvement and most importantly, youth and adults working together effectively to reach desired goals
-

Youth-Led Collaborations

- Youth primarily generate ideas and make decisions with limited support from adults
 - Young people may determine a particular need for their community
 - Most decisions were made by youth, although adult advice was often solicited
 - Adults typically provide assistance with the process, as well as some preliminary procedures
-

Youth-Centered Leadership

- Led exclusively by youth, with little or no adult involvement
 - Very few activities, if any, occur in structured environments
 - May often involve youth engaging in negative behaviors
-

Jones & Perkins, 2004, p.8

Should Adults/Informal Educators Be Engaged in Youth-Adult Partnerships?

The National 4-H Council conducted a study entitled, *At the Table: making the case for Youth in Decision-Making* (Innovation Center, 2003). This study found numerous ways adults benefit from meaningful youth involvement in decision-making.

- “Adults experienced the competence of youth first hand, and begin to perceive young people as legitimate, crucial contributors to organizational decision-making processes.
- Working with youth served to enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the organization.
- Adults felt more effective and more confident in working with and relating to youth.
- Adults came to understand the needs and concerns of youth and became more attuned to programming issues, making them more likely to reach outside of the organization and share their knowledge and insights”.(Innovation Center, 2003, p.2)

Should Youth Development Organizations Engage in Youth-Adult Partnerships?

Youth can develop critical skills by being involved in a youth-adult partnership. By being engaged youth can develop important social and leadership skills. Youth offer a unique perspective and capability. Youth understand other youth and they offer fresh perspective, creativity and energy for action.

Youth serving organizations want to make better decisions. The youth serving organization's capacity to make good decisions and wise investments in programs and services related to youth can be strengthened by youth engagement.

The community and society as a whole can be strengthened. Youth engagement can lead to reduced conflict and mistrust through improved understanding of youth and reduced negative stereotyping. Youth were equipped to become more active members and citizens in their community (Wright, 2000).

Youth Development and Life Skills

The purpose of this study involved studying the youth participants' development of life skills through youth-adult partnerships. Life skills or asset development enhances youths' ability to become competent and productive citizens. According to Edwards and Pennington (2006) youth who developed life skills related to citizenship and leadership, through 4-H were more likely to participate in civic engagement as adults. Leadership and life skill development increased as youth participation in 4-H increase (Boyd, Herring & Briers, 1992).

In 1992, it was estimated that 25% of our nation's youth engage in "high-risk" activities-heavy alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, delinquency, and poor school performance or non-attendance. An additional 25% were considered to be at moderate risk. Almost one third of our youth failed to graduate high school. The number of youth exhibiting at-risk behavior points to a lack of skills necessary for adulthood: skills in working with others, understanding self, communicating, making decisions, and leadership. These skills were required by adults for everyday living and were often called leadership life-

skills. The development of life skills allowed youth to cope with their environment by making responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able to communicate and get along with others (Boyd, Herring & Briers, 1992).

The following sections and tables were a review of research based youth development models of the life skills or assets deemed necessary to help youth avoid high risk behaviors and develop into competent and productive adults.

Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate Positive Youth Development

There are many definitions and frameworks of positive youth development with a great deal of common ground growing out of current theory and research (Benson, et al, 2006). Life skills comprise the majority of competencies within the personal and social assets categories identified in the National Research Council and Institute of medicine book on youth programs. In this text, Eccles and Gootman (2002) identified four general categories of developmental assets necessary for positive youth development. These categories are: Physical Development, Intellectual Development, Psychological and Emotional Development, and Social Development. Table 2.2 contains a complete list of the categorized assets.

Table 2.2

Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate Positive Youth Development

Physical Development

- Good health habits
 - Good health risk management skills
-

Intellectual Development

- Knowledge of essential life skills
 - Knowledge of essential vocational skills
 - School success
 - Rational habits of mind-critical thinking and reasoning skills
 - In-depth knowledge of more than one culture
 - Good decision-making skills
 - Knowledge of skills needed to navigate through multiple cultural contexts
-

Psychological and Emotional Development

- Good mental health including positive self-regard
 - Good emotional self-regulation skills
 - Good coping skills
 - Good conflict resolution skills
 - Mastery motivation and positive achievement motivation
 - Confidence in one's personal efficacy
 - "Planfulness"—planning for the future and future life events
 - Sense of personal autonomy/responsibility for self
 - Optimism coupled with realism
 - Coherent and positive personal and social identity
 - Prosocial and culturally sensitive values
 - Spirituality or a sense of a "larger" purpose in life
 - Strong moral character
 - A commitment to good use of time
-

Social Development

- Connectedness-perceived good relationships and trust with parents, peers, and some other adults
 - Sense of social place/integration-being connected and valued by larger social networks
 - Attachment to prosocial/conventional institutions, such as school, church, non-school youth programs
 - Ability to navigate in multiple cultural contexts
 - Commitment to civic engagement
-

Eccles and Gootman (2002) p. 74

The Search Institutes 40 Developmental Assets

The Search Institute has surveyed over two million youth across the United States and Canada since 1989. Through this research, researchers have learned about the experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and the number of Developmental Assets at work for these young people. Studies revealed strong and consistent relationships between the number of assets present in young people's lives and the degree to which they develop in positive and healthful ways. The Search Institute has shown the greater number of assets experienced by youth the more successful their development. The opposite was also true, the fewer assets experienced, the less successful they were in their development, or the greater possibility they would engage in risky behaviors such as drug use, unsafe sex, and violence (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). The Search Institute divided the identified 40 assets into two main categories; External Assets and Internal Assets. These main categories were then subdivided into four more categories. Table 2.3 illustrates the Search Institutes Developmental Assets.

Table 2.3

The Search Institute 40 Developmental Assets

External Assets

Asset Type	Asset Name
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Support• Positive Family Communication• Other Adult Relationships• Caring Neighborhood• Caring School Climate• Parent Involvement in Schooling
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Values youth• Youth as Resources• Service to Others• Safety

Boundaries and Expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Boundaries • School Boundaries • Neighborhood Boundaries • Adult Role Models • Positive Peer Influence • High Expectations
Constructive Use of Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Activities • Youth Programs • Religious Community • Time at Home
<hr/>	
Internal Assets	
<hr/>	
Asset Type	Asset Name
Commitment to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement Motivation • School Engagement • Homework • Bonding to School • Reading for Pleasure
Positive Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Equality and Social Justice • Integrity • Honesty • Responsibility • Restraint
Positive Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Decision Making • Interpersonal Competence • Cultural Competence • Resistance Skill • Peaceful Conflict Resolution
Positive Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Power • Self-Esteem • Sense of Purpose • Positive View of Personal Future

Benson et. al, 2006

The Five C's of Youth Development

Lerner and Benson (2003) summarized the ingredients of positive youth development into the five C's; (1) competence in academic, social, and vocational areas; (2) confidence or a positive self-identity; (3) connections to the community, family and

peers; (4) character or positive values, integrity and moral commitment; (5) caring and compassion (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4

Five C's of Positive Youth Development

1. Competence in academic, social, and vocational areas
 2. Confidence or a positive self-identity
 3. Connections to the community, family and peers
 4. Character or positive values, integrity and moral commitment
 5. Caring and compassion
-

Lerner & Benson (2003)

Four-Fold Youth Development Model

The Four-Fold Youth Development Model was developed by Barkman and Machtmes (2002). This model was based on a search of theoretical and empirical research. The Four-Fold Model combined four existing models: the SCANS Workforce Preparation Model, the Science Process Skill Model (developed by the National Network for Science and Technology), Iowa State University's Targeting Life Skill Model, and the Search Institute's Internal Assets Model.

This model divided 47 developmental skills that youth need into the four categories of the 4-H motto; head, heart, hands, and health. Table 2.5 contains a complete list of the identified life skills or assets.

Table 2.5

Four Fold Youth Development Model

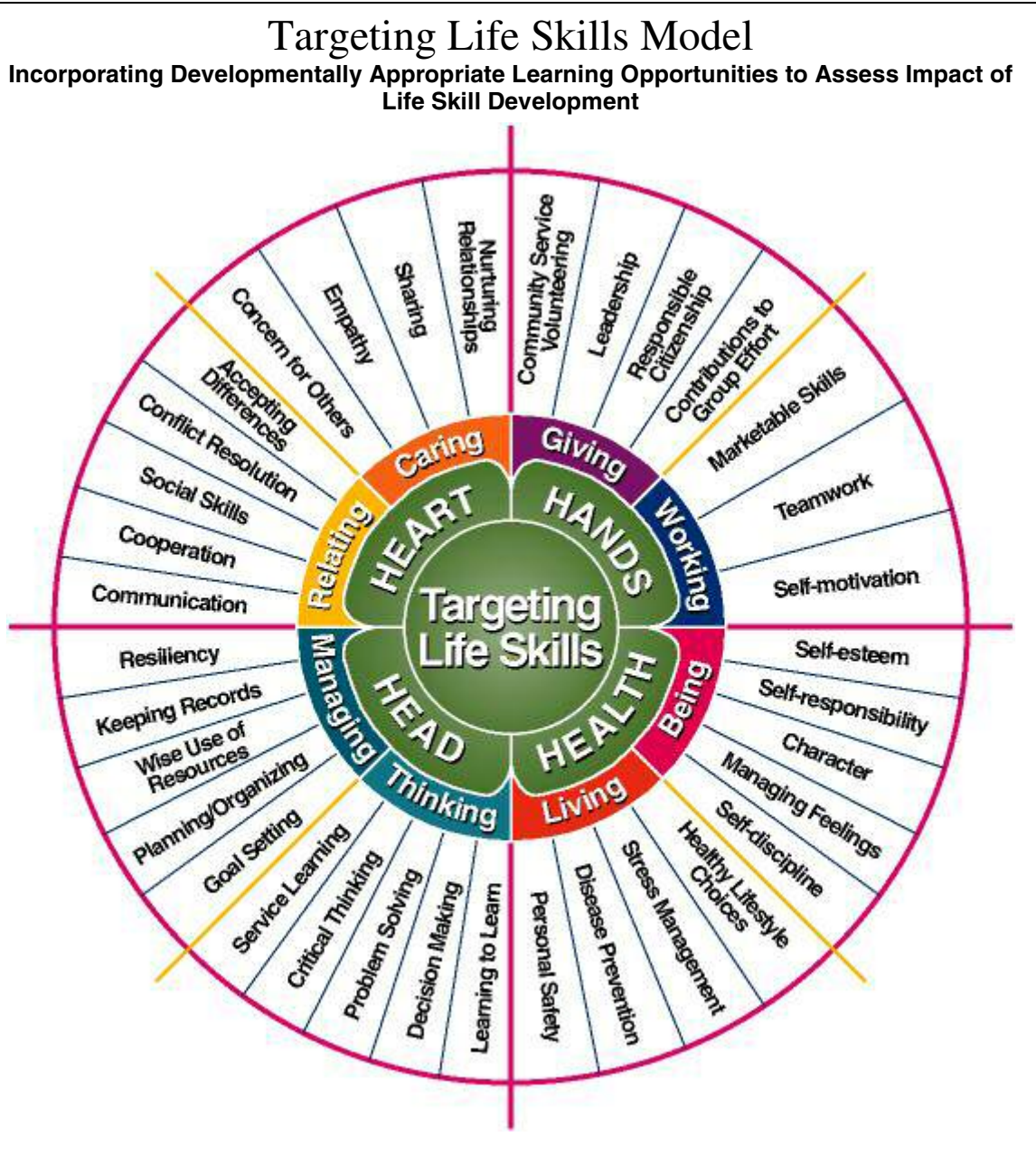
Head	Heart
Utilizing Scientific Methods	Communicating
Processing Information	Interacting Socially
Understanding Systems	Cooperating
Managing Resources	Sharing
Practicing Creativity	Resolving Conflicts
Making Decisions	Valuing Social Justice
Solving Problems	Valuing Diversity
Visualizing Information	Building Relationships
Learning to Learn	Caring for Others
Reasoning	Being Empathetic
Thinking Critically	
Keeping Records	
Planning and Organizing	
Achieving Goals	
Navigating in Your Environment	
Working with Numbers	

Hands	Health
Mastering Technology	Being Responsible
Learning Through Community Service	Developing Self Esteem
Volunteering	Managing Yourself
Being a Responsible Citizen	Practicing Integrity and Character
Working in a Team	Developing a Sense of Purpose
Exercising Leadership	Developing a Positive View of Future
Completing a Project/Task	Utilizing Resistance Skills
Motivating Yourself	Being Resilient
	Managing Stress
	Making Healthy Lifestyle Choices
	Preventing Personal Injury
	Expressing Emotions Positively
	Preventing Disease

Barkman & Machtmes (2002)

Targeting Life Skills Model

The Targeting Life Skill model operated from the standpoint; youth development was a process of mental, physical, social and emotional growth during which young people prepare to live a productive, and satisfying life within the customs and regulations of their society. Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best ones are carefully planned to encourage life skill development while delivering subject matter content, and to achieve specific results. A skill was a learned ability to do something well. Life skills were abilities individuals could learn that would help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model categories of life skills are identified and divided on the basis of the familiar four H's from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Two general categories of skills are included under each of the four headings (Hendricks, 1998). The following model, figure 2.2, was developed by Hendricks (1998), Iowa State University.



Hendricks, 1998

Figure 2.2 Targeting Life Skills Model

The TLS Model was intended to be inclusive for all possible life skills. The terminology in the TLS Model was not the same as that used in any one other current list of life skills. By being generic, the model allowed those developing curriculum to incorporate any specific life skill that youth programmers may wish to address using whichever terminology was descriptive of that skill.

The purpose of the TLS Model was to provide a way to simplify coordination of life skill development with ages and stages tasks so programs would be developmentally appropriate and more effective in achieving identified outcomes. Life skill development was mapped sequentially over four age groupings of youth to indicate growth. This continuum would guide planners in identifying an appropriate developmental level for content delivery. By assigning developmentally appropriate tasks to specific life skills, the TLS Model has the potential to greatly improve the possibility of achieving measurable program success in youth development. These categories could be used as the basis of life skill development. Authors generally agree that life skills are learned through experience. Life skills often must be practiced over and over before mastery could be achieved (Hendricks, 1998).

Selected Life Skill definitions

The following life skills were the skills focused on in this study. The following definitions were reported by Hendricks, (1998, p.29-33).

Life Skills:

- *Leadership* – to assist the group in meeting its goals by showing or directing along the way; using personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goals.
- *Cooperation* – to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit.
- *Accepting Differences* – to recognize and welcome factors that separate or distinguish one person from another
- *Contribution to Group Efforts* – to give or supply along with others for a common purpose.
- *Service Learning* – gaining skill and experience through active participation in organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community; learning linked with real life.
- *Planning and Organizing* – a method for doing something that has been thought out ahead of time; how parts can be put together.

Summary

Life skills comprise the majority of competencies within the personal and social assets categories identified in the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine book on youth programs. Youth need opportunities and support from their communities to develop these important personal and social assets to become competent, contributing members of society (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

There are many life skill models being used by 4-H, and other youth development organizations. The model was not what was important; rather the specific life skills were identified and targeted in the curriculum (Perkins, 2001). For the purposes of this research the Targeting Life Skills model was selected for its life skill definitions and usage.

If youth-adult partnerships are an effective youth development tool, youth could benefit by developing life skills, adults could benefit by accepting youth as caring, intelligent individuals. Informal education youth organizations can benefit by creating programs that reach their missions and clientele. Communities can benefit by developing future leaders who have experience in making decisions and solving issues and problems.

If adolescents develop life skills, then positive feelings of self worth will follow—or if youth have positive feeling of self worth, they will be more likely to develop and practice life skills .Studies suggest that indicators of healthy self-esteem include problem solving and decision making skills, a sense of responsibility, the ability to act on one's best judgment, a feeling of value, and being of interest to others, and possession of values and principles about which feels good. These indicators relate closely to key components of successful life skills educational programs (Miller & Bowen, 1993).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine if participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover if there were perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in youth-adult partnerships. This chapter describes the population, method of research, research design, and theoretical base for the method, the reliability and validity of the method and instrument, analysis and collection of data and the Institutional Review Board clearance.

Objectives for this study

1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults.
3. To discover if there are perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.

4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Scope of the Study

The population for this study was the youth and adults who were involved in the youth-adult teams participating the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact team. The population consisted of teams of youth and adult partners from sixteen Oklahoma counties. Study respondents from the 16 locations self-selected to participate. A census was used for the study, therefore sampling was not required. Fourteen of the 16 counties were represented in this study.

The Youth-Adult partnerships began when the youth volunteered to participate in the environmental program prior to the May, 2005 4-H Round Up. The first training for these teams was conducted on May 26, 2005 at the Oklahoma 4-H Roundup. During this training, teams learned how to perform well water tests and water-well assessments. Following the initial training, the teams worked in youth-adult partnership to develop individual county plans of action. The action plans allowed the teams to address water quality and environmental issues other than just well water testing. A follow-up training was conducted with the county Extension Educators the following December, 2005. During this training the educators were trained to further implement youth-adult partnership programming by the researcher. The training participants were taught about various youth-adult relationships according to the Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships (Jones & Perkins, 2004) and the advantages/disadvantages of Youth-Adult partnerships (Russell, Polen, & Tepper, 2002). Following the December training the

educators returned to their respective counties and continued their impact team programming.

All the participants in the original training participated in the pre-survey to gather a baseline data for measurement. Only 16 of the original 36 youth participants, and 8 of the original 9 adult participants completed the post-survey. This research project did not explore why participants changed throughout this project or did not complete the post-survey.

