THE OBSERVED BEHAVIOURAL EFFECTS OF A UNIVERSAL SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

by

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Abstract

In this thesis, I identified and addressed the need for social-emotional skill development in schools by creating and implementing a tailored social-emotional learning program in an inner-city, faith-based school. Evaluation of the program was done by using quantitative and qualitative methods through a questionnaire, survey, and interviews. This thesis aimed to answer the question: *In what ways does implementing the prosocial, leadership and self-regulation-based ROAR program affect elementary school student behaviour?* The program was found to have positive effects on the school community across various domains including community building, leadership and social-emotional awareness.

Keywords: prosocial behaviour, self-regulation, peer leadership, social emotional learning

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As a teacher, I have observed that education systems today place a great amount of focus on professional development for teachers. Teachers are exposed to the new and trending ways of assessment and training for improved student achievement on standardized testing, all the while teaching to individual learning styles. Often the goal of professional development is for the academic success for all learners. While these foci are necessary in student academic achievement, the success of these practices is dependent upon positive and receptive behaviours within the learning environment. In many instances, academic success is related to students' readiness to learn by which I mean a student's overall emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing, allowing them to learn to their highest potentials.

As adults, we have many stresses in life which can cause us to perform less than adequately at work, or cause deficiency in sleep and, therefore, loss of focus in carrying out daily activities, as well as negative impacts on our moods. A fact that sometimes goes unacknowledged, though, is that children go through their own life stresses which, like adults, impact their performance, attention, and focus during activities, as well as their overall behaviour. As world events continue to demonstrate, we are all in danger when our students receive academic knowledge but grow up lacking necessary social and emotional skills such as compassion and empathy (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2010).

In my experience as an elementary school teacher, I have observed that when students perform poorly or act inappropriately in the classroom, teachers are often quick to blame the student and, in many cases, punish the student for the behaviour. Instead of addressing the reason for poor overall performance, a troubled student may find himself

spending time in the principal's office with piles of extra work. Adults can often recognize when their stress levels are increased and begin affecting negatively their lives. They can choose a method of stress relief, whether it is a glass of wine or couple's counselling. Children are often not aware of their stresses; they are not always able to say what has affected their performance or behaviour, let alone choose a stress-relieving strategy that helps to reduce the negative impacts on their lives. Children experiencing life stresses need to be taught strategies to both recognize and de-escalate stress in their lives in order to be more successful at school. I believe there is an urgent call for self-regulatory and prosocial initiatives for children in schools to positively impact behaviour and student performance in a way that targets the root of the problem and increases students' readiness to learn. It has been the goal of my thesis, and ultimately my passion, to create such a program in the school at which I teach.

Research Questions

Through creating and implementing a program based on social emotional learning and self-regulation, I planned to answer the following question:

- In what ways does implementing the prosocial, leadership- and self-regulation-based Respect Optimism Acceptance Rejoice (ROAR) program affect elementary school student behaviour?

Background to the Study

In identifying the lack of prosocial behaviour in our school and in comparing this deficit to the adversities facing many of our students, the last three years have included a collaborative push for stronger school community. The work toward school unity has entailed school pride shirts, "hoodies" for students and staff, and staff lanyards and laptop

bags, all displaying the school logo and panther mascot. Students also strive to earn hats and toques displaying the school logo. These "panther" items have provided some incentive for positive behaviour as well as a concrete representation of school unity. Over these three years, we have held monthly school spirit days, meet-the-teacher potluck dinners, school-wide turkey dinners at Christmas time, and most recently, a Family Fun Night. These items and events have helped to unify our students, families, and staff in a positive way that is meaningful to our school community.

Having invested multiple efforts from a staff and administrator perspective, unifying the school has become a key focus as our enrollment continues to increase. Not only are we receiving more families, but also we continue to receive families of diverse backgrounds, adversities, and unstable home lives. With a growing population, we have witnessed an influx in access to counselling, behaviour intervention plans, referrals to the principal for inappropriate behaviour, as well as individualized education plans. Acceptance of others, providing safe space at our school, and welcoming others in a respectful way have become very important in our community. With strides toward school unity, the incorporation of a universal prosocial and self-regulatory program was a logical next step for our students.

Throughout this study, students were informed of some incentives to developing this program in their school. One incentive was having ownership over the acronym "ROAR" through processes of brainstorming, voting, and presenting class ideas to the school. A second incentive included having the acronym added to a new school logo painted on the gym wall. Other incentives included class parties and program leader toques reserved for those students who received one-on-one and group training in self-

regulatory and prosocial techniques who became peer leaders of the program. These incentives were integral to the success of the program in terms of peaking students' interests as well as continuing the ongoing efforts to foster school pride.