Institutional Review Board Clearance

The proposal for this research project was reviewed and approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). It was approved from May 17, 2005 through April 4, 2007 and the assigned IRB number was AG0544. All adult participants were required to complete a research consent form and the youth participants and their parents completed the appropriate research consent or assent form as designated by IRB policies.

Research Design

The research was an exploratory study to determine the perceptions of youth and adults involved in partnerships through Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact programs. Specifically the study sought to determine how youth and adult participants perceived the youths' development of life skills through their involvement in youth-adult partnerships.

Much has been written and said about the respective merits of quantitative and qualitative methods for conventional and naturalistic-constructivists studies, in fact, the

two paradigms are often classified by their methodologies: the conventional research paradigm as the quantitative paradigm and the naturalistic paradigm as the qualitative paradigm (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

The design selected for this research was a mixed method approach. A mixed method design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2005). The research study consisted of a quantitative pre-survey and post-survey regarding the perceptions of all the participants. The study also involved a qualitative assessment in which the adult participants were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions relating to their experiences with project. The ultimate outcome of this approach was to determine the perceptions of the youth and adult participants regarding youth-adult partnerships enhancing the development of life skills in the youth partners. By assessing both quantitative and qualitative outcomes a complex picture of the social phenomena could be developed (Creswell, 2005; Erlandson et. al., 1993). The mixed method design was the most appropriate means to collect the necessary data to analyze the participants' perceptions of the youth partners developing life skills through participating in youth-adult partnerships.

Survey Instruments

The youth and adult, pre/post survey instruments for this research were pre-existing and being implemented as a part of a larger research program conducted by the National 4-H Council Rural Youth Development project: Engaging Youth, Serving Community, these instruments are located in the appendices. The questionnaires were downloaded from the *Engaging Youth, Serving Community* website:

<http://msg.calsnet.arizona.edu/fcs/4hnateval/formspage.cfm> . Permission to use the questionnaires was obtained from the author Dr. Daniel Perkins (personal communications, March 1, 2005), Penn State University. Because the instrument was pre-existing, not all the items on the questionnaires were used in the analysis of this research. Table 3.1 indicates which questions from the survey were used to analyze each objective and life skill.

The qualitative *Adult Participant Report*, also referred to as the *Adult Report*, was an open-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher to further explore the adult participants' perceptions of the youth participants' life skill development and involvement in the youth-adult partnerships during the Oklahoma Youth Development Environmental Education Impact program. The questionnaire was based upon the pre-post survey instrument to further explore the participant perceptions and to provide rich data regarding life skill development through youth-adult partnerships. This instrument asked reflective questions, which expected participants to recall and report on their program experiences. The Adult Participant Report was designed to support and add validity to the original pre-post survey results. This questionnaire had face validity and was reviewed by a panel of experts for additional credibility. The panel of experts consisted of four Oklahoma State University faculty members who were involved in conducting and teaching research methodology.

Table 3.1

Quantitative/Qualitative Survey Items Analyzed for Survey Objectives/Life Skill			
	Youth Survey Questions	Adult Survey Questions	Adult Participant Report Questions
Objective / Life-skill			
1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of; leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, and planning and organizing through participation in youth-adult partnerships.			1
Hendrick's defined Life Skills			
• Leadership	1-5	1-5	2a
• Cooperation	15abc	25, 26	2b
• Contributions to Group Efforts	7-8,10	7-8,10	2d
• Accepting Differences	12-13,	12-13	2f
• Service Learning	18-21	34abcd	2i
• Planning and Organizing	23-25	15abc	2j
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults.	31-35	35-39	3, 4, 5
3. To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.	27	16	6
4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.			7

Theoretical Base for the Method

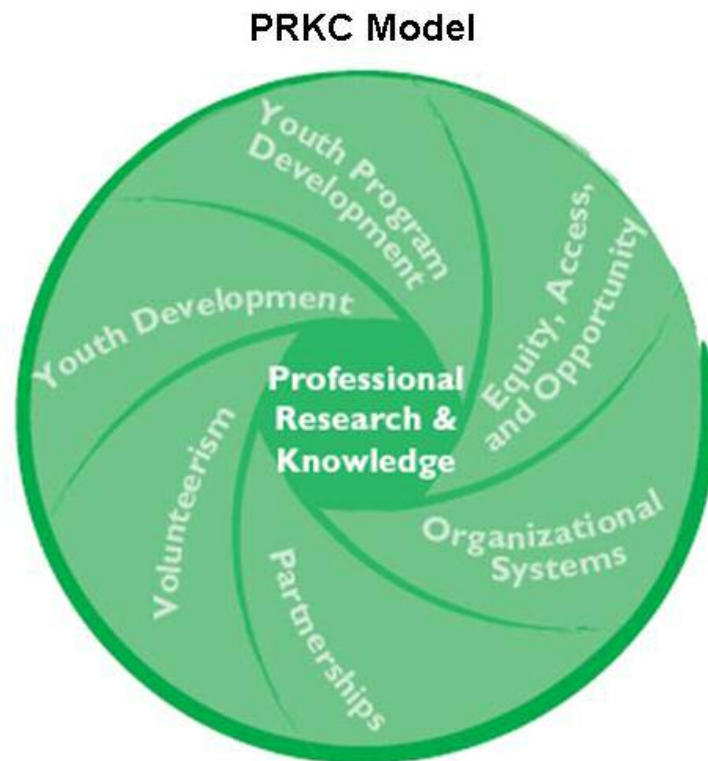
The 4-H professional research, knowledge, and competencies, 4-H PRKC was established in 1986 and has undergone several revisions. The 4-H PRKC was created to help 4-H professionals and educators design in-service trainings for 4-H staff, develop pre-service programs and provide a framework for research efforts (Seevers, et. al., 1995). The most current version of the 4-H PRKC model was developed in 2004 by Stone and Rennekamp. This version of the 4-H PRKC added the “C” which is the competencies necessary for youth professionals. The 4-H PRKC continues the tradition of the original model and provides a road map for the 4-H youth development workforce of the future. According to the authors, Stone and Rennekamp (2004), the study which defined the current 4-H PRKC (2004) was “designed and conducted with methodological rigor and reflected the most current research and thinking in 4-H youth development.” The domains and topics listed in the 4-H PRKC reflects the complexity and sophistication of the 4-H youth development profession and can be used with confidence to guide the 4-H youth development academic base. The 4-H PRKC is designed to guide; research agendas, graduate study, scholarly activities, and youth development degrees and certificate programs. The 4-H PRKC consists of six domains; Youth Development, Youth Program Development, Volunteerism, Equity, Access and Opportunity, Partnerships, and Organizational Systems (See Figure 3.1).

This particular study resides in the Partnership domain. The Partnership domain is designed to engage youth in community development and the broader community in youth development. Youth-Adult partnerships are a sub-topic of partnerships. The Youth-

Adult partnerships are a component of Building and Maintaining Partnerships; the 4-H PRKC stated that partnerships should provide opportunities for young people to lead, build youth capacity to lead, understand realistic expectations from youth and adults in partnerships, build adult capacity to follow youth leadership, and provide consistent encouragement for the growth of the partnership (Stone & Rennekamp, 2004).

Figure 3.1

4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competencies



Stone & Rennekamp, 2004

The mixed method approach selected was intended to determine the participants' perceptions of the benefits received by youth through their participation in a youth-adult

partnership. The researcher's method quantified the participants' perceptions but also generated a rich qualitative description of the same perceptions. The participants were a select community of youth and adults involved in a specific project of the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development program.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena which it stresses the careful description of phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing the phenomena (Weirisma & Jurs, 2005, p. 243). The phenomenological approach emphasizes that the meaning of reality is in the eyes and minds of the beholders; the way participants being studied perceive or view their experience (Weirisma & Jurs, 2005). A phenomenological study focuses on "descriptions of how people experience and perceive their experience of the phenomena under study" (Glesne, 1999, p. 7). Ethnographic research is phenomenological in nature. Ethnographic studies focus on "organizations or communities which consist of defined groups of people who interact in regular and structured ways" (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 246).

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of a research instrument concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Although unreliability was always present to a certain extent, there will generally be a good deal of consistency in the results of a quality instrument gathered at different times. The tendency toward consistency found in repeated measurements was referred to as reliability (Carmines & Zeller, 1979, Key, 1997).

The first reliability measure concerns the survey instrument. The internal consistency method provides a unique estimate of reliability for the given test administration. The most popular internal consistency reliability estimate was given by Cronbach's alpha. It was expressed as follows:

$$\alpha = N / (N - 1) \left[1 - \frac{\sum \sigma^2 (Y_i)}{\sigma^2_x} \right]$$

The coefficient (Cronbach's) alpha was an internal consistency index designed for use with surveys containing items that have no right answer. This was a very useful tool in educational and social science research because instruments in these areas often ask respondents to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement on a particular scale (Key, 1997, R-10). The alpha indicators for the questionnaire were calculated for this research (Sallee) and the original survey (Perkins), these inventories are located in Table 3.1. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) most test makers and researchers are satisfied if they obtain a Cronbach's alpha indicator greater than .70. Subsequently, all questions on the survey which received a rating lower than .70, on this research, were not used in the findings of this study.

Table 3.2

Cronbach's Alpha Score For Youth and Adult Survey Life Skill Questions

Life Skill	Sallee Study Alpha Values	Perkins Survey Alpha Values
Youth Survey Questions		
Leadership	0.76	0.86
Accepting Differences	0.74	0.52
Contributions to Group Efforts	0.70	0.54
Planning and Organizing	0.82	0.76
Service Learning	0.73	0.83
Cooperation	0.95	0.75
Adult Survey Questions		
Leadership	0.82	0.91
Accepting Differences	0.73	0.78
Contributions to Group Efforts	0.71	0.67
Planning and Organizing	0.78	0.68
Service Learning	0.95	0.83
Cooperation	0.73	0.91

An additional measure to protect the internal validity of this research was the use of a pre-survey. The pre-survey, or measurement before the experiment begins, “can aid control for differential selection by determining the presence or knowledge of the experimental variable before the experiment begins” (Key, 1997, R-10). However, the pre-survey method can also jeopardize the internal validity of the research by not taking into account the following three factors or limitations of the pre-survey method of research:

- “History - The events which occurred between the first and second measurements in addition to the experimental variable which might affect the measurement.
- Maturation - The process of maturing which took place in the individual during the duration of the experiment which was not a result of specific events but of simply growing older, growing more tired or similar changes.
- Pre-testing (or pre-surveying) - The effect created on the second measurement by having a measurement before the experiment.” (Key, 1997, R 13)

These limitations were overcome by corroborating the results of the pre-post survey with the qualitative reflective questionnaires which were completed by the adult participants.

The third measure used in this study to maintain validity was corroboration. The purpose of corroboration was not to confirm whether people’s perceptions were accurate and true reflections of a situation but rather to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect people’s perceptions, whatever they may be. The purpose of corroboration was to help researchers increase their understanding of the probability that their findings will be seen as credible or worthy of consideration by others (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, Key, 1997). The results of the pre-post survey were corroborated by triangulating the pre and post survey results with the Adult Participant Reports.

The process used in corroboration was triangulation. According to Key, Denzin (1978) has identified several types of triangulation. “One type involves the convergence of multiple data sources; another type was methodological triangulation, which involves the convergence of data from multiple data collection sources” (Key, 1997, R-14). Three

sources of data were triangulated during this project: pre-post questionnaires of youth and adult participants, and the qualitative, Adult Participant Reports.

All data was reported directly by the participants. Participants individually completed the pre and post questionnaires. In addition, the adult participants completed their own open-ended questionnaire. Direct participant reporting helped maintain the validity of the qualitative data. The final research data was also shared, as a member check, with select adult participants to insure that the information was reported accurately and completely (Key, 1997). These select participants were the program leaders and administrators who were directly involved with the Environmental Impact team. These leaders did not have specific county responsibilities; they were involved with the complete project and could evaluate the efforts of all the county teams involved in the program. The 'member check' reports are located in Appendix H.

Collection and Analysis of Data

Quantitative Data

This study was a longitudinal study conducted among the population of youth and adults who served on the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Environmental Impact team. The initial survey was administered in May, 2005 during the 2005 Oklahoma 4-H Roundup and the second survey was administered one year later in May, 2006 during the 2006 Oklahoma 4-H Roundup.

The instruments were administered to 36 youth and 9 adult participants who attended the Environmental Education Impact workshop in 2005. The following year the same instrument was administered to the youth participants in the same workshop during

the 2006 Oklahoma 4-H Roundup. Only 16 of the original youth participants and 8 of the original adult participants completed the questionnaire from the original administration. In other words, only 16 youth and 8 adults completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey. Other youth did complete the questionnaires during both Roundup workshops. The remaining youth who completed the pre-survey either dropped out of the impact program or chose not to complete the survey.

The survey results were compiled and analyzed to determine the change in the participant's perception of youth-adult partnerships after collaborating in a youth-adult partnership for one year. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the change in the participants' perceptions from the pre-survey to the post-survey.

The changes from the pre-survey to the post-survey were calculated by determining the percent change between the two values. The percent change was calculated by subtracting the post-survey mean from the pre-survey mean divided by the pre-survey mean and multiplied by 100 as illustrated in the following formula.

$$\frac{(\text{Pre-Survey Mean} - \text{Post-Survey Mean})}{\text{Pre-Survey Mean}} \times 100 = \text{Percent Change}$$

A change was considered notable if the post-survey mean increased or decreased by more than 10 percent from the pre-survey mean.

All results from individuals who completed a pre and post surveys were compiled, and evaluated as a population. These results were summarized for corroboration by triangulation with the qualitative data.

Qualitative Data

The County Extension Educators and volunteer adults involved with each team were asked to complete a short program report (the Adult Participant Report) regarding the process and outcome of the youth-adult partnerships developed throughout the program. This report was a summary of the past year's activity of the county environmental impact program. This Adult Participant Report form is located in Appendix G. Within this report the educators were asked to report on the roles the youth and adults played during the program, how decisions were made, what were the various assignments of the youth and adults, and the skills the educator perceived the youth developed and why the educator believed those skills were developed. The adults were given the report form via email and asked to return the report to the researcher shortly following the May, 2006 Oklahoma 4-H Roundup or by June 30, 2006.

The Adult Participant Reports generated qualitative data which was grouped by question to determine overall patterns and themes regarding the effectiveness of the youth-adult partnership to develop life-skills within the youth participants. The responses to the Adult Participant Reports were analyzed by the researcher to determine common themes. These themes were organized by the questions relating to the study objectives or the life skill analyzed. In the findings and discussion chapter of this dissertation, these themes are identified and key statements were selected to represent the findings of the themes or pattern which emerged through the analysis of the research data.

The completed process generated three sources of data to compare; pre and post survey results for the youth and adult participants, and the Adult Participant Reports. These data sources helped the researcher determine the enhancement of life skills in

youth through the youth-adult partnerships developed during 2005-2006 Oklahoma 4-H Environmental Impact program. The results of the pre-post surveys were triangulated with the qualitative Adult Participant Reports. The researcher compared the outcomes of the youth data and the adult data to determine the final perceptions of life skill development through the youth-adult partnerships. These reports were identified only by youth or adult. The reporting adults or youth teams were studied as a population and were kept anonymous to protect the participants' identities.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to determine if participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover the perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in youth-adult partnerships. The purpose of this chapter was to report the findings of the data collected for the study. This chapter is organized by; demographic findings of the youth and adults participants, the findings of each objective (qualitative and/or quantitative), and then the researchers discussion of the findings of each objective in the study, followed by a summary and discussion of the research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover if there were perceived obstacles that kept youth and adults from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.

Objectives for this Study

1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults.
3. To discover if there are perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.
4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills..

Scope of the Study

The population for this study was all the youth and adults who were involved in the youth-adult teams participating the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact team, 2005-2006. The population consisted of teams of youth and adult partners from sixteen Oklahoma counties. A census was used for the study, therefore sampling was not required. Participation in this research was encouraged but not required by the 4-H Environmental Impact program. Study respondents from the 16 locations self-selected to participate. Fourteen of the sixteen counties involved were represented in this research.

The pre-survey instrument was administered to 36 youth and 9 adult participants who attended the Environmental Education Impact workshop in 2005. The following year

the same instrument was administered to the youth participants in the same workshop during the 2006 Oklahoma 4-H Roundup. Only 16 of the original participants completed the questionnaire from the original administration. Sixteen youth completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey. Other youth did complete the questionnaires during both Roundup workshops. The remaining youth who completed the pre-survey either dropped out of the impact program or chose not to complete the post-survey.

The original group County Extension Educators, and volunteers who took the pre-survey consisted of 9 adults. There were additional educators involved who chose not to participate in the pre-surveys. However, after the program, several of these educators did complete an Adult Participant Report. Following is the number of participants whose data was analyzed in the findings: 16 youth completed the pre-post surveys, 8 adults completed the pre-post surveys, and 14 adults completed the Adult Participant Report.

Quantitative Findings

The following quantitative findings tables report the pre-survey and the post-survey means from the youth and adult survey questions. The participants responded to the questions based on five possible answers. These responses were then converted to a 5 point Likert scale. The lowest rating for the responses of “Never” or “Strongly Disagree” was assigned a value of 1, a value of 2 was given to the responses of “Rarely” or “Disagree”, a 3 value was given to the responses of “Sometimes” or “Neutral”, a 4 value was given to the responses of “Often” or “Agree,” and a value of 5 was given to the responses of “Almost Always” or “Strongly Agree”. These values were averaged for each

question using the pre-survey and post-survey responses for the youth and adult participants.

The final parameter reported in the tables was the percent change from the pre-survey to the post-survey values for each question related to a specific life skill or objective of the study.

Qualitative Findings

The following qualitative findings tables report the unedited responses the adult participants submitted through the qualitative Adult Participant Report. These responses have been included to allow the reader to interpret for themselves what the adult, respondents reported. Qualitative research may or may not be transferable to another context. The determination of the transferability of this data is up to the reader (Erlandson, 1993). All qualitative data has been included in this chapter to allow the reader to determine if these findings apply, or may be transferable, to another situation.

Demographics of Study Participants

Table 4.1 identifies the demographics of the youth that participated in this study. There were 16 total youth who completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey. These youth were involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 11 boys and 5 girls, the average age was 14.5, ranging from 12 to 18 years old. Fourteen of the participants were Caucasian, one Hispanic, and one indicated “other” on the questionnaire. The youth participants had been involved in 4-H from 2 to 8 years with an average of 5.19 years. The majority of these youth (56.25%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

Table 4.1**Demographics of Youth Participants at Pre-survey (N = 16)**

Survey Question	Frequency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Percent
Gender					
Male	11				68.75
Female	5				31.25
Age					
		14.50	12	18	
12	1				6.25
13	2				12.50
14	5				31.25
15	4				25.00
16	2				12.50
17	1				6.25
18	1				6.25
Ethnicity					
Caucasian	14				87.50
Hispanic	1				6.25
Other	1				6.25
Years Involved in 4-H					
		5.19	2	8	
2	1				6.25
3	1				6.25
4	3				18.80
5	3				18.80
6	6				37.50
7	1				6.25
8	1				6.25
Hours spent doing Community Service each Month					
More than 20 hours	1				6.25
11-20 hours	3				18.80
2-10 hours	9				56.25
About 1 hour	2				12.50
None	1				6.25

Table 4.2 identifies the demographics of the adults that participated in this study. There were 14 adults who completed the Adult Participant Report or the pre-survey and the post-survey, or both. Fourteen adult participants completed the Adult Report while eight completed both the pre-survey and post-survey. These adults were all involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 8 male and 6 female adult participants, the median age was 41, ranging from 25 to 53 years old. All of the participants were Caucasian. The adult participants had been involved in 4-H from 0 to 26 years with an average of 13.50 years. The majority of these adults (71.5%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

Table 4.2**Demographics of Adult Participants at the end of the Pre-survey (N = 14)**

Survey Question	Frequency	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Percent
Gender					
Male	8				57.1
Female	6				42.9
Age					
		41	25	53	100.00
25 -30	2				14.29
31-35	2				14.29
36-40	3				21.42
41-45	2				14.29
46-50	3				21.42
51-55	2				14.29
Ethnicity					
Caucasian	14				100.0
Highest Level of Formal Education					
Graduate degree	10				71.4
Four Year Degree	3				21.4
Some College	1				7.2
Role					
Paid Staff	13				92.9
Volunteer	1				7.1
Years Involved in 4-H					
		11-15	0	26	
0-5	2				14.3
6-10	3				21.4
11-15	5				35.7
16-20	0				0.0
Over 20	4				28.6
Hours spent doing Community Service each Month					
More than 20 hours	3				21.4
11-20 hours	1				7.1
2-10 hours	10				71.5
About 1 hour	0				0.0
None	0				0.0

Table 4.3 identifies the participants' responses regarding their past experiences within youth-adult partnerships prior to participating in the project. When asked, "How much experience do you have being involved in a youth-adult partnership?" 68.75% of the youth responded "some" while 18.75% responded "a lot". None of the youth checked "none" as their prior experience in a youth-adult partnership. The adults indicated a higher involvement in youth-adult partnerships with 62.5% identifying "a lot," and 37.5% indicating "some" involvement.

When asked, "How much experience do you have on planning committees or decision-making boards with youth?" 43.75% of the youth indicated "A lot", 31.25% indicated "some" while 25.0% indicated "A little." The adult respondents indicated more prior involvement with youth on boards and committees, 37.5% indicated "A lot" of experience working with youth on planning committees or decision-making boards, 62.5% indicated "Some" experience.

Table 4.3

Experience of Participants within Youth-Adult Partnerships Prior to the Project				
	Youth Frequency	Youth Percent	Adult Frequency	Adult Percent
How much experience do you have being involved in a Youth-Adult Partnership?				
• None	0	0.00	0	0.00
• A little	2	12.50	0	0.00
• Some	11	68.75	3	37.50
• A lot	3	18.75	5	62.50
How much experience do you have on planning committees or decision-making boards with youth?				
• None	0	0.00	0	0.00
• A little	4	25.00	0	0.00
• Some	5	31.25	5	62.50
• A lot	7	43.75	3	37.50
Which of these statements about youth-adult partnerships describes you? (Check all that apply)				
I have never participated with Youth (or Adults) in equal partnership on a board or committee.	3	18.75	0	0.00
I would like to serve with youth (or adults) in equal partnership on a board or committee.	9	56.25	0	0.00
I currently serve with youth (or adults) in equal partnership on a board or committee.	8	50.00	5	62.50
I have plans now to join and serve on a board or committee with youth (or adults) in equal partnership.	0	0.00	0	0.00
I plan to increase my current level of participation on a board or committee with youth in equal partnership.	5	31.25	5	62.50

Participants were asked to respond to the statements which apply to their youth-adult partnership experience. Nine of the 16 youth participants indicated they would like to serve in equal partnerships on a board or committee with adults, while 50% indicated they currently serve in a board or committee with adults in equal partnership. Thirty-one percent of the youth respondents indicated they would like to increase their current level of participation on a board or committee with adults in equal partnership, only 3 youth indicated they had never participated with adults in equal partnership.

Over 62% of the adult respondents indicated they currently serve with youth in an equal partnership, and 62.5% plan to increase their current level of participation with youth in equal partnership.

Objective 1: To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of; *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing*, through participation in youth-adult partnerships.

Qualitative Findings – Objective 1

As reported in table 4.4, the respondents were asked “On a scale from 1 to 5 (five being the best), how would you rate your team’s cooperation in developing your environmental program? Why?” The respondents gave a mean rating of 3.0 with n=14. A 4.0 rating had a frequency of 5, a 3.0 had a frequency of 6, 2.0 had a frequency of 1, and 1.0 had a frequency of 2.

In reviewing the “Why” data in table 4.4 respondents B, K, D, J, and L indicated through the Adult Report, question 1, that they needed more participation from the youth.

Respondent J stated:

“It was a challenge to get youth involved in the well testing type of programming. However, many teens were involved in other environmental programming in the county such as teaching/assisting with classes at 4-H programs, and during established 4-H events/activities.”

Table 4.4

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 1

On a scale from 1 to 5 (five being the best), how would you rate your team’s cooperation in developing your environmental program? Why?

Respondent	Response	Rating
C	The boys were very involved in planning our activities and working with landowners to find well sites. They also looked for opportunities to conduct groundwater flow model demonstrations to other students and audiences.	4
E	We had very good response from our teens on ideas that could be done. They recognized several environmental issues/programs that could be done. The follow through with the group was somewhat lacking by the total group.	4
H	They are teen age boys and I let them decide what they want to do so they will be motivated to get the project done.	4
I	They were very interested in working with me on the youth Advisory council the only drawback was that only one of the 4-H’ers had a strong interest in environmental studies.	4
N	The members of the team are youth that are motivated to be in these types of situations	4
A	From the start of our program we had great interest. As the year developed, we lost some interest due to the repetition of the program	3
B	Needed more adults and kids	3
D	I had to sit them down and force them to plan. Then, I had to insist that they take on leadership roles within the team. They had ideas – they were just reluctant to put the ideas into plans.	3
F	I rate our team’s cooperation as a 3. The adults and children that participated did a good job of accomplishing the program	3

objectives in terms of collecting data. I would have liked to have done some mapping with the kids, but the few that participated quickly lost interest. Also, 8 out of the 10 wells that we collected from did nothing to address the water quality problem with their water well.

G	Haven't had a formal set down and plan for the future meeting; participating as things come up.	3
M	Everyone today is to busy to add things to schedules. Everything done was what was mandatory. No one had the time to commit to the program.	3
J	It was a challenge to get youth involved in the well testing type of programming. However, many teens were involved in other environmental programming in the county such as teaching/assisting with classes at 4-H programs, and during established 4-H events/activities.	2
K	I found it hard to get kids excited about well testing. One because they were not many wells to found is XXXXX County and that the testing itself was not that exciting. Also I provided a water camp and only had 4 kids show up and it is hard to do some of the programming with so few kids.	1
L	Lack of interest on the part of the youth in my County. After completing this survey I felt the need to describe my experience. My first approach to the Environmental Impact Team in my County was to recruit youth to enroll in the Impact workshop that was conducted during 4-H Roundup. I got two youth to sign up. After Roundup we scheduled the initial meeting of the newly organized "4-H in the Great Outdoor" Club. I had two 4-H members show up but we did go over the well water testing program and showed the video. We then scheduled a well water testing on-site visit to XXXXXX's Dairy and went through the whole thing from GPS to mapping. I had two youth and one adult show up. I continued to advertise meetings that would include hiking trip and camp out but had little interest. I was not only disappointed but shocked because I thought that this age group would enjoy the opportunity. We did conduct a variety of environmental programs throughout that year but they were not organized by "the team" they were organized by me.	1

Respondents A, E, and F indicated their teams started with a positive response and good interest. However, that interest quickly dwindled as the program progressed. Respondent A stated: "From the start of our program we had great interest. As the year developed, we lost some interest due to the repetition of the program." Respondents C, H,

and I indicated they had good success with the team cooperation. Respondent C stated: “The boys were very involved in planning our activities and working with landowners to find well sites. They also looked for opportunities to conduct groundwater flow model demonstrations to other students and audiences.”

Qualitative Discussion

According to the adult responses from question 1, the programs which gave the youth the opportunity to decide the direction of their program were more successful than the programs which tried to force the team into a specific project area. However, three of the teams lost interest over the duration of the program.

Norman (2001) stated, “A true partnership was one in which each party had the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions and in which the contribution of each was recognized. A youth-adult partnership was one in which adults worked in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs and policies affecting youth.” The responses from question 1, on the Adult Report, indicated the closer the adult works with the youth partners in the design and implementation of the program, the more interest the youth will show in the project.

Life Skill Findings

Quantitative Life Skill Findings - *Leadership*

Life skills were the abilities that were useful for living everyday life; they include thinking, doing, and feeling skills (Miller, 1976). Table 4.5 reports the percent change in the means of the pre-survey and post-survey values of the youth and adult survey questions relating to the life skill of *Leadership*. The life skill of *Leadership* was to assist

the group in meeting its goals by showing or directing along the way; using personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goals (Hendricks, 1998). All five survey questions on the adults and youth surveys indicated a positive change with the exception of question 4 on the youth survey. The post-survey mean value of question 4 indicated no change from the original mean value of 3.88.

Table 4.5

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Leadership* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Leadership</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
1) How often are you given the chance to share your feelings and ideas about things that matter to you?	3.63	4.00	10.19
2) How often are your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions listened to by the other team members?	3.69	4.06	10.03
3) How often are your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions taken seriously by the other team members?	3.75	3.88	3.47
4) How often do you have the opportunity to discuss concerns about decisions the team makes?	3.88	3.88	0.00
5) How often do youth have an equal voice in the decision- making process?	3.25	3.38	4.00
Adults Responses			
1) How often are youth given the chance to share feelings and ideas about things that matter to them?	3.75	4.13	10.13
2) How often are youth's thoughts, ideas, and suggestions listened to by the other team members?	3.88	4.13	6.44
3) How often are youth's thoughts, ideas, and suggestions taken seriously by the other team members?	4.00	4.13	3.25
4) How often do youth have the opportunity to discuss concerns about decisions the team makes?	3.63	3.88	6.89
5) How often do youth have an equal voice in the decision- making process?	3.63	4.00	10.19
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

The youth indicated the most change in perception in questions 1 and 2. Question 1 “How often are you given the chance to share your feelings and ideas about things that matter to you?” and question 2 “How often are your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions listened to by the other team members?” Question 1 responses showed a 10.19% increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey. The members indicated they were given the chance to share their feelings and ideas more than originally expected. They also stated a 10.03% positive change in how often they believed their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions were listened to by other team members.

The most notable changes in the adult responses from the pre-survey to the post-survey were in questions 1 and 5. Question 1 was, “How often are youth given the chance to share feelings and ideas about things that matter to them?” and question 5, “How often do youth have an equal voice in the decision-making process?” Question 1 responses showed a 10.13 % increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey. The adult members indicated through the survey, the youth were given the chance to share their feelings and ideas more than originally expected. Question 5 had a 10.19% positive change which indicates the youth had more of an equal voice in the decision making process than originally indicated on the pre-survey.

Qualitative Findings Life Skill – Leadership

The adult participants were asked in question 2 of the report to “Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project? Describe how each skill was developed?”

Table 4.6 reports all 14 respondents indicated the environmental impact program developed the life skill of *Leadership* within the youth partners. Respondent F stated: “The kids had to communicate with the adults in a role of leadership, and they had to be responsible in their data collection.”

Table 4.6

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2a Leadership

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Leadership*

Respondent	Response
A	Great development from the teens involved in the program
B	organizing groups
C	Contacted landowners to test the wells. Did demonstrations to other youth on groundwater quality.
D	They planned a trash pickup day and carried it through
E	Having an equal say in what projects would be done. Giving the responsibility to take lead on well site assessments.
F	The kids had to communicate with the adults in a role of leadership, and they had to be responsible in their data collection
G	Each youth takes on responsibilities to get the project down.
H	Making the decisions on what the team will do
I	Working together on the team with each member putting in their input. Teaching the programs to others and sharing what they had learned.
J	Youth enhanced public speaking and group leadership techniques by assisting with/teaching classes at the 4-H Farm
K	Youth are actively involved in planning and implementing programs not so much with environmental education (EE) kids just didn't have the fire to lead in this area
L	Leadership (identified as a developed skill)
M	The importance of meeting goals.
N	Leadership (identified as a developed skill)

Quantitative Findings Life Skill - Cooperation

Table 4.7 reports the findings of a three part question, 15a, 15b, 15c, for the youth participants to determine their perceptions in regard to the life skill of *Cooperation*. Question 15a “How often are you engaged in the discussion?” the youth indicated a negative change in the mean value. The value dropped from 3.50 to 3.38, a -3.43% change. Question 15c “How often do you contribute without being prompted?” also dropped from 3.56 to 3.44, a -3.37% change. Question 15b “How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions?” showed a notable increase of 15.38%, which was a categorical change from “Sometimes” to “Often.”

Table 4.7

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Cooperation* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Cooperation</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
15a) How often are you engaged in the discussion?	3.50	3.38	-3.43
15b) How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions?	3.25	3.75	15.38
15c) How often do you contribute without being prompted?	3.56	3.44	-3.37
Adults Responses			
25) I actively and consistently consult youth.	4.38	4.25	-2.97
26) I actively and consistently involve youth.	4.63	4.50	-2.81
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

The adult participants answered two survey questions related to the life skill of *Cooperation*. The mean values of both these questions indicated a negative percentage change. Question 25, “I actively and consistently consult youth.” decreased from 4.38 to 4.25 a 2.97% drop in the mean value. However, the mean values for this particular question remain in the “Almost Always” category. Question 26 “I actively and consistently involve youth.” mean value also had a negative change of 2.81%. This change dropped the categorical response from “Almost Always” to the upper limit of “Often”. Four of these five questions indicated a negative percentage change, but only two of these questions indicated a categorical response change.

Qualitative Finding Life Skill – Cooperation

The life skill of *Cooperation* was to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit (Hendricks, 1998). Table 4.8 identifies, 13 of the respondents reported *Cooperation* as a life skill developed through the environmental program. Respondent K indicated they force cooperation through assigning tasks in a way the youth have to work together. The other respondents indicated the program encouraged cooperation. Respondent F stated: “The children had to cooperate with myself, with each other and with the adults while collecting data together and making decisions on which wells to test.”

Table 4.8

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2b Cooperation

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Cooperation*

Respondent	Response
A	Youth and adults learned to work closely together to complete tasks
B	Working together, sharing information
C	Worked with OCES and other agencies to support the program.
D	They had to determine what tasks were to be done & who would carry it out.
E	Working with each other and land/well owners
F	The children had to cooperate with myself, with each other and with the adults while collecting data together and making decisions on which wells to test
G	Everyone has to work together to get it done
H	Agreeing on when and what they are going to do
I	Working together to get the tasks completed.
J	Teens from 3 counties cooperated in conducting volunteer days at the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank and in developing programming for tri-county 4-H Camp and the Tri-County Leadership Retreat.
K	EE (Environmental Education) – very little/ I tend to put people together on activities that either don't know each other or don't necessarily view things the same way to foster cooperation and team work.
M	Working together to reach their goals
N	Cooperation (identified as a developed skill)

Quantitative Finding Life Skill – Contributions to Group Efforts

Table 4.9 indicates the youth participants' development of the life skill of *Contributions to Group Efforts*. The life skill of *Contributions to Group Efforts* was to give or supply along with others for a common purpose (Hendricks, 1998). All of the

adult responses indicated a positive change; however, only one of the three youth responses indicated a positive change from the pre-survey to the post-survey means.