The diverse population in this school can be represented by the number of families using subsidies for tuition, the number of single-parent or divorced families, those families who speak English as a second language, recent immigrants, as well as identified First Nations families. This school currently has 11% of families living below the poverty level. Of the families whose children are enrolled in this school (Catholic Independent Schools, 2015), 28% receive subsidized tuition in either partial or full amount. These students represent those vulnerable families of low socioeconomic status. Single parent families represent 31% of the school's population. Children of these families either live with the mother or the father, the grandparent or other family member, or spend their time split between two or more households. Of the school's total population, 16% are English-as-second language learners and 35 families are recent immigrants to Canada in the last three years. This school has 15 families who identify as Aboriginal as well.

Many students within the school are affected by familial stresses and individual risks that warrant extra support through either in-school or outside resources. The school-offered resources often include meeting basic needs such as clothing and food, offering learning assistance and support through educational assistants (EAs), access to a counsellor, or referral to external supports. Currently, 10% of the school's population accesses a part-time school counsellor. Due to deficits in learning, medical alerts, special needs, or other challenges, 41% of the student population is on individualized education

plans (IEPs). Due to challenging behaviours, lack of self-regulation or lack of prosocial behaviour, 10% of the students are on behavioural plans developed by school-based teams including the respective classroom teacher, principal, and learning assistance teacher.

Personal Location

I have devoted my career to working with children. I have 12 years of experience working in northern British Columbia with at-risk youth facing adversities such as various special needs, poverty, race, and separated families. I have worked with these children in varied capacities including coaching sports, running after-school activity programs, child care, summer camp coordination and implementation, and now, as a teacher. I have a vested interest in the wellbeing of the children in this community as I have spent essentially my life's work dedicated to their healthy development and education.

I currently work as a full-time teacher at the school in which I carried out this study on prosocial and self-regulatory behaviour. I have identified a lack of social-emotional understanding and consideration in many of the students with whom I currently work and, in my opinion, it has caused multiple barriers to students' social interactions with one another and with adults, as well as lowered self-esteem, little self-awareness and a limited level of academic engagement. It has become my goal and my passion to promote prosocial behaviour in children in order for them to rise to their individual potentials and become as successful as possible in all endeavours despite adversities they may face. I strongly believe that by integrating a well-planned universal

school program focused on social-emotional learning, social behaviour in this school demonstrated some positive change.

I took on the role of teacher-researcher during this study. During the three years I have worked at the school, I believe I have created positive relationships with the students, not only with those whom I teach directly, but students from kindergarten through Grade Seven. I have worked with students in each grade through various academic and extra-curricular activities including the development of a school-wide performance choir, coaching intermediate sports, providing support and supervision for lunch time clubs, and promoting intermediate and primary partner work between classes. Because I have engaged in multiple school-wide activities with the students, I feel their familiarity with me promoted positive interactions during this universal initiative. The nature of this study was such that, although I am a researcher, I feel I was not seen as a traditional outsider. The children, instead, continued to view me as a teacher.

I believe the greatest assets I have had during this study are the relationships I have developed with the students as well as my colleagues. The nature of this study required that I not only work one-on-one with students, but also relied on the support of my peers. During my time at the school, I have worked to develop strong working relationships with my colleagues which I believe have been beneficial to working with the staff in terms of gaining involvement, participation, and effective communication during this process. Though interaction with a peer-turned-researcher could be construed as intimidating or conflicting, I believe the nature of this study was such that it has not greatly affected my professional relationships with my colleagues because the study itself was for the benefit of all our students.

Significance of Study

Children who experience high levels of stress are often those of low socioeconomic status. Poor outcomes in terms of self-regulatory and prosocial behaviour are most likely among children who both show individual risk, such as early aggressive behaviour, difficult temperament, and low IQ, and those who experience stressful family circumstances such as low socioeconomic status and family violence (Dodge & Pettit, 2003). A 2011 statistics report on British Columbia poverty statistics revealed the child poverty rate to be 18.6 per cent using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs before tax as a measure of poverty (First Call, 2013). Families most susceptible to living in poverty include those with single mothers, Aboriginal descent, recent immigrants and refugees, and those with disabilities (Ivanova, 2011).

Of the 150 students in the inner-city school at which I work, there are over 10 recent immigrant families, two international students, 10 funded special needs students, and approximately 15% of our students self-identify as First Nations. Families living in poverty, especially in an inner-city setting, are often those which have less access to nutritious food, health care, and other services. Available research suggests lack of these basic needs in a child's life can cause the stresses that impact performance academically and behaviourally and may be associated with undesirable change in personality (Hart, Atkins, & Matsuba, 2008), yet the stresses go beyond simply not having money or good food. In single parent families, for example, there is often a lack of familial structure which can leave children feeling lonely, unwanted, or depressed. Absence of either a mother or father in the home life of a child can have an immense impact on their identity, their world view, and how they treat others. A longitudinal study conducted by Hart et al.