Table 4.9

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Contributions to Group Efforts* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5

(1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Contributions to Group Efforts</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
7) How often are you able to attend the activities planned by the team?	4.56	4.19	-8.11
8) How often do you have specific tasks or assignments on the team?	4.19	4.00	-4.53
10) How often are other youth team members positive and responsive to your needs and questions?	3.63	3.88	6.89
Adults Responses			
7) How often are activities planned by a committee at a time convenient for youth?	4.00	4.13	3.25
8) How often do youth have specific tasks or assignments on the committee?	3.63	3.88	6.89
10) How often are other youth team members positive and responsive to another youth's needs and questions?	3.63	3.88	6.89
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

Qualitative Finding Life Skill – Contributions to Group Efforts

The life skill of *Contributions to Group Efforts* was to give or supply along with others for a common purpose (Hendricks, 1998). According to Table 4.10, ten respondents indicated on the Adult Report form that the youth partners developed this life

skill. Respondent F stated this was their lowest scorer of the life skills while respondent A stated the partners developed great working relationships with each other.

Table 4.10

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2d Contributions to Group Efforts

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Contributions to Group Efforts*

Respondent	Response
A	All the partners involved developed great working relationships with each other
B	Sharing information
C	Teamwork
D	One team member designed a flyer; one contacted the City of XXXXX for permission to pick up trash at the lake and one took pictures and reported.
E	Helping each other and getting to be an equal part
F	This was probably our lowest scorer. The children that participated in the well testing were very excited at first, but they quickly got bored with the project and stopped participating.
H	Each person has to do their part
J	Teens/youth donated time and products to programming at XXXXX, to Oklahoma Regional Food bank, and to for the local community food pantry.
M	To interact on what they are doing
N	Contributions to Group Efforts (identified as a developed skill)

Quantitative Findings Life Skill – Accepting Differences

The next life skill examined was *Accepting Differences*. According to Hendricks (1998), *Accepting Differences* was to recognize and welcome factors that separate or distinguish one person from another. The researcher identified two questions from the instrument which related to this life skill. This life skill was examined by the quantitative instrument from the perspective of trust. These two questions were, question 12 on the

youth survey, “How much can you trust the adult team members?” and question 13 on the youth survey, “How much can you trust other youth team members?” The youth indicated a slight positive increase in the mean values from the pre-survey to the post-survey on these two questions.

Table 4.11

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Accepting Differences* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Accepting Differences</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth			
12) How much can you trust the adult team members?	4.19	4.25	1.43
13) How much can you trust other youth team members?	4.06	4.13	1.72
Adults			
12) How much can youth trust the adult team members?	4.13	4.13	0.00
13) How much can youth trust other youth team members?	3.75	3.63	-3.20
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

The adult mean responses to questions 12, “How much can youth trust the adult team members?” indicated a no change. The adult responses to question 13, “How much can youth trust other youth team members?” showed a negative change in the mean value of 3.75 pre-survey to 3.63 on the post-survey, which was a 3.20% drop. Although

negative, both of these mean values fall in the “Often” categorical response to the question.

Qualitative Findings Life Skill – Accepting Differences

In Table 4.12, four respondents identified this *Accepting differences* as a life skill developed through the program. Respondent J stated: “During one event, youth worked side by side with other youth from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Afterwards, many expressed their successes and challenges they witnessed with the other youth.”

Table 4.12

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2f *Accepting Differences*

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Accepting Differences*

Respondent	Response
E	Not having to be the leader. Taking what everyone said as important
F	I don't think this was an issue that was dealt with in the program.
I	Learning each others strengths and using those as they work together to test the water wells and other activities.
J	During one event, youth worked side by side with other youth from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Afterwards, many expressed their successes and challenges they witnessed with the other youth.
M	By accepting what others on the team want to contribute?
N	Accepting Differences (identified as a developed skill)

Quantitative Findings Life Skill – Service Learning

Table 4.13 reports the indicators of the findings of the survey questions relating to the youth development life skill of *Service Learning*. This life skill was defined as,

gaining skill and experience through active participation in organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community; learning linked with real life (Hendricks, 1998).

Table 4.13

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Service Learning* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Service Learning</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
18) Learn new skills	4.13	4.50	8.99
19) Feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve your community.	3.94	4.19	6.35
20) Gain support from others in your community for your own goals and activities.	4.00	4.06	1.50
21) Network with others in your community.	3.81	3.63	-4.72
Adult Responses			
34a) Learn new skills	4.13	4.38	6.05
34b) Feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community.	3.88	4.25	9.54
34c) Gain support from others in their community for their own goals and activities	4.13	4.13	0.00
34d) Network with others in your community.	4.00	4.00	0.00
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Strongly disagree, 1.6-2.5 = Disagree, 2.6-3.5 = Neutral, 3.6-4.5 = Agree, 4.6-5 = Strongly Agree			

Through working with the Environmental Impact team, the youth worked on community projects related to water quality and water conservation. The participants answered four questions on the survey to determine their perceptions of *Service Learning*. Question 18 “Learn New Skills” had a positive increase of 8.99%. The youth participants agreed they learned new skills through the project. Question 19 illustrated, the participants also categorically agreed they felt a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community. The fourth question showed a negative change in the mean values. Question 21, “Network with others in your community” dropped 4.72%; however, this change remained in the category of “agree.”

The adult surveys ranged from no change to a positive change of 9.54%. Question 34b, “Feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community” had the greatest positive change. However, all of the adult survey responses were reported in the “Agree” category.

Qualitative Findings Life Skill – Service Learning

Table 4.14 indicates the life skill of *Service Learning* was reported by 12 of the 14 respondents as a skill developed through the project. Eight of the 14 respondents stated the youth learned the importance and value of working with clientele throughout the community. Respondents A and F respectively stated: “All involved valued the contribution made to our community,” “The children learned a lot via service learning in this project. Many people requested that we test their wells here. In fact not all of the people’s wells were able to be tested by the limited children that we had participated in the project. Therefore, the children found that people really considered this as a great

community service to them by the children. This was a big self-esteem booster for our children as well as the responsibility that they learned during the project. This gave the children an increased sense of civic duty.”

Table 4.14

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2i Service Learning

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Service Learning*

Respondent	Response
A	All involved valued the contribution made to our community
B	Using the information gathered to help the public be water wiser
C	Worked to assist fellow citizens be insuring that their water is safe.
D	One team member designed a flyer; one contacted the City of XXXXX for permission to pick up trash at the lake and one took pictures and reported.
E	Learned the importance of helping others in the community
F	The children learned a lot via service learning in this project. Many people requested that we test their wells here. In fact not all of the people’s wells were able to be tested by the limited children that we had participated in the project. Therefore, the children found that people really considered this as a great community service to them by the children. This was a big self-esteem booster for our children as well as the responsibility that they learned during the project. This gave the children an increased since of civic duty
I	Helping test and advise local clientele about proper care and upkeep of their well, and explaining test results so that the homeowners could make informed decisions
J	Teens incorporated service learning into their monthly meetings and during the Tri-County Leadership retreat
K	I have my county currently brainstorming to come up with a community service project. I want this to be their idea and them to do the nuts and bolts of it I hope they will only need me to guide.
L	Service Learning (identified as a developed skill)
M	Gaining experience while working with groups to meet the communities’ needs
N	Service Learning (identified as a developed skill)

Quantitative Findings Life Skill – Planning and Organizing

Table 4.15 reports the youth development of the life skill of *Planning and Organizing* which was considered a method for doing something that has been thought out ahead of time; how the parts can be put together (Hendricks, 1998). The respondents based these answers on how worried they were that these activities might interfere with “their school schedule and activities,” “family time,” and “personal free time.” From the youth respondents question 23 (their school schedule and activities) had a notable increase of 24.56% in response means. Question 25 (their personal free time) also had a notable increase of 16.29%.

Table 4.15

Indicators of Youth Participants development of the Life Skill of *Planning and Organizing* through Participation in a Youth-Adult Partnership on a scale of 1 to 5 (Participants rated these questions based on how worried they were this project might interfere with:) (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always)

Life Skill Indicator: <i>Planning and Organizing</i>	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
23) Your school schedule and responsibilities.	2.81	3.50	24.56
24) Your family life.	3.44	4.00	16.29
25) Personal free time.	3.81	4.06	6.56
Adult Responses			
15a) Youth's school schedule and responsibilities?	4.13	4.25	2.91
15b) Youth's family life?	3.25	3.25	0.00
15c) Youth's personal free time?	2.88	3.25	12.85
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

The adult respondents had lower values on the corresponding questions. On question 15c, the adults indicated a 12.85% increase in how worried the youth were the project would interfere with the youth's personal free time. The adults reported no change in how the project would affect the youth's family time and a 2.91% increase in how much the youth worried the project would affect the youth's school schedule and activities.

Qualitative Findings Life Skill – Planning and Organizing

The life skill of *Planning and Organizing* was identified by nine of the 14 respondents in Table 4.16. Six of the respondents stated the youth learned to develop a plan and a timeline to accomplish their tasks. Respondents A, D, and H stated respectively: “Making a game plan to divide responsibilities and working together,” “The team planned and organized the activity,” “How to get done everything they want to do around their school schedules.”

Table 4.16

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 2j *Planning and Organizing*

Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project. Describe how each skill was developed.

Life Skill Identified: *Planning and Organizing*

Respondent	Response
A	Making a game plan to divide responsibilities and working together.
B	Set up timelines for test and activities
D	The team planned and organized the activity
E	Had to be organized to complete a well assessment
F	The children were part of some of the planning and organizing for this project. For instance, they decided which wells we would test. I would say that the project slightly increased their planning and organizing skills.
H	How to get done everything they want to do around their school schedules
I	I try to get them to do this as much as I can. They select programs they want brought to their meeting, themes for events, and they plan family fun nights for the county.
M	Working together and developing a plan for them to carry out
N	Planning and Organizing (identified as a developed skill)

Objective 1 Summary and Discussion

Life skills comprise the majority of competencies within the personal and social assets categories identified in the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine

book on youth programs. Youth need opportunities and support from their communities to develop these important personal and social assets to become competent, contributing members of society (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The development of life skills allows youth to cope with their environment by making responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able to communicate, and get along with others (Boyd, Herring & Briers, 1992).

According to Table 4.17, at least 70% of the respondents identified the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, and service learning* as life skills developed through the environmental impact team youth-adult partnership. The life skill rankings in Table 4.17 correlate with the findings of the pre-survey and the post-survey data, with the exception of *Contributions to Group Efforts*, which received mixed results.

Table 4.17

Life skill and Number of Adult Respondents who identified the Life skill as developed through the Environmental Impact program Youth – Adult Partnership

Life Skill	Number of Times Identified	% of N (N=14)
Leadership	14	100
Cooperation	13	93
Service Learning	12	86
Contributions to Group Efforts	10	71
Planning Organizing	9	64
Accepting Differences	6	43

The qualitative questions on the pre-survey and the post-survey resulted in a positive change in the means of the questions related to developing the life skill of *Leadership*. Both the youth and adults reported over a 10% increase in the mean scores

from the pre-survey to the post-survey on two of the questions related to the life skill of *Leadership*. The most notable differences were that the questions indicating youth were given the chance to share their feelings about things that mattered to them, that the youth's thoughts, ideas, and suggestions were listened to by the other team members, and that youth "often" have an equal voice in the decision making process.

All 14 of the adult respondents to the qualitative Adult Participant Report, indicated that the life-skill of *Leadership* was developed through the youth-adult partnership. A respondent stated the youth developed the life skill of *Leadership* by; "Having an equal say in what projects would be done. Giving the responsibility to take lead on well site assessments." Another stated, "The kids had to communicate with the adults in a role of leadership, and they had to be responsible in their data collection." Therefore, there was a positive correlation between youth participating in youth-adult partnerships, and youth enhancing the life skill of *Leadership*.

The quantitative survey questions related to the life skill of *Cooperation* indicated a small percentage drop in the level of cooperation in the pre-survey and post-survey means; however the change was less than 4%. The one exception to this drop in perception was the youth response to the question, "How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions. The mean change in this question was a notable 15% increase in the perception of the youth of how the adults value their thoughts and opinions.

The qualitative analysis illustrated that 13 of the 14 respondents to the Adult Report, indicated *Cooperation* as a life skill developed through the environmental program. The participants stated that the, "Youth and adults learned to work closely

together to complete tasks” another respondent stated, “The children had to cooperate with myself, with each other and with the adults while collecting data together and making decisions on which wells to test.”

Finally, there was a mixed correlation between the qualitative and the quantitative responses of the enhancement of the life skill of *Cooperation*. Although the quantitative values indicated a negative percent change, the identifiers associated with the values remained as positive responses to the survey questions. The qualitative data did indicate an enhancement in the youths’ development of the life skill of *Cooperation*. Therefore, the results of the life skill of *Cooperation* indicated youth enhanced this life skill through participation in a youth-adult partnership.

On the quantitative surveys all the adult respondents indicated a positive change in regard to the life skill of *Contributions to Group Efforts*. The survey question, “How often do youth have specific assignments on the team” received mixed responses from the youth and the adults. The youth indicated a negative percent change in the pre-survey and post-survey means the adults reported a positive change. The question, “How often are youth able to attend the activities planned by the team” received the same mixed response. Both the youth and adults agreed that the other youth team members were positive and responsive to the needs and questions of the other youth.

The results of the life skill of *Contributions to group efforts* were questionable as to whether this life skill was enhanced through the participation in a youth-adult partnership. The youths’ lack of attendance to the meetings may have caused the negative results to the development of this life skill.

On the quantitative Adult Participant Reports there was very little change in the mean scores for *Accepting Differences*. These questions approached this life skill from the perspective of trusting other team members. All the responses in the pre-survey and post-survey questions reported they *often* trust the other team members. Only four of the 14 respondents identified this life skill as one developed through the program. The findings for the life skill of *Accepting Differences* were inconclusive due to the lack of the identification of this life skill on the Adult Participant Reports and the absence of change in the mean scores on the pre/post survey responses.

The quantitative data questions corresponding to *Service Learning* reported almost a 9% increase in the youth mean response to “learn new skills,” which correlate with over a 6% increase in the adult mean values. The adults also reported over a 9% increase in the mean value to the question that the youth, “feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community”, this value corresponded to over a 6% increase in the youth perception. However the youth also indicated a negative change in the mean value to the responses to the survey questions regarding how they learned to network with other in their community. The adults showed no change in the corresponding question.

The life skill of *Service Learning* was reported by 12 of the 14 adult respondents on the Adult Report as a skill developed through the project. A common theme emerged through the qualitative data that the youth learned the importance and value of working with clientele throughout the community. Therefore this data indicates an enhancement in the youths’ development of the life skill of *Service Learning*.

The quantitative data addressing the life skill of *Planning and Organizing* indicated the youth had a notable increase in response means of 24.56% that they were worried this project would interfere with their school schedule and activities. The youth also indicated over a 16% increase in their concern with the project interfering with their family life. The adult respondents had lower values on the corresponding questions. The adults indicated a 12.85% increase in how worried the youth were the project would interfere with the youth's personal free time, no change on how the project would affect the youth's family time.

The life skill of *Planning and Organizing* was identified by nine of the 14 respondents on the qualitative Adult Report. The participants' responses emerged into a consistent theme that the youth learned to develop a plan and a timeline to accomplish their tasks. Therefore the results indicated the youth participants enhanced their life skill of *Planning and Organizing*. The youths' quantitative survey data indicated they became more concerned about their schedules which might be interpreted they realized how their time was limited. Through the qualitative Adult Reports the adults stated the youth increased their skills in *Planning and Organizing*.

According to the triangulation of the findings in the data sources, the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and Organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership.

Objective 2: To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults.

Quantitative Findings Objective 2

Table 4.18 reports youth responses to questions determining if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a youth-adult partnership by examining their perceptions of their role on the team. The responses to these questions were either yes or no. These responses were reported by the percent of the respondents who answered yes. The first question (31) was “Were you able to choose your role on the team?” 81.3% responded yes on the pre-survey, and 87.5% responded yes on the post-survey, a 7.63% increase. The next question (32) was, “Do you feel you can change your role on the team?” 81.3% responded yes on the pre-survey, and 87.5% responded yes on the post-survey, a 7.63% increase. The third question (33), “Are you able to take on roles over time that gave you more responsibility?” received a 100% “yes” response rate on both the pre-survey and the post-survey. The next question 34, received the most notable increase in percent “yes” responses. Question 34, “Do you receive coaching assistance from another youth on the team?” received a 62.5% “yes” on the pre-survey which increased to an 81.3% on the post-survey, a 30.08% increase.

Table 4.18**To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults**

	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Youth Responses			
31) Were you able to choose your role on the team?	81.3	87.5	7.63
32) Do you feel that you can change your role on the team?	81.3	87.5	7.63
33) Are you able to take on roles over time that gave you more responsibility?	100.0	100.0	0.00
34) Do you receive coaching or assistance from another youth on the team?	62.5	81.3	30.08
35) Do you receive coaching or assistance from an adult on the team?	100.0	100.0	0.00

Note. Youth responses were Yes or No, responses were reported by percent yes responses

Table 4.19 reports adult responses to questions determining if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a youth-adult partnership by examining their perceptions of their role on the team. Question 38, received the most notable increase of 15.38% with a pre-survey value of 3.25, and a post-survey value of 3.75.

Table 4.19

To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults.

	Pre-survey	Post-survey	% Change
Adult Responses			
35) Youth are able to choose their role on a board?	3.38	3.25	-3.85
36) Youth are able to change their role on a board?	3.00	3.13	4.33
37) Youth are able to take on roles over time that gives them more responsibility?	3.63	3.88	6.89
38) Youth receive coaching or assistance from another youth on the team?	3.25	3.75	15.38
39) Youth receive coaching or assistance from an adult on the team?	4.13	4.25	2.91
Real Limits: 1-1.5 = Never, 1.6-2.5 = Rarely, 2.6-3.5 = Sometimes, 3.6-4.5 = Often, 4.6-5 = Almost Always			

Qualitative Findings Objective 2

The adult participants were asked to, “Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s), and your team.” As illustrated in table 4.20, the general responses were “it was a good relationship,” “the youth and adults worked in an equal relationship,” “we all felt important,” and “we worked well together.” These responses would indicate an equal partnership between the youth and adults. According to Jones and Perkins (2004) this would be the point of stasis where a partnership was achieved between the youth and adults. These teams reached a balance between youth and adult involvement and all the partnership members (youth and adults) worked together to effectively reach the desired goals.