(2003) reported that children living in households with risk factors such as low income, many siblings, father absence, and poor home environment were more likely to transition from the resilient personality type, identified as having positive relationship skills and high self-esteem, at ages 3–4 to the under-controlled personality type, characterized by aggression and delinquency, at ages 5–6 (Hart, Atkins, & Fegley, 2003). There is plenty of research like the study conducted by Hart, Atkins, and Fegley, which focuses on the negative behaviours that stem from the adversities many children face but most recently, there has been a shift in behavioural research to focus on the positive behavioural attributes that lead to greater mental-health and wellbeing (Schonert-Reichl et. al, 2009). As a result of this paradigm shift, there has been a recent surge in development and implementation of programs which are aimed at positive emotional development and growth in children despite adversities (Schonert-Reichl et. al, 2009). There are additional stresses that accompany having English as a second language, not being familiar with the structure or world view represented in the school environment, and the overall inequality felt by minorities currently and throughout history. Educational research in neurobiology has demonstrated that neglected children, as well as those who have experienced physical or emotional adversities, often experience alterations in brain development resulting in stress hormones which tend to degenerate the areas of the brain that control emotional development (Jensen, 2009). Evidence from this study reinforces much of what past researchers have reported.

Programs with the goal to improve social emotional skills are integral at the elementary school level. Children in the elementary school years are at a critical stage in their social development, regardless of their socioeconomic status, as their social circle

spreads from their families to a broader school community which includes new adults, children, and relationships. Differing from the first five years of a child's life where the influence of family is most central, it is during middle childhood in which there is an increasing influence of outside, and in some cases unfamiliar, environments on children's social interactions and development (Bianchi & Robinson, 1997). Because the family structures, adversities, and familiar social environments of students vary greatly, it is integral to create a school environment which fosters respect, positive relationships and responsibility.

The adversities some children face today can result in larger issues such as bullying, victimization, and depression. In a Canadian study of youth aged 10 to 16, it was found that 33% of boys and 30% of girls reported having been bullied within the previous few months (Boyce, 2004). Increasing rates of social victimization among children combined with individual risks and family status affirm the inherent need for prosocial behaviour and development of socially aware life skills. It is the lived experience of the individual child which shapes how they will perform in their educational environment.

Context of Study

This study involved the development and implementation of a social-emotional program aimed at improving prosocial and self-regulatory behaviour in an inner-city school in northern British Columbia. As previously mentioned, there are currently 150 students enrolled from kindergarten to Grade Seven. This school is faith-based and welcomes families from diverse backgrounds, which has created a population that is both multicultural and representative of varied familial structures. This diverse population is

representative of the adversities in British Columbia in terms of poverty, single parent families, immigrant status, as well as First Nations heritage.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted within the conceptual lens of the social-emotional learning core values and goals outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as well as Goleman's fundamentals of emotional intelligence, both including self-management, social awareness, and the ability to manage relationships (Goleman, 2006; CASEL, 2015). With its roots in social-emotional learning, the purpose of the ROAR program was to promote students' self-awareness, strengthen individuals' social awareness, foster children's relationships and responsible decision-making skills, and to improve attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school (CASEL, 2015). The ROAR program meets the standards of social emotional-learning as outlined by CASEL by coinciding with the components of emotional intelligence which involve persistence during frustration, controlling impulse, regulation of one's moods and distress, and to empathize (Goleman, 2006).

Summary of the Study

The program was applied universally in the school setting. Every student from kindergarten through Grade Seven had exposure to the program and was involved in its development and implementation in some capacity. The student population was responsible for deciding which social-emotional value would be assigned to each letter in the acronym "ROAR", and was held accountable to behaving within the ROAR values with the assistance of peer leadership. There are seven classroom teachers, one

administrator, and seven educational assistants who were also essential in supporting this study.

The school represented in this study is located in a low socioeconomic part of the city. In addition, this is a faith-based independent school. Being an independent school, it is not fully government funded and works in partnership with the parish associated with the school. As a faith-based institute, the school is governed by the mission to honour the inherent goodness of each student as a child of God, and to cultivate their physical, artistic, academic, emotional, moral, and spiritual growth. Simultaneously, the school works with the vision statement that asserts the role of the school community to form exceptional leaders using Christ as our model. Through initiating a universal social-emotional learning program, it was hypothesized that prosocial and self-regulatory behaviour would improve while continuing to build the school family through faith, collaboration, caring for one another, and promoting self-awareness.