Table 4.20

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 3

Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s) and your team.

Respondent	Response
A	Our team worked together sometimes in large numbers and sometimes in small groups to accomplish their tasks. They became a pretty well knit team
B	Very relaxed, easy communication
C	Team worked closely with adults. Excellent relationships were developed. Youth provided ideas. Adults provided guidance.
D	It was a good relationship; once they realized I was serious about the project, they carried it through – of course, they did have to have a few reminders and a parent or two who made sure they carried out their responsibilities.
E	We all felt important. Everyone was given equal chance to give opinions and all opinions were considered important
F	The youth and adult partners had a good relationship in our team. They worked well together, and the adults seemed very appreciative of the youth.
G	The youth and adults on our team work together in all phases of planning and implementing the programs.
H	Our youth work closely with the NRCS in XXXXX County they feel comfortable asking questions and visiting with office personnel
I	The youth and adults work to have an equal relationship. At first the youth wanted the adults to take the lead but once we started an equal relationship formed quickly.
J	Youth on this Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP) are invited/encouraged to get involved in any and all programming at the XXXXX. However, most of the planning is achieved by the XXXXX manager. When asked specifically to perform a duty, youth are very good at follow through as long as they are sent reminders. In this day and age, with so many other activities available in school and the community, it is hard to get them to prioritize 4-H and/or environmental programming.
K	EE (Environmental Education) – very limited, the youth seemed almost bored with the programming I try to emphasize with my leaders and volunteers to allow the youth lead their program and that they should be there to guide. I have had good success letting the youth get involved in things that typically fall to the volunteers or the educator. I think most of the youth that get involved enjoy the time spent with myself and volunteers because I try to treat them as leaders.
L	I have a relationship with the team relative to many 4-H activities but this group never functioned as a team.
M	They were very understanding on each others feelings and work ethics. The total group worked well together when ever they got together.

N The youth on the team make the majority of the decisions as to what will be accomplished. With little direction from the adult partners youth are very capable of leading.

There were two deviant teams which did not indicate they reached this level of partnership. Respondent J stated, “However, most of the planning was achieved by the XXXX manager.” This type of relationship where the adult made most of the decisions would indicate an adult led collaboration. This type of partnership occurred when the adult makes the majority of the decisions and the youth follow (Jones & Perkins, 2004). Respondent J also stated,

“When asked specifically to perform a duty, youth are very good at follow through as long as they are sent reminders. In this day and age, with so many other activities available in school and the community, it was hard to get them to prioritize 4-H and/or environmental programming”

This statement emphasizes that the adults remain in power and were the driving force in making the relationship a meaningful success; which further confirms an adult–led collaboration (Jones & Perkins, 2004).

Respondent N stated, “The youth on the team make the majority of the decisions as to what will be accomplished. With little direction from the adult partners youth are very capable of leading.” This was an indication of a youth-led Collaboration. The characteristics of this type of partnership was youth primarily generate ideas and make decisions with limited support from adults, the adults typically provide assistance with the process but most of the decisions are made by the youth.

These two outlying respondents didn't meet the characteristics of a true youth-adult partnership based on Perkins and Jones (2004) "Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships" although they were not that far from the ideal. The Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships consisted of five different relationships, Youth-Adult Partnerships were in the middle, while the Youth-Led collaboration and the Adult-led collaboration lay just to the right and left of the center. All the teams avoided the pitfalls of an Adult-Centered Leadership or Youth Centered Leadership, which were the extremes on the continuum. Responses from Participant E and I, were the most representative of teams exhibiting the qualities of youth-adult partnerships. Their responses were: "We all felt important. Everyone was given equal chance to give opinions and all opinions were considered important," "The youth and adults work to have an equal relationship. At first the youth wanted the adults to take the lead but once we started an equal relationship formed quickly."

The adult respondents were asked, "What have your youth partners contributed to the team effort?" Reported in Table 4.21, as a whole the respondents indicated the youth provided leadership to the projects. The leadership the youth provided ranged from selecting well sites to sample, to contacting community partners, to changing the direction of the program away from the well testing objective.

Table 4.21

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 4

What have your youth partners contributed to the team effort?

Respondent	Response
A	Our youth have completed a large percentage of the leg work and testing.
B	Using GPS and mapping pulling samples and reading them
C	Labor, Time, contacts within the community, leadership
D	Planned and implemented an activity – trash pickup at XXXXX Lake.
E	Helping to organize program. They have begun to consider other issues that they can be a part of. They feel that what they said is important
F	The youth partners chose wells that we tested. They collected data. The youth partners did the water sampling and recorded all data with the exception of bacteria testing.
G	Youth partners contribute enthusiasm and energy to the team effort. They have a fresh way to look at the ways that “we’ve always done things.” They can network with other youth and get them involved.
H	Time, labor and ideals
I	Planning and ideas about what they perceived as needs of the community
J	Youth have contributed limited time for this specific team effort as there are many constraints which hinder their involvement. (See question 3 answers)
K	EE – nothing they really had very little interest in the topic. Currently with the recycling program they seem to enjoy the competition. They collected approximately 100 pounds of aluminum cans at the first weigh in. I think we are starting to head in the right direction.
L	Very Little
M	By accepting differences they had and over coming those differences to work as a team.
N	The direction the team will go.

According to Wright (2000) by being engaged, youth can develop important social and leadership skills. Youth offer a unique perspective and capability. Youth understand other youth and offer fresh perspective, creativity, and energy for action. Wright was supported by respondent G who stated: “Youth partners contribute enthusiasm and energy to the team effort. They have a fresh way to look at the ways that ‘we’ve always done things.’ They can network with other youth and get them involved.”

The Laidlaw Foundation supported this statement in its seven reasons for youth engagement. One of the reasons states organizations can make better decisions on youth-related matters – youth provide a ‘reality check’ and ‘creativity, energy, and fresh perspectives’ (Wright, 2000).

Eight of the respondents suggested the youth took a leadership role. Other respondents (A, B, F, & H) indicated the youth provided legwork, labor, and ideas. These statements indicate the youth were engaged in the project which helped them develop life skills through working equally with adults. If the adults were more controlling and less open to the youth, the youth would not be able to take a lead role in the program. Unfortunately, three respondents stated the youth contributed very little to the project. This lack of participation has been identified by the Innovation Center (2003) as youth who were unwilling to get involved because they have not previously been invited to participate in the decision making process. These youth have a lack of knowledge, and are skeptical their opinion will be heard and counted. An additional possibility for this behavior could have been the lack of a support network to make a concerted effort that the youth would succeed in the youth-adult partnership.

In Table 4.22, the adult participants were asked, “What have the adult team members (including yourself) contributed to the team effort?” Respondent E stated: “By giving guidance to the group without demanding things be done a certain way. Learned to step back and let the youth do ‘their thing’ in the organization, and implementation of the program.”

Table 4.22

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 5

What have the adult team members (including yourself) contributed to the team effort?	
Respondent	Response
A	Adults have served in an advising and educating capacity
B	Guiding the youth and teaching them how to use the GPS and make a map
C	Technical expertise, testing resources, transportation
D	Guided youth and reminded them about tasks.
E	Giving guidance to the group without demanding things being done a certain way. Learned to step back and let the youth do “their thing” in the organization and implementation of the program.
F	The adult partners aided the children in data collection, and they (in some cases) followed recommendations to remedy water quality problems
G	The adult team members contribute past experience and organizational skills to the project. We also have patience that sometimes the kids lack. We provide resources in expertise, money and transportation.
H	Transportation, ideas, guidance, time, labor and encouragement
I	Facilitation and organization of the meetings
J	Adult team members take on the majority of planning and developing of environmental programming involved in this county. Teens/youth are invited/incorporated into efforts to teach, set up, clean up, and work the events/activities
K	Ideas and programs
L	Very Little
M	Same as question number four (By accepting differences they had and overcoming those differences to work as a team.)
N	The oversight to make sure the youths direction is positive and achievable.

The respondents suggested the adults provide guidance and teaching to the team by advising the youth, and drawing on their past experiences. Respondent N suggested the adults make sure the direction the youth take was positive and achievable. This corresponds with Jones and Perkins (2000) idea that without adult guidance youth led projects may decline into negative and undesirable behaviors. The Innovation Center and National 4-H Council (2003) study suggested that by working in youth-adult partnerships

adults may have first hand experience of the competence of youth and begin to perceive them as legitimate contributors to the decision making process.

Three of the adult respondents saw their role as organizing and conducting the majority of the planning, respondent J stated:

Adult team members take on the majority of planning and developing of environmental programming involved in this county. Teens/youth are invited/incorporated into efforts to teach, set up, clean up, and work the events/activities.

It could be concluded from this statement the team was not working in a youth-adult partnership. This team was functioning in an adult-led collaboration in which the youth provided limited input.

Respondent L indicated the adults provided very little to the partnership. This team appears to be working as a youth-led collaboration instead of a partnership.

An additional theme which came from this question was transportation. Three of the respondents identified transportation as one of the adults' contributions to the team. It was imperative not to overlook that youth may need a ride to plan, organize, and contribute to a project (Innovation Center, 2003).

Objective 2 Summary and Discussion

When the youth respondents were asked, "Were you able to choose your role on the team?" over 80.0% responded yes on the pre-survey, and the post-survey. The next question was, "Do you feel you can change your role on the team?" over 80.0% responded yes on the pre-survey, and the post-survey.. The third question, "Are you able

to take on roles over time that gave you more responsibility?” received a 100% “yes” response rate on both the pre-survey and the post-survey. The next question received the most notable increase in percent “yes” responses, “Do you receive coaching assistance from another youth on the team?” received a 62.5% “yes” on the pre-survey which increased to an 81.3% on the post-survey, a 30.08% increase.

The responses by the youth to these questions indicate that the youth felt an equal partnership on the team. A notable change from an adult-led collaboration to a youth-adult partnership was evident by the over 30% increase in the response to the question regarding receiving coaching from other youth on the team. The youth expected to receive coaching from the adults, it would appear that coaching from each other was a new concept. The adult responses to these same questions fell in the “sometimes” or “often” categories. This was an indicator that the adults were open to the youth choosing and changing their role on the team and the youth were being given more responsibility or coaching each other and serving in a leadership role.

The adult participants were asked to, “Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s), and your team.” As illustrated in table 4.20, the general response was “it was a good relationship.” This type of response indicates an equal partnership between the youth and adults. According to Jones and Perkins (2004) this would be the point of stasis where a partnership was achieved between the youth and adults. These teams reached a balance between youth and adult involvement, and all the partnership members (youth and adults) worked together to effectively reach the desired goals.

The adult respondents were asked, “What have your youth partners contributed to the team effort?” As a whole the respondents indicated the youth provided leadership to

the projects. The leadership the youth provided ranged from selecting well sites to sample, to contacting community partners, to changing the direction of the program away from the well testing objective.

According to Wright (2000) by being engaged, youth can develop important social and leadership skills. Youth offer a unique perspective and capability. Youth understand other youth and offer fresh perspective, creativity, and energy for action. Wright was supported by respondent G who stated: “Youth partners contribute enthusiasm and energy to the team effort. They have a fresh way to look at the ways that ‘we’ve always done things.’ They can network with other youth and get them involved.” The Laidlaw Foundation supported this statement in its seven reasons for youth engagement. One of the reasons states organizations can make better decisions on youth-related matters – youth provide a “reality check,” and “creativity, energy and fresh perspectives (Wright, 2000). Respondents suggested the youth took a leadership role. Other respondents indicated the youth provided legwork, labor, and ideas. These statements indicate the youth were engaged in the project which helped them develop life skills through working equally with adults. If the adults were more controlling and less open to the youth, the youth would not be able to take a lead role in the program. This was another indication of youth serving in an equal partnership with the adults.

The respondents also suggested through the qualitative data the adults provide guidance and teaching to the team by advising the youth and drawing on their past experiences. One respondent suggested the adults make sure the direction the youth take was positive and achievable. This corresponds with Jones and Perkins (2000) idea that without adult guidance youth led projects may decline into negative and undesirable

behaviors. The Innovation Center and National 4-H Council (2003) study suggested that by working in youth-adult partnerships adults may have first hand experience of the competence of youth and begin to perceive them as legitimate contributors to the decision making process. However, it must be noted that the data also indicated that 100% of the teams did not function in this manner. There were 14 different teams in this study, they all functioned differently.

Objective 3 To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships

Quantitative Findings Objective 3

Table 4.23 reports the respondents perceived obstacles that keep youth from fully participating in youth-adult partnerships. “Not much time after homework and other activities” was identified by 68.8% of the youth respondents. The second most identified obstacle was the “Meeting not at a good time”. This obstacle was selected by 50% of the youth participants.

Table 4.23

**Post-survey Indicators of Participants perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships
(Respondents checked all the appropriate responses)**

Youth (N=16)	# of Responses	% Identified
27) What keeps you from participating 100% with the project team? (Check all that apply)		
• 27a) not much time after homework and other activities	11	68.8
• 27b) I would like to serve with youth in equal partnership on a board/committee	0	0
• 27c) Adults don't respect youth on the committee	0	0
• 27d) Rather be with friends	2	12.5
• 27e) Transportation to meetings	2	12.5
• 27f) Not so interesting	2	12.5
• 27g) Parents don't help youth get to the meeting	2	12.5
• 27h) Meeting not at a good time	8	50.0
• 27i) Other,	0	
• 27i) Other, specify		
Adults (N=8)	# of Responses	% Identified
16) What keeps youth from participating 100% with the project team? (Check all that apply)		
• 16a) not much time after homework and other activities	7	87.5
• 16b) I would like to serve with youth in equal partnership on a board/committee	1	12.5
• 16c) Adults don't respect youth on the committee	1	12.5
• 16d) Rather be with friends	4	50.0
• 16e) Transportation to meetings	7	87.5
• 16f) Not so interesting	3	37.5
• 16g) Parents don't help youth get to the meeting	5	62.5
• 16h) Meeting not at a good time	2	25.0
• 16i) Other	1	12.5
• 16i) Other, specify	Ball games	

The two most identified obstacles by the adult participants were, “Not much time after homework and other activities,” and “Transportation to meetings”. These two obstacles were selected by 87.5% of the adult respondents. “Parents don’t help get youth to the meeting” was selected by 62.5% of the adults. This was followed by 50% of the adults reported that youth would “Rather be with friends.”

Qualitative Findings Objective 3

Table 4.24 reports the adult responses to question 6 “Describe how the youth and adult team members supported and/or discouraged the project.” Ten respondents indicated that their teams were very supportive of the project and enthusiastic about it. Respondents B, and H, respectively stated: “We had a great group that was eager to learn and use their new knowledge. Every time we went everyone had fun,” “The youth love to test wells and visit with people. They have helped decide the direction the team will take in the coming months.”

Table 4.24

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 6

Describe how the youth and adult team members supported and/or discouraged the project.

Respondent	Response
A	The youth lost some interest over time due to other spring and summer opportunities
B	We had a great group that was eager to learn and use their new knowledge. Every time we went everyone had fun!
C	All were enthusiastic about the program. Basically answers are the same as in #4 and #5 above.
D	All adults supported the project. The youth were all behind the project and carried out their responsibilities.
E	The members support the efforts. Through this project they wanted to do other environmental projects within the county. There were a few of the youth that new the importance of the well testing but gave very limited

	effort to doing it.
F	The adult team members supported the project by providing food for the children and providing a lot of encouragement and thanks. The youth supported doing the project, but their enthusiasm declined possibly as a result of not having a lot of variation within the project or ability to give a lot of input in the project objectives or overall plan.
G	Youth and adult team members supported the project by committing to it and fulfilling their responsibilities to make sure that the project is completed
H	The youth love to test wells and visit with people. They have helped decide the direction the team will take in the coming months
I	All the team members had a positive attitude toward the project and did what they could to insure the projects success
J	As described earlier, when the project was presented, all team members were supportive of the efforts; however, time and travel constraints limited the success of the project.
K	It was discouraging when you ask for interested folks and no one shows up. I hosted a water camp (2 days) and only had 4 kids show up. Then they have a hard time understanding why things aren't as fun and exciting. I also don't think some of my adults promote it like I want them to. I have one club wanting natural resource programs yet they didn't come to something like this.
L	They did not show up for meetings.
M	They supported the project because it was new and interesting to them. Our most discouragement was to find enough time to work together with every ones schedule.
N	Once the teams direction had been decided both the adult and youth partners had to discuss the particulars to accommodate scheduling and resources.

The respondents with the most positive statements indicated a cooperative and supportive relationship between the youth and the adults. Working with youth can serve to enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the project (Innovation Center, 2003). Respondents J, and M identified time as a constraint that limited the project. Time was identified by the Innovation Center (2003) as a disadvantage of implementing youth-adult partnerships. It takes more time for a youth leader to partner with youth than it does to make a decision and implement that decision.

The identified discouragement to the partnership was that the youth either lost interest or did not show up at the meetings or work days. Respondent F stated,

The adult team members supported the project by providing food for the children and providing a lot of encouragement and thanks. The youth supported doing the project, but their enthusiasm declined possibly as a result of not having a lot of variation within the project or ability to give a lot of input in the project objectives or overall plan.

The respondent identified the problem in their statement that the youth did not give a lot of input into the project objectives or overall plan. It was not a youth-adult partnership if the youth are not involved in the decision making process. A youth-adult partnership was a balance between youth involvement and adult involvement, but most importantly the youth and adults work together to reach the desired goals (Jones & Perkins, 2000). Youth engagement in the decision making process can strengthen the organizations projects (Wright, 2000).

Objective 3 Summary and Discussion

Youth respondents identified two obstacles through the quantitative data that keep youth from fully participating in youth-adult partnerships. “Not much time after homework and other activities” was identified by 68.8% of the youth respondents. The second most identified obstacle was the “Meeting not at a good time”. This obstacle was selected by 50% of the youth participants, only 25% of the adults identified this as an obstacle.

The two most identified obstacles by the adult participants were, “Not much time after homework and other activities,” and “Transportation to meetings”. These two obstacles were selected by 87.5% of the adult respondents. “Parents don’t help get youth to the meeting” was selected by 62.5% of the adults. This was followed by 50% of the adults reported that youth would “Rather be with friends.” Only 12.5% of the youth responded to “Rather be with friends”.

This data would indicate the greatest obstacle was a lack of time after homework and other activities. It could also be concluded that the meeting not being at a good time may be the cause of the transportation obstacle, and the parents not helping the youth get to the meeting. The Innovation Center (2003) identified transportation as a need youth may have to participate and contribute to a project.

The respondents with the most positive statements indicated a cooperative and supportive relationship between the youth and the adults. One respondent stated, “Youth and adult team members supported the project by committing to it and fulfilling their responsibilities to make sure that the project was completed.” Another respondent said, “The youth love to test wells and visit with people. They have helped decide the direction the team will take in the coming months.” Working with youth can serve to enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the project (Innovation Center, 2003).

Two respondents identified time as a constraint that limited the project. Time was identified by the Innovation Center (2003) as a disadvantage of implementing youth-adult partnerships. It takes more time for a youth leader to partner with youth than it does to make a decision and implement that decision. An additional identified discouragement to the partnership was that the youth either lost interest or did not show up at the meetings

or work days, as one adult described, “When the project was presented, all team members were supportive of the efforts; however, time, and travel constraints limited the success of the project.”

Objective 4: To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills

Qualitative Findings Objective 4

The final question on the Adult Participant Report was “What would you recommend to improve the experience of working within a youth-adult partnership?” The results were given in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25

Qualitative Adult Report Summary - Question 7

What would you recommend to improve the experience of working within a youth-adult partnership?

Respondent	Response
A	Working with something besides water well testing. This is too repetitive; we tend to do the same things over and over again. Youth became discouraged, lost interest
B	More adults to participate
C	No changes needed.
D	My youth were all older – 16 years and up. I would to have younger teens involved also. None came to the meetings, but hopefully we can get them to attend future meetings.
E	Making sure that all adults allowed youth to have an equal part of all decisions.
F	I think that this project was a really good idea, and a lot of people in my county were very thankful for this project. I think this was a good project to connect adults and children in a worthwhile community project. However, I would try to find something more exciting in the youth’s eyes to improve youth participation in the project. I would recommend that the project allow for more youth input so that they would not lose interest in the project.
G	Have more formal planning meetings.

I	Stressing the need for these partnerships to be used more so that the youth become more confident in speaking out and working in the youth- adult partnership
J	YAP's (Youth-Adult Partnerships) are a great way to enhance activities and learning for both entities. However, curriculum (or the lack of youth user friendly curriculum) plays a major role in how successful a program will be. Furthermore, with all of the other opportunities available to youth today (sports, cheering, band, choir, boy/girl scouts, etc.) in conjunction with parents/adults also being extremely busy with work/family/and "Keeping up with the Jones's", limits the amount of participation. In this county, there are an abundance of activities/events in which YAP's are incorporated, but it seems to always be the same people assisting/volunteering
K	Come up with ways to get the leaders and adults to believe in what we are trying to do because ultimately they are the ones that help promote it and bring the kids to the activities. The youth are great when they show up I just need to get them there.
L	In this case I would find something of more interest
M	To make sure that the project is interesting to all that are participating.
N	Nothing that's exactly what a 4-H Educator is supposed to be working towards.

Two respondents, C, and N, suggested that no changes were needed in the program. Four respondents, A, F, L, and M, indicated that the project needed to be more interesting for all the participants. Three respondents, E, I, and J, suggested the team work more as a youth-adult partnership in decision making process. The last three respondents, B, D, and J, indicated they needed more participation in the project.

Respondent F stated,

I think that this project was a really good idea, and a lot of people in my county were very thankful for this project. I think this was a good project to connect adults and children in a worthwhile community project. However, I would try to find something more exciting in the youths' eyes to improve youth participation

in the project. I would recommend that the project allow for more youth input so that they would not lose interest in the project.

Objective 4 Summary and Discussion

A true partnership is one in which each party has the opportunity to make suggestions, decisions, and the contribution of each was recognized (Norman, 2001). The responses indicate that many of the recommendations for improvement in the program extend from a lack of a true partnership between the youth and adult participants.

The data reports the project needed: to be more interesting, more participation, to work more as a youth-adult partnership, or didn't need a change. Three of these issues may have been resolved by incorporating more youth involvement in the project design and decision-making process. The youth-adult partnership does not exist when adults discount youth input (Camino, 2000). The following two statements from participants illustrate this point, "Making sure that all adults allowed youth to have an equal part of all decisions," "Stressing the need for these partnerships to be used more so that the youth become more confident in speaking out and working in the youth- adult partnership." Further development of participants understanding and implementation of a true youth-adult partnership may be the most effective method for improving newly developed partnerships.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the research study, problem, purpose, objectives, methodology, and major findings. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications are presented based upon summarization, data analysis and interpretation from the research design and procedures used in implementing the study.

Purpose of the Study

Leadership development has been and continues to be a major goal of the 4-H Youth Development program. As the world enters the 21st century, many youth programs, including 4-H, are focusing on the effectiveness of their leadership training (Seevers, 1995). A historical approach to teaching leadership to 4-H youth has been through life skill development. Life skills are the abilities that are useful for living everyday life. They include thinking, doing and feeling skills. The overall purpose of the life skills approach to leadership training was the development of skills necessary to perform leadership functions in real life (Miller, 1976).

The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to

discover if there were perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in youth-adult partnerships.

Objectives for this Study

1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults.
3. To discover if there are perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.
4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Design and Procedures

The research was an exploratory study to determine the perceptions of youth and adults involved in partnerships through Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact programs. Specifically the study sought to determine how youth perceived the development of life skills through their involvement in the youth-adult partnership.

The design selected for this research was a mixed method approach. A mixed method design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and

qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2005). The research study consisted of a quantitative pre-survey and post-survey regarding the perceptions of the participants. The study also involved a qualitative assessment. The adult participants were asked to complete an open-ended report of their experiences relating to the project. The ultimate outcome of this approach was to determine the perceptions of the adult participants regarding youth-adult partnerships developing life skills. By assessing both quantitative and qualitative outcomes we can develop a complex picture of the social phenomena (Creswell, 2005). The mixed method design was the most appropriate means to collect the necessary data to analyze the participants' perceptions of developing life skills through youth-adult partnerships.

The survey results were compiled and analyzed to determine the change in the participants' perception of youth-adult partnerships after collaborating in a youth-adult partnership for one year. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the change in the participants' perceptions from the pre-survey to the post-survey. All results from individuals who completed a pre and post survey were compiled and evaluated as a population. These results were summarized for triangulation with the qualitative data.

All surveys were coded and participants' names were kept in strict confidence. Because this survey involved a youth audience, parental consent forms were required before the survey was administered. All forms and procedures were IRB approved.

Scope of the Study

The population for this study was the youth and adults who were involved in the youth-adult teams participating in the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental

Impact team during 2005-2006. The population consisted of teams of youth and adult partners from 16 Oklahoma counties. Study respondents from the 16 locations self-selected to participate. A census was used for the study, therefore sampling was not required.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Population of the Study

The original group of youth, County Extension Educators, and volunteers who took the pre-survey consisted of 36 youth and 9 adults. There were additional educators involved who chose not to participate in the pre-surveys. However, after the program, several of these educators did complete an Adult Participant Report. Following is the number of participants whose data was analyzed in the findings; 16 youth completed the pre-post surveys, 8 adults completed the pre-post surveys, and 14 adults completed an Adult Participant Report.

There were 14 total adults who completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey, or the Adult Report. Fourteen adult participants completed the Adult Report while 8 completed both the pre-survey and post-survey. These adults were all involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 8 male and 6 female adult participants, the average age was 39.35, ranging from 25 to 53 years old. All of the participants were Caucasian. The adult participants had been involved in 4-H from 0 to 26 years with an average of 13.50 years. The majority of these adults (71.5%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

There were 16 total youth who completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey. These youth were involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 11 boys and 5 girls, with the average age of 14.5, ranging from 12 to 18 years old. Fourteen of the participants were Caucasian, one Hispanic and one indicated “other”. The youth participants had been involved in 4-H from 2 to 8 years with an average of 5.19 years. The majority of these youth (56.35%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

For the youth, 68.8% indicated they had “Some” experience working in a youth-adult partnership, while 62.5% of the adults indicated they had “A lot” of experience working in youth-adult partnerships.

Objective 1: To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.

The programs which gave the youth the opportunity to partner and help decide the direction of their program were more successful than the programs that tried to force the team into a specific project area. Norman (2001) stated a youth-adult partnership is one in which adults work in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs, and policies affecting youth.

The responses from question 1 on the qualitative Adult Participant Report indicated the closer the adult works with the youth partners in the design and implementation of the program, the more interest the youth will show in the project.

Life Skills

According to the triangulation of the findings in the data sources, the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and Organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. Individual life skills results follow:

Life Skills – Leadership

All 14 of the adult respondents indicated on the qualitative Adult Report that the life-skill of *Leadership* was developed through the youth-adult partnership. A respondent stated the youth developed the life skill of *Leadership* through, “communicating with the adults in a role of leadership, and they had to be responsible in their data collection.”

The quantitative questions on the pre-survey and the post-survey resulted in a positive change in the means of the questions related to developing the life skill of *Leadership*. Both the youth and adults reported over a 10% increase in the mean scores from the pre-survey to the post-survey on two of the questions related to the life skill of *Leadership*. The most notable differences were the questions which indicated youth were given the chance to share their feelings about things that mattered to them, and the youth's thoughts, ideas and suggestions were listened to by the other team members.

Therefore, there was a positive relationship between youth participating in a true youth-adult partnership and youth enhancing the life skill of *Leadership*.

Life Skills – Cooperation

The qualitative analysis illustrated that 13 of the 14 adult respondents reported *Cooperation* as a life skill developed through the environmental program. The participants stated that the, “Youth and adults learned to work closely together to complete tasks” while another respondent stated, “The children had to cooperate with myself, with each other and with the adults while collecting data together and making decisions on which wells to test.”

The quantitative survey questions related to the life skill of *Cooperation* indicated a small percentage drop in the level of cooperation in the pre-survey and post-survey means; however the change was less than 4%. The one exception to this drop in perception was the youth response to the question, “How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions?” The change in the mean response to this question was a notable 15% increase in the perception of the youth in how the adults value the thoughts and opinions of the youth.

Therefore, there was a mixed relationship between the qualitative and the quantitative responses of the enhancement of the life skill of *Cooperation*. Even though the quantitative values indicated a negative change, the identifiers associated with the values remained as positive responses to the survey questions. The qualitative data did indicate an enhancement in the youths’ development of the life skill of *Cooperation*.

Life Skills – Contributions to Group Efforts

The qualitative analysis of *Contributions of group efforts* illustrated that 10 respondents indicated on the Adult Report form that the youth partners developed this life skill. A respondent stated this was their lowest scorer of the life skills while another respondent stated the partners developed great working relationships with each other.

On the quantitative surveys, all the adult respondents indicated a positive change. The survey question, “How often do youth have specific assignments on the team” received mixed responses from the youth and the adults. The youth indicated a negative percent change in the pre-survey and post-survey means while the adults reported a positive change. The question, “How often are youth able to attend the activities planned by the team” received the same mixed response. Both the youth and adults agreed that the other youth team members were positive and responsive to the needs and questions of the other youth.

The results of the life skill of *Contributions to group efforts* were questionable as to whether this life skill was enhanced through the participation in a youth-adult partnership.

Life Skills – Accepting Differences

Only five of the 14 respondents identified this life skill as one developed through the program. An adult respondent stated, “I don’t think this was an issue that was dealt with in the program.” This may indicate the youth could learn this skill under different circumstances. On the quantitative Adult Participant Reports there was very little change in the mean scores. The findings for the life skill of *Accepting Differences* were

inconclusive due to the lack of the identification of this life skill on the Adult Reports and the absences of change in the mean scores on the quantitative survey responses.

Life Skills – Service Learning

This life skill was reported by 12 of the 14 adult respondents on the Adult Report as a skill developed through the project. A common theme emerged through the qualitative data that the youth learned the importance and value of working with clientele throughout the community.

The quantitative data questions corresponding to *Service Learning* reported almost a 9% increase in the youth response to “learn new skills,” which correlate with over a 6% increase in the adult values. The adults also reported over a 9% increase in the mean value to the question that the youth, “feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community,” this value corresponded to over a 6% increase in the youth perception.

Therefore this data indicates an enhancement in the youths’ development of the life skill of *Service Learning*.

Life Skills – Planning and Organizing

This life skill was identified by nine of the 14 respondents on the qualitative Adult Report. The participants’ responses emerged into a consistent theme that the youth learned to develop a plan and a timeline to accomplish their tasks.

On the pre-survey and the post-survey the respondents were asked to base their answers on ‘how worried’ they were these activities might interfere with: “their school schedule and activities,” “their family time,” and “their personal free time.”

The quantitative data indicated the youth had a notable increase in response means of 24.56% that they were worried this project would interfere with their school schedule and activities. The youth also indicated over a 16% increase in their concern with the project interfering with their family life.

The adult respondents had lower values on the corresponding questions. The adults indicated a 12.85% increase in how worried the youth were the project would interfere with the youths’ personal free time.

Therefore the results indicated the youth participants enhanced their life skill of *Planning and Organizing*. The results indicated the youth became more concerned about their schedules from the beginning to the end of the project. This finding might be interpreted the youth realized to what extent their time was limited. Through the qualitative Adult Reports the adults stated the youth increased their skills in *Planning and Organizing*.

Objective 2: To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults.

The responses by the youth to quantitative questions regarding their role on the team indicate that the youth felt an equal partnership with the adults. A notable change from an adult-led collaboration to a youth-adult partnership was evident by the over 30%

increase in the response to the question regarding receiving coaching from other youth on the team. The youth expected to receive coaching from the adults, it would appear that coaching from each other may have been a new concept. The adult responses to these same questions fell in the “sometimes” or “often” categories. This was an indicator that the adults were open to the youth choosing and changing their role on the team, and the youth being given more responsibility, or coaching each other and serving in a leadership role.

The adult participants were asked to, “Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s) and your team.” The general responses indicated an equal partnership between the youth and adults. One respondent stated, “The youth and adults work to have an equal relationship. At first the youth wanted the adults to take the lead but once we started an equal relationship formed quickly.” This response was the most representative of teams exhibiting the qualities of youth-adult partnerships.

The adult respondents also suggested through the qualitative data the adults provided guidance and teaching to the team by drawing on their past experiences. This corresponds with Jones and Perkins (2000) idea that without adult guidance youth led projects may decline into negative and undesirable behaviors. However, it must be noted that the data also indicated that 100% of the teams did not function in this manner. There were 14 different teams in this study; they all seemed to operate somewhat differently.

Objective 3: To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.

Youth respondents identified two obstacles through the quantitative data that keep youth from fully participating in youth-adult partnerships: not much time after homework and other activities, and the meetings were not at a good time. These obstacles were selected by 50% of the youth participants. The two most identified obstacles (that may keep youth from participating in a youth-adult partnership) by the adult participants were: not much time after homework and other activities, and transportation to meetings. These two obstacles were selected by 87.5% of the adult respondents. Fifty percent of the adults reported that youth would rather be with their friends. Although it was notable that only 12.5% of the youth indicated they would rather be with their friends.

The results indicated the greatest obstacle was not much time after homework and other activities. It could also be concluded that the meeting should be scheduled at a time convenient for the youth and at a time when the youth have transportation to the meetings.

Two respondents identified time as a constraint that limited the project. Time was identified by the Innovation Center (2003) as a disadvantage of implementing youth-adult partnerships. It takes more time for a youth leader to partner with youth than it does to make a decision and implement that decision.

An additional identified discouragement to the youth-adult partnership was that the youth either lost interest, or did not show up at the meetings or work days, as one

adult described, “When the project was presented, all team members were supportive of the efforts; however, time, and travel constraints limited the success of the project.”

Many of these obstacles, such as time, transportation and interest, could be improved by including youth in the planning process, especially when scheduling meeting times and designing the project.

Objective 4: To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data related to this objective; *no changes* should be made in the program, the project needed to be *more interesting* for all the participants, the project needed *more participation* in the decision making process, and the teams should work *more as a youth adult partnership*. By incorporating more youth involvement in the project design and decision-making process, as a *true youth-adult partnership* this project may have resolved the two issues of: needed to be *more interesting* and needed *more participation*. Which only leaves the first theme of the project did not need any changes.