This chapter has presented the subject of inquiry of this study, and the research question I intended to answer as the teacher-researcher carrying out this exploration. This chapter discussed the rationale behind the study, as well as the setting and population demographics of the study. The next chapter will outline the professional literature in relation to the central research question. The third chapter will present my research design. Chapter four will include the results and discussion of my research. Finally, chapter five will present the conclusion of my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Before the creation and implementation of a prosocial initiative such as the ROAR program, it was integral to analyse the research that exists on the subjects of social emotional learning and universal prosocial programs. In order to inform the design of the program and how it would be carried out, an analysis of similar successful programs took place. The purpose of this literature review is to discover what has led to previous successful implementation of universal prosocial school programs as well as to inform the study with sound theory to support the research that was carried out.

The goal of this literature review is to explore the current literature and research surrounding social emotional learning as well as the implementation of universal prosocial programs in elementary schools. The literature review includes the definition, influential theory, and development of social emotional learning. Influential factors of social-emotional deficits are discussed as well as successful social emotional programs. Research cited in this literature review involves elementary school student behaviour and the implementation of universal programs targeted at strengthening prosocial behaviours in schools. This chapter also includes the researched benefits of implementing a program involving peer leadership as well as a discussion on the connection of social-emotional learning to the current British Columbia curriculum.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning can be defined as the process of acquiring the competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively (Elias, 2006). The Fetzer group first introduced the term social and

emotional learning (SEL) as a conceptual framework to address both the needs of young people and the fragmentation that typically characterizes the response of schools to those needs (Elias et al., 1997). They believed that SEL programming and curriculum could address underlying causational factors of problem behavior while assisting in academic achievement, unlike the many other prevention programs which target specific problems such as addiction, depression, and illness. Though most school mission statements assert the importance of fostering both academic and social development in tandem, the emphasis in schools today commonly resides in academic achievement. There is a push for higher levels of performance on standardized tests and lack of focus on social development despite the need for social skill development alongside academics. Research, however, is telling us that if we want our children to succeed in both school and life, we need to promote their social and emotional skills (Schonert & Hymel, 1996). Social-emotional learning works in a way to better prepare students for the tests of life, not a life of tests (Elias, 2001). Social emotional learning is sometimes called "the missing piece", because it represents a part of education that is inextricably linked to school success, but has not been explicitly stated or given much attention until recently (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2010).

There are many positive reasons for incorporating social-emotional learning into schools. Social-emotional learning works to the benefit of all students. Though the obvious concerns in a school setting may be reducing inappropriate or challenging behaviour, or promoting respect for others so as to minimize disruptions throughout the day, there are five specific goals and essential competencies of social-emotional learning: developing self-awareness, developing social awareness, promoting self-management,

strengthening relationship skills, and fostering responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2015).

Conceptualization of social-emotional learning. In light of the recent push for social-emotional learning in schools, more universal prosocial programs have been implemented and evaluated in schools. The findings of such research have demonstrated the benefits of universal social-emotional learning programs. These benefits include reduced negative behaviour, increased positive social interactions, as well as higher academic achievement in many cases (Payton et al., 2008). The predominant findings in research surrounding SEL programs suggest and assert that school-based prevention programming based on coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning should be integral to preschool through high school education due to the positive effects of such programs in communities facing adversities such as increased economic and social pressures on families; weakening of community institutions that nurture children's social, emotional, and moral development; and access by children to media that encourage health-damaging behavior (Greenberg et al., 2003).

The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Curriculum (PATHS) is a universal elementary school-based prevention program targeted at reducing students' anti-social behaviour by promoting the development of social emotional skills (PATHS Education Worldwide, 2015). The curriculum is based on a model of development which focuses on the developmental integration of cognition, affect and emotion language, and behaviour in the fostering of social competence (Riggs et. al, 2006). The PATHS curriculum is primarily aimed at improving social competencies by incorporating elements of neuropsychology and the interaction of left and right hemispheres of the