The youth-adult partnership does not exist when adults discount youth input (Camino, 2000). The following two statements from participants illustrate this point, “Making sure that all adults allowed youth to have an equal part of all decisions,” and “Stressing the need for these partnerships to be used more so that the youth become more confident in speaking out and working in the youth-adult partnership.” Further development of participants understanding and implementation of a true youth-adult

partnership may be the most effective method for improving newly developed partnerships.

Recommendations

Objective 1 - To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships

According to the triangulation of the findings in the data sources, the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and Organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. The other measured life skills of *Contributions to Group Efforts* and *Accepting Differences* were not clearly enhanced through this program effort.

Therefore it is recommended that before beginning 4-H programming utilizing youth-adult partnerships as a youth development tool, specific life skills should be targeted for enhancement through the program. Once these skills are targeted the participants in the program should receive programmatic training through youth, adult volunteer or County Extension Educator youth-adult partnership workshops to help them develop these skills within the youth participants.

Objective 2 - To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults

Through this research there was evidence that many of the youth participants did perceive themselves as equal team members when participating in this youth-adult partnership. However, other youth may not have perceived themselves as equal partners and dropped out of the program or they may have just lost interest in the project or 4-H.

It is recommended that before initiating youth-adult partnership programming all the adults involved understand the concept of a youth-adult partnership and demonstrate a true appreciation for the youth partners and their opinions. Once the adults involved reach this understanding then the youth may feel appreciated and view themselves as equal team members.

Objective 3 - To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships

The research data generated by this study indicated the greatest perceived obstacle that kept youth from engaging was “not much time after homework and other activities.” It could also be concluded that the “meeting not being at a good time” may be the cause of the transportation obstacle. The Innovation Center (2003) identified transportation as a need youth may have to participate and contribute to a project.

It is recommended that the youth-adult partnership team schedule meetings at a time that was convenient to all participants. In order to overcome these identified obstacles, the youth must be involved in setting the meeting schedule.

Objective 4 - To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills

The data indicated the project needed to be more interesting, needed more participation, needed to work more as a youth-adult partnership, or didn't need a change. By incorporating more youth involvement in the project design and decision-making process, this project may have resolved these two issues.

It is recommended that all participants in newly formed youth-adult partnerships receive training on how to implement and participate equally in this type of programming.

Staff development and 4-H Leader training should be conducted to ensure greater participation by youth in planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities. Adults may need to be taught to share authority roles, and respect youth for the contributions they can make in the leadership process (SeEVERS & Dormody, 1995, ¶ 12).

Training can help the youth and adult participants improve their participation, working relationships, and partnership in this type of effort.

Implications of the study

The implications of this study could affect how the Oklahoma 4-H program uses the youth development tool of youth-adult partnerships. Youth-adult partnerships do have the ability to enhance the life skill development in 4-H youth.

Oklahoma 4-H should implement this type of programming, but training should be provided to all the partners involved prior to the development of the youth-adult relationship. Youth should understand they have an equal voice in the program design and implementation. Adults should understand the special needs of youth, such as meeting schedules and transportation to events. Adults should also understand it is imperative they place a high value on the youths' opinion and participation in the project development. Both the youth and adults should understand that there is a balance in a youth-adult partnership where the youth and the adults have an equal voice. This point of balanced leadership and commitment is the ideal context for the development of life skills within the youth partners. According to the research and the literature, youth-adult partnership can enhance youth development programs, but to be effective they must be conducted properly.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. It is recommended that continued research be conducted on the enhancement of life skills in youth through youth-adult partnerships. Life skills should be targeted for development and a factorial study could be conducted to determine which life skills are effectively developed through youth-adult partnership programming. A study of a larger population might allow the research to determine which life

skills, if any, are developed through youth-adult partnership programming. This research might provide additional information regarding the life skills of *Contributions to Group Efforts* and *Accepting Differences* which the research indicated were not enhanced through this project.

2. It is recommended that further research be conducted into the effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships within the 4-H Youth Development program. This research could study to what extent youth-adult partnerships enhance youth development through an experimental design involving youth working in a partnership and youth who are not involved in a youth-adult partnership. An experimental design would allow the research to compare youth who dropped out of a youth-adult partnership with nonparticipating youth to determine how they were affected by the program.
3. It is recommended that further research be conducted to study the obstacles to developing youth-adult partnerships and determine methods for overcoming the identified obstacles. This research could look at the different perceptions of youth, volunteers and staff who participate in a youth-adult partnership and how each group views the challenges of this type of youth development programming.
4. It is recommended that research be conducted on how prior training affects newly formed youth-adult partnerships, and if prior training enhances the development of youth-adult partnerships. This study should examine partnerships involving,

not only youth, but also County Extension Educators and 4-H Volunteers who work with youth in partnership. A post-then instrument would allow for a larger population to be involved in the study, by including all the participants not just the participants in the original training.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2005
IRB Application No AG0544
Proposal Title: Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development through 4H
Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 5/16/2006

Principal Investigator(s)

Jeff Sallee
205 4H Youth Developme
Stillwater, OK 74078

Charles Cox
205 4-H Bldg.
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

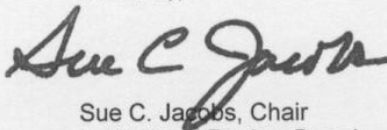
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, emct@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2006 Protocol Expires: 4/24/2007
IRB Application No: AG0544
Proposal Title: Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development through 4H

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)
Continuation

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s) :

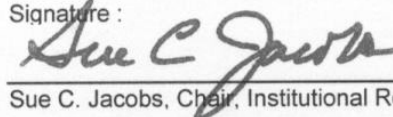
Jeff Sallee
205 4H Youth Developme
Stillwater, OK 74078

Charles Cox
205 4-H Bldg.
Stillwater, OK 74078

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office **MUST** be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

Signature :



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Date

APPENDIX B

ADULT CONSENT FORM

OSU	
Institutional Review Board	
Approved	4/25/06
Expires	4/25/07
Initials	AS
A.D. OSU	

Date, 2006

Adult Informed Consent Form:
**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
 development through 4-H**

Dear Adult Participant:

Hello, my name is Jeff Sallee and I am an Assistant Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development at Oklahoma State University. Currently, I am conducting an in-depth evaluation study of Youth-Adult, focusing on the 4H20, Environmental Educations program initiative. The Youth-Adult partnership study is part of a national evaluation project of the *Engaging Youth Serving Communities* (EYSC) initiative. This study entitled, "**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill development through 4-H**", is about youth, adults, and their experiences when working together on community projects. The benefits of this study include participants measuring the quality of their own activities and to provide feedback on issues affecting youth and adults engaged in community efforts.

I am asking you to participate in this study, because you are currently working on a community group or team that involves youth and adults. You must also be 18 years of age or older to participate as an adult. If you agree to participate, you will be completing a survey instrument at the beginning of the project and again one year later at the end of the project. This survey asks you to rate youth involvement, adult involvement, and the youth-adult interaction within your youth-adult partnership. It will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete this survey. This survey will be given to you at the beginning of the program and a second time one year later.

- You can decide if you want to participate. You will also be given the option to refuse to answer any of the questions or withdraw at any time.
- If you choose to participate, you will take part in a 20-minute survey to provide us with an understanding of your experiences with this program. This survey will be given to you two times, once at the beginning of the program and again in one year.
- **After completing the second survey, you will be asked to complete a short report, which will consist of several open-ended questions regarding your experiences with the program.**
- The survey questions ask about how the program worked (e.g., did adults listen to the young people, were young people allowed to make decisions within the program, did they feel safe?).
- The survey responses will be entered into a computer by the Program Coordinator and the data will be analyzed after the second survey is given. In addition to the Oklahoma 4-H program the data will be sent to the University of Arizona where it will be added to a national database of surveys.

- There are no known risks or direct benefits to those who participate in this evaluation project.

The evaluation team will not use your name or other identifying information in any report or document. We will use an ID number to record your responses. The list connecting your name to the ID number will be kept in a locked file in my office. I will be the only person who can access the information that will correlate your name with your survey responses. This information will only be kept in order your survey responses from the first to second survey. The information obtained from the surveys will only be available to the evaluation team. The data will be securely stored until December 31, 2010 at which time it will be destroyed. There are no risks to you in sharing this information with us.

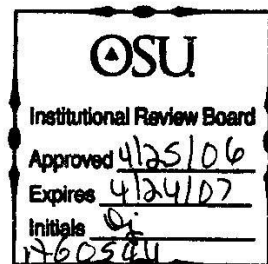
In addition, if you choose to withdraw from the study, you have the right to tell us not to use any information that you have given us. You also have the right to receive a copy of the evaluation report if you so choose. Participation in this survey does not affect your participation in the program.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 405/744-8885, Address 205 4-H Youth Development Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. You can also reach me by email at: sallee@okstate.edu.

For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Sincerely,

Jeff Sallee
Assistant Extension Specialist
Oklahoma State University,
4-H Youth Development



Adult Informed Consent Form:
Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Adult Informed Consent Form
(To be returned to Jeff Sallee)**

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form had been given to me.

Signature(s):

Adult participant

Date



Oklahoma State University Survey Consent form:
**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H**

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Adult Informed Consent Form
(To be kept by Participant)**

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form had been given to me.

Signature(s):

Adult participant

Date



APPENDIX C

YOUTH ASSENT FORM

OSU	
Institutional Review Board	
Approved	4/25/06
Expires	4/24/07
Initials	J
A-80344	

Youth Informed Assent Form:

Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill development through 4-H

Dear Youth Participant:

Hello, my name is Jeff Sallee and I am an Assistant Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development at Oklahoma State University. Currently, I am conducting a research study of Youth-Adult partnerships, focusing on the 4H20, Environmental Education program. The Youth-Adult partnership study is part of a national evaluation project of the *Engaging Youth Serving Communities* (EYSC) initiative. This study entitled, **“Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill development through 4-H”**, is about youth, adults, and their experiences when working together on community projects. The benefits of this study include participants measuring the quality of their own activities and to provide feedback on issues affecting youth and adults involved in community efforts.

I am asking you to participate in this study, because you are currently working on a community group or team that involves youth and adults. If you agree to participate, you will be completing a survey at the beginning of the project and again one year later at the end of the project. This survey asks you to rate youth involvement, adult involvement, and the youth-adult relationships within your youth-adult partnership. It will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete this survey. This survey will be given to you at the beginning of the program and a second time one year later.

- You can decide if you want to participate. You will also be given the option to refuse to answer any of the questions or withdraw or quit at any time.
- If you choose to participate, you will take part in a 20-minute survey to provide us with an understanding of your experiences with this program. This survey will be given to you two times, once at the beginning of the program and again in one year.
- **After completing the second survey, youth will be placed with other team members from their county and asked to respond to several open-ended questions about their experiences with the program. The answers will be recorded as group responses by a facilitator.**
- The survey questions ask about how the program worked (e.g., did adults listen to the young people, were young people allowed to make decisions within the program, did they feel safe?).
- The survey responses will be entered into a computer by the Program Coordinator and the data will be analyzed after the second survey is given. In addition to the Oklahoma 4-H program the data will be sent to the University of Arizona where it will be added to a national database of surveys.
- There are no known risks or direct benefits to those who participate in this evaluation project.

The evaluation team will not use your name or other identifying information in any report or document. We will use an ID number to record your responses. The list connecting

your name to the ID number will be kept in a locked file in my office. I will be the only person who can access the information that will correlate your name with your survey responses. This information will only be kept in order your survey responses from the first to second survey. The information obtained from the surveys will only be available to the evaluation team. The data will be securely stored until December 31, 2010 at which time it will be destroyed. There are no risks to you in sharing this information with us.

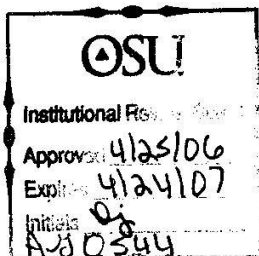
In addition, if you choose to withdraw or quit this study, you have the right to tell us not to use any information that you have given us. You also have the right to receive a copy of the evaluation report if you so choose. Participation in this survey does not affect your participation in the educational program.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 405/744-8885, Address 205 4-H Youth Development Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. I can also be reached by email at: salleej@okstate.edu.

For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Sincerely,

Jeff Sallee
Assistant Extension Specialist
Oklahoma State University,
4-H Youth Development



Youth Informed Assent Form:
Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Youth Informed Assent Form
(To be returned to Jeff Sallee)**

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form had been given to me.

Signature(s):

Youth participant

Date



Youth Informed Assent Form:
Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Youth Informed Assent Form
(To be kept by Participant)**

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form had been given to me.

Signature(s):

Youth participant

Date



APPENDIX D

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM



Date, 2006

Parental Consent Form:
Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill development through 4-H

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Hello, my name is Jeff Sallee and I am an Assistant Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development at Oklahoma State University. Currently, I am conducting an in-depth evaluation study of Youth-Adult, focusing on the 4H20, Environmental Education program initiative. The Youth-Adult partnership study is part of a national evaluation project of the *Engaging Youth Serving Communities* (EYSC) initiative. This study entitled, "**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill development through 4-H**", is about youth, adults, and their experiences when working together on community projects. The benefits of this study include participants measuring the quality of their own activities and to provide feedback on issues affecting youth and adults engaged in community efforts.

I am asking for your permission to allow your child to participate in this study, because he/she is currently working as a member of a youth-adult partnership or team. The partnership or team is involved in projects such as well-water assessment, cleaning stream banks or other environmental projects. There is very little research available on what youth and adults gain from working together as partners. Your child's participation in this study will provide information on what it takes for youth and adults to successfully accomplish common goals when working together. Another benefit of this study is that it gives young people, like your child, an opportunity to share their views on how they feel about their communities. Participation is voluntary. If your child participates, he/she does not have to answer any questions that he/she does not wish to answer.

Whether or not you allow your young person to participate in this evaluation is your decision. Your child will be a participant in the educational program with or without completing the evaluation survey.

- Your young person can decide if he/she wants to participate. Young people will also be given the option to refuse to answer any of the questions or withdraw at any time.
- If you allow your young person to participate, he/she will take part in a 30-minute survey to provide us with an understanding of his or her experiences with this program. This survey will be given to your child two times, once at the beginning of the program and again in one year.

- The survey questions ask about how the program worked (e.g., did adults listen to the young people, were young people allowed to make decisions within the program, did they feel safe?).
- **After completing the second survey, youth will be placed with other team members from their county and asked to respond to several open-ended questions about their experiences with the program. The answers will be recorded as group responses by a facilitator.**
- The survey responses will be entered into a computer by the Program Coordinator and the data will be analyzed after the second survey is given. In addition to the Oklahoma 4-H program the data will be sent to the University of Arizona where it will be added to a national database of surveys.
- There are no known risks or direct benefits to those who participate in this evaluation project.

The evaluation team will not use your child's name or other identifying information in any report or document. We will use an ID number to record her/his responses. The data will be securely stored on my computer in a password protected file. I will be the only person who can access the information that will correlate your child's name with his / her survey responses. This information will only be kept in order his / her survey responses from the first to second survey. All this information will only be stored until December 31, 2010 at which time it will be destroyed. There are no risks to your child in sharing this information with us.

In addition, you and your child have the right to withdraw from the study. Participation in the study will not affect your child's participation in the educational program. You and your child have the right to tell us not to use any information that has been given to us. **You also have the right to receive a copy of the evaluation report if you so choose.** Parental consent is required for your child's participation in this study. If you wish to consent to allow your child to participate, sign your name on the appropriate form, indicate the date on the enclosed form and return to Jeff Sallee via your County Extension Educator. A second copy of the signature sheet is for your records.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 405/744-8885, Address 205 4-H Youth Development Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. You can also reach me by email at: salleej@okstate.edu.

For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Sincerely,

Jeff Sallee



Assistant Extension Specialist
Oklahoma State University,
4-H Youth Development

OSU	
Institutional Review Board	
Approved	4/25/06
Expires	4/24/07
Initials	di
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Oklahoma State University Survey Consent form:
**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H**

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Parent Informed Consent Form #1
(To be kept by the Parent)**

Parental Signature for Minor,

I have read and fully understand the consent form. As parent or guardian, I
authorize _____, (print name) to participate in the
described research.

Signature(s):

Parent

Date



Oklahoma State University Survey Consent form:
**Perceived effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships on enhancing life skill
development through 4-H**

**Youth-Adult Partnerships
Parent Informed Consent Form #1
(To be returned to Jeff Sallee)**

Parental Signature for Minor,

I have read and fully understand the consent form. As parent or guardian. I
authorize _____, (print name) to participate in the
described research.

Signature(s):

Parent

Date



APPENDIX E

YOUTH SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Youth in Governance (Youth/Adult Partnerships) Youth Survey - Version 2

Today's Date _____

Part I: Experience

- 1) How much experience do you have being involved in a Youth Adult Partnership?
(check only one) None A little Some A lot

- 2) How much experience do you have on planning committees or decision-making boards with youth? None A little Some A lot

- 3) Which of these statements about **youth-adult partnerships** describes you? (check all that apply)
 - I've never participated with adults in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I would like to serve with adults in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I currently serve with adults in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I have plans now to join and serve on a board or committee with adults in equal partnership
 - I plan to increase my current level of participation on a board or committee with adults in equal partnership

PART II. INVOLVEMENT ON TEAM

Directions: Please answer the following questions using this scale:

Within the project...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1) How often are you given the chance to share your feelings and ideas about things that matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) How often are your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions listened to by the other team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) How often are your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions taken seriously by the other team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) How often do you have the opportunity to discuss concerns about decisions the team makes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Within the project...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
5) How often do youth have an equal voice in the decision-making process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) How often are adults on the team positive and responsive to your needs and questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) How often are you able to attend the activities planned by the team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) How often do you have specific tasks or assignments on the team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) How often do adults on the team order or command you to follow their demands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) How often are other youth team members positive and responsive to your needs and questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions using this scale:	Not at All	Rarely	Some	More Often Than Not	A lot
11) How much do the adult team members trust the youth team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) How much can you trust the adult team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) How much can you trust other youth team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions using this scale:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
14) How much do you feel you have access to the information needed to participate fully in the team decision-making process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15) Is there time for team members to discuss and reflect on problems that arise?
 (check one) ___ yes ___ no (skip to #16)

If yes, please answer the following questions using this scale. For no, skip to #16	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
15a) How often are you engaged in the discussion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15b) How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15c) How often do you contribute without being prompted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16) Since joining the team, have you established a strong positive relationship with an adult on the team? (check one) ___ yes ___ no

17) Since joining the team, have you established a strong positive relationship with another youth on the team? (check one) ___ yes ___ no

Directions: For the following questions, please indicate the amount of benefit to you. Use the following scale:

Your involvement in this project helps you:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18) Learn new skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) Feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve your community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20) Gain support from others in your community for your own goals and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21) Network with others in your community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22) What balance of costs and benefits do you expect personally from involvement with this project (select one):

- ___ Many more costs than the benefits
- ___ Somewhat more costs than benefits
- ___ About even
- ___ Somewhat more benefits than costs
- ___ Many more benefits than costs

Directions: For the next questions, please indicate the amount of concern you have. Use the following scale:

How worried are you about how involvement with this project might interfere with:	Always Worried	Worried Most of the Time	Worried About Half the Time	Worried a Little Bit	Never Worried
23) Your school schedule and responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24) Your family life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25) Personal free time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26) What skills, if any, are you learning by being on the team? (Check all that apply)

- Teamwork skills
- Problem solving skills
- Evaluation and Assessment skills
- Planning skills
- Communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Critical thinking skills

27) What keeps you from participating 100% with the project team? (Check all that apply)

- Not much time after homework and other activities
- I would like to serve with youth in equal partnership on a board or committee
- Adults don't respect youth on the committee
- Rather be with friends
- Transportation to meetings
- Not so interesting
- Parents don't help youth get to the meeting
- Meeting not at a good time
- Other, please specify: _____

28) How interesting are the events or meetings? (Select one)

- Very Somewhat Not interesting Very boring

29) How much fun are the events or meetings? (Select one)

- A lot of fun Somewhat fun Not very fun Not at all fun

30) Do you think that this project is working? (Select one)
 Yes, definitely! Probably Maybe I doubt it No way

PART III. ROLE ON THE TEAM

31) Were you able to choose your role on the team? (check one) yes no

32) Do you feel that you can change your role on the team? (check one) yes no

33) Are you able to take on roles over time that gave you more responsibility?
(check one) yes no

34) Do you receive coaching or assistance from another youth on the team?
(check one) yes no

35) Do you receive coaching or assistance from an adult on the team?
(check one) yes no

PART IV: Describe Yourself

For each of the following items, please mark the one response that best describes you.

36) About how much time per month do you spend doing volunteer/community service work (select one):
 None
 About 1 hour
 2-10 hours
 11-20 hours
 More than 20 hours

37) I am a: (check one) male female

38) How old are you? _____ years old.

- 39) How do you describe yourself? (check one)
- African-American, not of Hispanic origin
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic
 - White, not of Hispanic origin
 - Other- please specify _____
- 40) I am a: (check one)
- paid staff member on this project
 - volunteer
 - other, please specify: _____
- 41) I participated in a training that focused on:
- 4-H Afterschool
 - Youth Adult Partnerships
 - Other, please specify: _____
- 42) How many months have you been involved in this program? _____ months
- 43) How many years have you been in 4-H? _____ years
- 44) If you have been involved in other youth activities and organizations in the past, please indicate below **how many years** you have been involved:
- Sports
 - Student Government
 - Drama or Dance
 - Academic Club
 - Pep Club
 - Band or Symphony
 - Community organization (i.e., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, Girls Inc., Junior Achievement) please specify: _____
 - Youth group at church, synagogue, or mosque
 - Other youth activities or organizations, please specify: _____

Thank you for providing this information!

APPENDIX F

ADULT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Youth in Governance (Youth/Adult Partnerships)

Adult Survey - Version 2

Today's Date _____

Part I: Experience

1. How much experience do you have being involved in a Youth Adult Partnership?
(check only one) None A little Some A lot

2. How much experience do you have on planning committees or decision-making boards with youth? (check only one) None A little Some A lot

3. Which of these statements about youth-adult partnerships describes you? (check all that apply)
 - I've never participated with youth in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I would like to serve with youth in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I currently serve with youth in equal partnership on a board or committee
 - I have plans now to join and serve on a board or committee with youth in equal partnership
 - I plan to increase my current level of participation on a board or committee with youth in equal partnership

PART II. Beliefs about youth's involvement

Directions: Please answer the following questions using this scale:					
On most boards and committees...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1) How often are youth given the chance to share their feelings and ideas about things that matter to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) How often are youth's thoughts, ideas, and suggestions listened to by the other committee members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) How often are youth's thoughts, ideas, and suggestions taken seriously by the other committee members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) How often do youth have the opportunity to discuss concerns about decisions a committee team makes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On most boards and committees...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
5) How often do youth have an equal voice in the decision- making process of the committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) How often are adults on a committee positive and responsive to youth's needs and questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) How often are activities planned by a committee at a time convenient for youth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) How often do youth have specific tasks or assignments on a committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) How often do adults on a committee order or command youth to follow their demands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) How often are youth committee members positive and responsive to another youth member's needs and questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) How much do adult committee members trust the youth committee members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) How much can youth trust the adult committee members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) How much can youth trust other youth committee members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) How much do youth feel they have access to the information needed to participate fully in the committee decision-making process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How much are the following barriers to youth being involved in a youth adult partnership:	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
15a) Youth's school schedule and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15b) Youth's family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15c) Youth's personal free time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. What keeps youth from participating 100% with the project team?(Check all that apply)

- Not much time after homework and other activities
- I would like to serve with youth in equal partnership on a board or committee
- Adults don't respect youth on the committee
- Rather be with friends
- Transportation to meetings
- Not so interesting
- Parents don't help youth get to the meeting
- Meeting not at a good time
- Other , please specify: _____

17. What skills, if any, are youth learning by being on a community board? (Check all that apply)

- Teamwork skills
- Problem solving skills
- Evaluation and Assessment skills
- Planning skills
- Communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Critical thinking skills

PART III. What I know about youth and adults

Directions: For the following statements, please indicate the amount of agreement you have with the statement. Use the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18) Youth should construct their own beliefs from their own experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) I understand the negative effects of stereotyping youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20) I am aware of the current issues and concerns that are important to young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21) I understand the negative effects of stereotyping adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22) I am aware of the issues and concerns of adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23) I would be welcomed to participate in a youth-adult partnership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24) I have a lot to contribute to my community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART IV: Youth Adult Partnerships

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Directions: Each of the statements below describes a different component of youth adult partnerships. Please use the following scale to indicate *How Often* each statement describes you:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
25) I actively and consistently consult youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26) I actively and consistently involve youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27) I curb inclinations to take over when working with youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28) I listen carefully to young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29) I provide support for young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30) I recognize the value of diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31) I trust youth to handle power responsibly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32) I engage in respectful conversations with youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33) I ensure that youth are involved in meaningful roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: For each statement below, how often do you believe that on most board and committees, the following occurs where youth's involvement in a youth adult partnership helps them to:

	Not at all	Rarely	Some	More often than not	A lot
34a) learn new skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34b) feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34c) gain support from others in their community for their own goals and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34d) network with others in your community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: For each statement below, how often do you believe that on most boards

and committees, the following occurs...

	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	More often than not	A lot
35) Youth are able to <u>choose</u> their role on a board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36) Youth are able to <u>change</u> their role on a board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37) Youth are able to take on roles over time that give them more responsibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38) Youth receive coaching or assistance from another youth on the team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39) Youth receive coaching or assistance from an adult on the team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

40) What balance of costs and benefits should youth expect from involvement with this project (select one):

- Many more costs than benefits
- Somewhat more costs than benefits
- About even
- Somewhat more benefits than costs
- Many more benefits than costs

PART V: About you

For each of the following items, please mark the one response that best describes you.

41) About how much time per month do you spend doing volunteer/community service work (select one):

- None
- About 1 hour
- 2-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- More than 20 hours

42) I am a: (check one) male female

43) How old are you? _____ years old.

44) How do you describe yourself? (check one)

African-American, not of Hispanic origin

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian/Pacific Islander

Hispanic

White, not of Hispanic origin

Other- please specify _____

45) The highest level of formal education I have completed is:

Some high school

High school diploma

GED

Some college/university

Two year college/university associate degree

Four year college/university bachelors degree (BA or BS)

Some college/university graduate work

College/university graduate degree (MA, MS, EdD, or PhD)

College/university professional degree (MD, JD, etc.)

46) I am a: (check one) paid staff member volunteer staff member

47) My major role in working with youth is best described as (please remember: mark one response only, the most appropriate response):

Working directly with youth on a daily basis

Supervising/planning individual educational activities for youth

Supervising/planning entire educational programs for youth

Supervising/supporting paid staff working directly with youth

Supervising/supporting un-paid volunteers working directly with youth

Advocating for youth with public/governmental entities

Some other role not described above

please specify briefly _____

48) I participated in a training that focused on:

4-H Afterschool

Youth Adult Partnerships

Other, please specify: _____

49) How many months have you been involved in this program? ____ months

50) How many years have you been involved 4-H? ____ years

51) If you have been involved in other youth activities and organizations in the past, please indicate below **how many years** you have been involved:

- Sports
- Student Government
- Drama or Dance
- Academic Club
- Pep Club
- Band or Symphony
- Community organization (i.e., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, Girls Inc., Junior Achievement) please specify: _____
- Youth group at church, synagogue, or mosque
- Other youth activities or organizations, please specify: _____

Thank you for providing this information!

APPENDIX G

ADULT PARTICIPANT REPORT

Adult Participant Report

(Report to be completed by Adult Team Partner from each participating county)

Your team was charged with working on environmental programs related to water quality. Every team was to test well water and map potential pollutants. Plus, each team was to work together to identify local environmental issues and design a county plan of action to address those issues. The team membership consisted of youth and adults in equal partnership. The answers to these questions will be kept in strict confidence and will not be related back to any specific adult or county team. We are looking for techniques to improve the function of our environmental impact program.

1. On a scale from 1 to 5 (five being the best), how would you rate your team's cooperation in developing your environmental program? Why?

2. Please identify from the list the leadership and life skills your youth team has developed through working with an adult on this project? Describe how each skill was developed?

Life skills:

- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Caring
- Contribution to group efforts
- Nurturing relationships
- Accepting differences
- Wise use of resources
- Learning to learn
- Service learning
- Planning and organizing

3. Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s) and your team?

4. What have your youth partners contributed to the team effort?

5. What have the adult team members (including yourself) contributed to the team effort?

6. Describe how the youth and adult team members supported and / or discouraged the project?

7. What would you recommend to improve the experience of working within a youth-adult partnership?

APPENDIX H

MEMBER CHECK REPORTS

As a team member, I verify that the research was conducted as stated and that the results are representative of what I saw in practice, as a District Specialist.

In counties where the adult fully understood the youth/adult partnership concept, teams functioned effectively – even if they did not particularly like the project selected for formal evaluation. Where the assigned project was part of a total program, or was adapted to better meet youth interests and needs, youth and adults had positive experiences.

Objective 1 – To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.

1. I agree that youth who participated in positive youth/adult partnership situations developed leadership through taking the lead in planning projects, contacting property owners on well assessment.
2. Findings indicate a small drop in level of Cooperation, which as an observer of the program I would attribute to the natural stages of group or team formation as group satisfaction often drops then rises again during the process as team members become comfortable with their roles.
3. I concur that the mixed reports related to the life skill of contribution to group efforts indicate the project had little impact on participants. I would further assert that based on the average age of the youth participants (14.5 years), many were not developmentally ready to think as group members rather than individuals.
4. Since the teams lacked diversity and the demographic make-up of the counties range from 90 to 98 per cent white, they had little opportunity to accept differences, because they were rarely exposed to individuals significantly different from themselves.
5. Well testing and other self-selected projects conducted by the teams did help them develop the life skill of Service Learning
6. Because the project required a significant time commitment from the youth and adults involved, it caused youth to evaluate the amount of time required to participate in not only the activities of the team, but their other activities as well.

Objective 2 – To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults

Teams functioned at widely varying levels. My observations of the teams at work support the research which indicates that initially adults saw and behaved in more of a coaching role than an equal role. In the teams that functioned well, as the youth gained confidence, they became more helpful to each other and contributed to the process in a greater capacity

Objective 3 – To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.

Time management is a consistent problem for busy youth. Since the average age was only 14.5 years, transportation to meetings and projects while parents were at work was

also a concern. The research confirms this was a limiting factor in the success of the project.

Objective 4 – To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills

The research indicates that where the project was not particularly successful, one of the primary reasons was that youth did not find the pre-selected project interesting enough to commit time to it. Team leaders learned that although youth had the opportunity to choose most of the projects they would conduct during the year, adults had a hard time “selling” the well-testing as a part of the total experience.

This research illustrates the need for more staff and volunteer training in how to work with youth as partners rather than directing their activities, as many are accustomed to doing. Before becoming involved in a youth-adult partnership activity, the youth involved need to possess the maturity to think beyond their own needs and they may need some additional training to fully participate.

To Whom It May Concern:

As a proponent of youth-adult partnerships for many years, I am please to see the findings of this research project. I have had the opportunity to observe the project from beginning to end. I helped distribute the pre-post surveys and contacted adult participants to complete their surveys at the end of the project. I also assisted with the planning of environmental subject matter in-service training for both the youth and adults.

Some of the adults were slightly apprehensive to form youth/adult partnership for programming efforts. However, they recruited youth to work with them on environmental education projects and provided feedback on how the partnerships worked.

The adults determined what projects they would conduct before the youth became involved in the partnerships. This fact could explain why some of the youth were not as involved or excited about the projects as others. I also think the adults' attitudes toward the partnership and program topics may have influenced the youth's perception of the partnership. Youth tend to reflect the same actions and attitudes as the adults who serve as their leaders or role models.

From conversations with the youth involved in this research project, they were pleased to be invited to work with adults on educational efforts. They also seemed eager to become partners with adults on other service projects in their home community and county. Their main concern was finding time to take on additional projects.

In discussions with the adults who had successful youth-adult partnerships, they stated that the young people were building their self-esteem. They also mentioned that the youth were feeling more confident while working with adults. The adults tried to work around the schedules of the youth so that more young people could be involved in educational efforts. This contributed to the goal of developing a good youth-adult partnership.

The positive result of this study is to see that the youth want to serve on boards or committees with adults. This will be achieved by increasing their involvement in youth-adult partnerships. However, for this partnership to be successful, I believe that the youth need to be involved in the beginning stages of a project or educational effort. They need to be included in the initial decisions that determine the direction of the project or program.

Everyone, both youth and adults, who want to become involved in true youth-adult partnerships, needs to be trained. It is vital to the success of the partnership and the life skill development of the youth. Good, productive youth-adult partnerships don't happen by chance. This "Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development Through 4-H" research project of Mr. Sallee's reinforces this need.

VITA

Jeffrey Alan Sallee

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS ON
ENHANCING LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH 4-H

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, October 7, 1965, son of Albert C. Sallee and Bertha F. Terry. Husband of Stephanie L. Sallee since August 15, 1989; father to Katelyn Elizabeth, Emily Anne, Tyler Jeffrey and Allie Grace.

Education: Graduated from Sallisaw High School, Sallisaw, Oklahoma, in May, 1984; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University in May 1989; received a Masters of Science degree in Agricultural Education in July, 1995 from Oklahoma State University; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Agricultural Education at Oklahoma State University in May, 2007.

Experience: Employed with Oklahoma State University in the 4-H Youth Development department as an Assistant Extension Specialist with responsibilities in science and technology and Ag in the Classroom. Previously employed by the University of Arkansas, the University of Georgia, and prior experience with Oklahoma State University in 4-H youth development related positions for the past 16 years.

Professional Memberships: Gamma Sigma Delta, Oklahoma Association of Extension 4-H Agents, National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, and Epsilon Sigma Phi an organization of Cooperative Extension Service professionals.

Name: Jeffrey Alan Sallee

Date of Degree: May 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH-ADULT
PARTNERSHIPS ON ENHANCING LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH 4-H

Pages in Study: 170

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover the perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in equal partnerships. Objectives were to: (1) determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Contributions to group efforts, Accepting differences, Service Learning, Planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships, (2) determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults, (3) discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships, and (4) discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Findings and Conclusions: The life skills of: *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. The other measured life skills were not clearly enhanced through this program effort. Therefore it is recommended that before beginning 4-H programming utilizing youth-adult partnerships as a youth development tool, that specific life skills be targeted for enhancement through the program. (2) Through this research there was evidence that many of the youth participants did perceive themselves as equal team members when participating in this youth-adult partnership. It is recommended that all the adults involved understand the concept of a youth-adult partnership. (3) The research data indicated the greatest perceived obstacle that kept youth from engaging was not much time after homework and other activities. In order to overcome these identified obstacles the youth must be involved in setting the meeting schedule. (4) The data reported the project needed to be more interesting, needed more participation, needed to work more as a youth-adult partnership, or didn't need a change. It is recommended that all participants in newly formed youth-adult partnerships receive training on how to implement this type of program, and how to participate equally.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Charles B. Cox