brain during social interaction, conflict resolution, and emotional recognition. In a fundamental study of the effectiveness of the PATHS curriculum, Greenberg et al. (1995) reported that the prevention program led to significant improvement in students' ability to identify and understand emotion, fluency in communicating feelings, and increased ability to manage emotions. In another study involving a trial of 48 randomized schools in the United States, PATHS was shown to significantly decrease disruptive behaviour in grade one students after six months of implementation based on observations and improved quality of classroom social environments (Riggs et al., 2006). A study involving the implementation of PATHS aimed at discovering the relatedness of neurocognitive ability and teacher-reported incidents of disruptive behaviour, conducted by Riggs et al., showed that children exposed to the curriculum demonstrated increased inhibitory control as well as verbal fluency. This study used a control group in order to compare behaviour of those students exposed to the PATHS curriculum to those who were not. Along with the curriculum, teachers of the program received three training days on social emotional learning and were required to teach the curriculum two to three times per week for 20 to 30 minutes. Students involved in the PATHS curriculum were IQ tested and tested for inhibitory control using a Stroop Test which involved the administration of three color word trials. Verbal fluency and child behaviour were also assessed and analysed using a quantitative method. The findings of this study suggest that development of prosocial programs acknowledge the importance of the interplay between emotional competence and neuropsychology (Riggs et al., 2006).

While not all universal social emotional programs are primarily concerned with neuropsychology, some are aided in classrooms by a curriculum similar to PATHS,

called the MindUP Curriculum. MindUP is a research-based social emotional learning program which is centred on developing and promoting conscious awareness of the present moment by focusing attention and controlling breathing, learning to reduce stress and optimizing the learning capacity of the brain (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). Like the PATHS program, the MindUP curriculum is a product of research that suggests the skills that social-emotional development interventions attempt to promote are dependent upon parallel constructs at the neurocognitive level (Greenberg et al., 2004). The studies that have shaped neuropsychological programs for children demonstrate that controlling impulsive behavior requires intercession by the prefrontal cortex to inhibit impulsive thoughts and actions and children's ability to verbally mediate problem situations depends on the left hemisphere of the brain (Riggs, 2006). The MindUP curriculum was designed for teachers to create focused classrooms filled with focus students with social emotional awareness. The curriculum has its base in social emotional learning through neuropsychology and aims to teach students the specific parts of the brain that are responsible for their stress management and focus in order to better control their behaviour and social awareness. The curriculum lessons are presented in simple language for students of all grade levels to understand. With the help of visual aids and 15 core lessons, students learn about the connection between body and brain, the outcome of which is a group of resilient students who are aware of their impulses, thoughts, feelings, and behaviour resulting in higher levels of self-esteem, happiness, and ownership of their learning (The Hawn Foundation, 2011).

Although research about the successful implementation of the MindUP curriculum is not plentiful, it has been shaped and influenced by leading researchers and

experts in the social emotional field such as Goleman, Durlak, Greenberg, and CASEL (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). Most of the research which supports the success of social emotional learning has been linked to academic achievement. The MindUP program has been influenced by the recognition of the importance of social emotional learning with regard to academic achievement by many researchers including Caprara et al. (2000), who found that the academic success of students in the eighth grade could be predicted by assessing the social emotional development of the same students in the third grade than from their academic competence in the third grade. While there are many links between social emotional learning programs in schools and academic success, the social benefits of MindUP and other such programs include the reduction of peer-to-peer conflict, development of students' prosocial skills, such as compassion, patience, generosity, and empathy.

The Roots of Empathy program is another successful social emotional learning initiative centered on the prosocial development of children. The Roots of Empathy program is evidence-based and was developed for the classroom in order to reduce levels of aggression, raise social emotional competence, and foster empathy in children (Roots of Empathy, 2015). The program is designed for elementary school classrooms where a parent and an infant from the neighborhood visit the classroom on a monthly basis. A Roots of Empathy instructor coaches the students to observe the interactions between the infant and the parent in order to better understand the attachment that forms between the two and to recognize the empathetic responses and feeling between the two (Gordon, 2003). The children record the infant's development over 27 lessons throughout the school year and learn to recognize the baby's cues and temperament while learning to

recognize feelings in others. The implementation of the Roots of Empathy program has shown that children learn to take the perspective of others and become less likely to bully and exclude others while building skills in democracy and gaining a sense of justice in the classroom (Gordon, 2003). Children demonstrate their learning through meaningful reflection, often through artwork which displays their interpretations of why the infant cries at certain times, for example. Through the reflections and artwork, students are able to express themselves in a positive and creative way while taking perspective of others.

In a study of the effectiveness of the Roots of Empathy program in six to eight year old children, Schonert-Reichl found a decrease of aggression in the Roots of Empathy group and a rise in the aggression of a comparison group not exposed to the Roots of Empathy program with significant decreases in peer-to-peer conflict and increased prosocial behaviour reported by students and teachers (Gordon, 2003). Schnoert-Reichl et al. (2011) conducted a more recent study of the Roots of Empathy program which was concerned with specific social emotional skills such as sharing, helping, cooperation, and kindness in the evaluation of the success of the program, as well as aggression rates of both proactive and reactive nature. The study involved 28 participating schools, 585 students total, from across Canada spanning from the fourth to seventh grades. Of the schools, 14 implemented the Roots of Empathy program and 14 schools were in a control group where the Roots of Empathy program was not implemented. The study was designed in a way to minimize differences of age, gender, socio-economic status, and race between the program implemented and the control groups. In order to make this quasi-experimental study trustworthy, T-tests and chi-square was performed, the results of which demonstrated little variance among the type

of students in each group. Instructors of the program were given an intensive three day training workshop in order to ensure consistency in the delivery of the lessons and programs. The results of the study demonstrated that children exposed to the program gained significant improvements in their ability to generate causes for infants' crying that reflected attention to the emotions of the baby, children in the Roots of Empathy group were more likely to be nominated by peers as having prosocial ability than those of the control group, and the program students significantly decreased in levels of aggression (Schonert-Reichl, 2011).

While there are many universal social emotional learning programs being successfully implemented in schools, the PATHS, MindUP curriculum, and Roots of Empathy seem to be most pertinent as well as most research-based. It is important to note that these are but a few of the many programs targeted at promoting prosocial behaviour among students.

Self-Regulation and Prosocial Behaviour

Self-regulation can be defined as the ability to stay calmly focused and alert which often involves self-control (Education Canada, 2015). It is becoming more and more widely understood that the better a person is able to self-regulate, the better he or she is able to achieve and demonstrate more complex higher-order thinking skills including social conflict resolution and interactions, as well as academic tasks within a school setting. Self-regulation is conducive to positive adjustment and adaptation, as reflected in positive social relationships, productivity, achievement, and positive self-esteem (Blair and Diamond, 2008). Children who lack self-regulatory skills struggle with paying attention, ignoring distractions, inhibiting impulses, regulating emotions, and

maintaining a state of being calm, focused, and alert (Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative, 2015). Self-regulation concerns various levels and aspects of a person's interactions with his or her environment. Shanker (2015) outlines the five levels or domains of self-regulation as biological (how well a person regulates his or her arousal states), emotional (how well a person monitors and modifies his or her emotional responses), cognitive (how well a person can sustain and switch attention, deal with frustration, inhibit impulses), social (a person's functional understanding of social norms and rules), and reflective thinking skills. These domains are not separate from one another but rather affect and are influenced by one another. Often in classroom settings it can be easy to misinterpret compliance for self-regulation. Many teachers prefer a quiet classroom where students are silent and presumably listening and learning. This is the type of classroom which some may think represents a self-regulated atmosphere but Shanker (2015) would argue this is not the case, particularly in contrast to a noisy classroom where each student is actively engaged in a small group, hands-on learning activity. Classrooms that are quiet are not necessarily classrooms where children are self-regulated. Students in these classrooms can be quite off-task in terms of daydreaming or general disengagement. Students in active learning environments often seem outwardly chaotic but at closer glance tend to have the most engaged learning behaviour. This example provides a reminder to educators that compliance is not interchangeable with self-regulation.

Self-regulation is not an isolated skill and it can be inherently linked to prosocial behaviour due to the fact that in order to self-regulate one must respond to a given situation with a combination of communication systems, for example, language in a

social context (Florez, 2011). Children must learn to respond to stimuli in an appropriate manner especially in schools where an inappropriate reaction could result in harm of another child. In order to promote self-regulation in children, Florez (2011) suggests three teaching strategies that are critical for scaffolding children's development: modeling, using hints and cues, and gradually withdrawing adult support. With these three strategies, students can learn to recognize appropriate behaviour, actively participate in guided prosocial behaviour, and eventually be able to identify and put the learned self-regulatory skills to use independently.

Blair and Diamond (2008) assert that in many studies of prekindergarten students across the United States, expulsion rates for behavioural problems have exceeded those of elementary and secondary schools since the turn of the century. In one such study 10.4% of prekindergarten teachers reported expelling at least one child over a 12-month period and 19.9% reported expelling more than one (Blair and Diamond, 2008). The children being expelled from prekindergarten programs were unable to follow directions, teachers overwhelmingly reported struggles with children being unable to communicate wants, needs, and thoughts verbally, to be enthusiastic and curious in learning, and children were not sensitive to other children's feelings (Blair and Diamond, 2008). Using the United States as a similar demographic comparison to Canada, these rates of expulsion are cause for concern for educators as some children are coming to school ill-equipped for school life. Influx in the number of children lacking these skills upon entering kindergarten places a large obligation on schools to model and teach self-regulatory skills.

Socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status (SES) has been shown to affect children's behaviour, academic achievement, and executive functioning. Many studies have shown that children from higher SES families consistently perform better on executive functioning tasks such as impulse control and conflict resolution (Rochette & Bernier, 2014). Children from low SES households often struggle with the ability to control impulsivity in social situations as well as the ability to respond appropriately to social conflicts. Research over the last decade has demonstrated that children of vulnerable families are at higher risk for developmental delays in health, cognition, and social-emotional skills (Rochette & Bernier, 2014). The low cognition, social skills, and academic aptitude in children from low SES families could be due in part to elevated truancy and absenteeism at school as well. In a study of 21 schools within a large Midwestern district involving 16, 418 students, low SES students were shown to be at a much greater risk for truancy and the risk of truancy was shown to increase between 14% and 78% over every additional year for low SES students in particular (Nolan et al., 2013). Because most academic topics are designed in a spiral curriculum, that is concepts taught in one lesson are built upon in following lessons, students who miss school frequently are more likely to lack understanding when they return. In addition, lack of engagement with other children due to being away from school is not conducive to promoting prosocial behaviour among peers. Truancy has also been identified as an early warning sign of negative and criminal behavior (Nolan et al., 2013). Due to the correlation between family and school factors, economic influences, and student variables such as mental health (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2005),

social-emotional programs are essential to the development of the skill-building that most low SES students in particular are not receiving in their home lives.

Studies of the effective of social-emotional programs on low SES student behaviour have been consistently positive. In a qualitative study of 28 inner-city elementary schools implementing peer mediation social-emotional programs across the United States, results demonstrated a 25% decrease in low SES students' violent and disruptive behaviour (Bickmore, 2001).

Family structure. Almost as prevalent as the link between SES and children's behavioural and academic performance is the correlation between those levels of achievement and the quality of parent-child relationships (Rochette & Bernier, 2014). Self-regulation is one of the most notable social skills affected by parent-child relationships (Jennings et al., 2008). The correlation between parent-child relationships and social-emotional skills including self-regulation may be due to the parental modeling of such skills in a child's home life. While it is noted frequently in schools that children learn from teacher-modelled behaviour, it is crucial to remember that behaviours are modeled by adults at home, outside of school, and within the family whether positive or negative as well.

As a result of influx of divorce, decrease in marriage, non-marital fertility and other various changes in family demographics, children are more likely to be raised in multigenerational households (Pilkauskas, 2014). Due to decreases in parents' support systems through traditional marriage, more and more parents look toward their own parents for help in raising their children for various reasons including childcare and finance. Grandparents are able to positively influence the development of children in many ways that affect social-emotional skills such as discussing behaviour and emotions, monitoring behaviour, and role modeling

(Pilkauskas, 2014). Alternatively, grandparents could also negatively impact the social-emotional development of children. Additional family members in a household could potentially create a drain on finances, interfere with parenting, and create conflict potentially resulting in less parent-child time which is crucial to child development and behaviour (Gershoff, 2013).

Faith development. Religion can play an important role in the way children develop as the values reflected in faith development are linked to the way children treat others and the way they behave in social interactions. Wenner (2008), in reviewing a study by Bartowski, argued that children whose parents are part of a faith community often have access to more social support in their role as parents. This study also affirmed that families who practice faith often hold faith values that are self-sacrificing and pro-family which are, in turn, traits that are positively viewed in school communities. Values of acceptance, understanding and empathy are values often resonating throughout most religions. The development of such values would require that students study religion in depth, as a live option for understanding their world and the people in it (Feinberg, 2013).

Passe and Willox (2009) argue that teaching religion in public school should be mandatory in the United States despite the separation of church and state, especially with the noted influx in religious animosity since 9/11. In public schools, religion can be taught as part of the social studies curriculum thereby teaching children about religion and promoting tolerance while minimizing ignorance of other faiths as the current state of public schools leave students religiously ignorant (Feinberg, 2013). Children who have been exposed to forms of religious teaching are more likely to be accepting of diversity and multiculturalism (Passe & Willox, 2009). Advocates for the integration of religion in schools argue that religion in schools is so important that specific religious courses should be mandatory and, in some cases, take precedence over mandatory mathematics

classes (Feinberg, 2013). The goal in the mandatory instruction of religion in public schools in these cases would work toward the goal of the development of responsible, active citizens. In addition, the inclusion of religion in schools in a well-planned effort may lead to a stronger society, one in which religious differences are understood, appreciated, and even celebrated (Passe & Willox, 2009). Children in faith-based schools, especially those which are not exclusively comprised of students from one specific religious background, have the privilege of being immersed in such an environment that promotes inclusion and acceptance of others and demonstrates low tolerance for exclusion.

Peer Leadership

Young students are capable of learning to help each other to resolve interpersonal conflicts in school through peer support, tutoring, leadership, and mediation (Bickmore, 2001). The use of peer leadership to promote successful learning in schools has been linked to the success of students in multiple arenas. Nath and Ross (2001) suggest that if elementary school children are taught leadership and tutoring skills as part of their involvement in cooperative learning in groups, their academic achievement will increase while strengthening their social interactive skills. Studies of promoting student leadership skills within physical education have demonstrated that leadership in the context of team sports activities works to decrease off-task behaviour and the skills taught in the physical education setting often generalize to include other venues in the school, most notably the classroom setting (Sharpe, Brown, & Crider, 1995). A study of the effectiveness of peer leadership in literacy development demonstrated that students exposed to the peer leadership program demonstrated increased collaborative skills across 16 observed traits

including praising and encouraging others, and active listening (Nath & Ross, 2001). Triangulation was achieved in this study by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. MANOVA testing was used to analyse the similarities and differences between the effect of the program on the control and program oriented students. Interviews of the teachers were held in this study in order to further explain the observed effects of this program and, although the teachers did not witness an increase in academic achievement, they did indicate that their students had grown socially.

Conflict in schools is often seen as an undesirable and negative behaviour. While it can cause disturbances, Bickmore (2001) argued that conflict is inevitable in human life, and can be a positive force for learning and development. Students must understand at a young age that conflict is normal but they must learn appropriate and practical ways of solving disputes and disagreements. One of the most successful forms of conflict resolution and intervention in schools has been peer mediation where a third unbiased party helps to talk about and work through disagreements (Bickmore, 2001). In order to develop a school environment where peer mediation can be successful, it is crucial for the staff to be modelling positive conflict resolution. Sometimes this type of transformation begins with the adults which extends beyond becoming familiar with SEL practices and theories and requires them to take action in their exploration of personal assets in SEL as well as areas of improvement (Elias, 2006). Once students learn from watching the adult leaders in their school community, they are better able to demonstrate the leadership qualities needed in order to be peer mediators and essentially role models in their schools. Leadership must be distributed, and ideally, each member of the school environment will

see that the mantle of leadership touches everyone who has a vested interest in the school (Elias, 2006).

Connection to Curriculum

With increasing evidence of the importance of social emotional learning and capability, education systems have recently been placing greater focus on integrating social emotional practice into curriculum. Here in British Columbia there is a newly designed curriculum being introduced in both the elementary and secondary levels of education. This new curriculum plan focuses less on specific prescribed learning outcomes and content and shifts to the incorporation of 'big ideas' to ensure inclusivity of all learners and greater flexibility in both teachers and students (BC Ministry of Education, 2015). The newly designed curriculum is based on three guiding core competencies which are thinking, personal and social, and communication. These competencies are inherently linked to social-emotional development which further weaves the importance of such programs and recognition in education.

The goals and outcomes highlighted by SEL programs are best accomplished through effective classroom instruction; student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom; and broad student, parent, and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation (Greenberg, 2003). These goals are echoed in British Columbia's current curriculum in its focus on experiential learning outside the classroom as well as the shift in focus to individualized learning with the guiding practices of SEL-inspired core competencies of communication, creative thinking, critical thinking, positive personal and cultural identity, personal awareness and responsibility, and social responsibility (BC Ministry of Education, 2015). This transformation in British

Columbian education represents a shift from the traditional assessment of only academic achievement to the assessment of interpersonal interaction and capabilities. This new curriculum emphasizes not only the importance of academic performance but also how students treat and feel about one another as well as themselves. The BC Ministry of Education website (2015) describes the competency of personal awareness and responsibility, for example, as including the skills, strategies, and dispositions that help students to regulate emotions, respect their own rights and the rights of others, manage stress, and to persevere in difficult situations. These are all goals within the realm of social-emotional learning. This shift in educational concern in schools to accommodate and acknowledge the need for SEL represents a stride toward holistic education for children; teaching to the whole child in an attempt to address every need so that the highest quality of academic learning possible can take place.

Conclusion

Developing a program based on social-emotional learning requires reviewing current literature around the topic with regard to the main goals presented in the CASEL framework. These goals include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The presence or lack of these skills can be influences by a child's socioeconomic status, family structure, and faith background. Schools in lower socioeconomic, faith-based communities are at higher risk for children lacking in these fundamental social-emotional skills.

Studies have demonstrated social-emotional programs involving peer leadership and mediation are successful in promoting positive behaviour and social skills. Programs with a leadership aspect also contribute to confidence building in students. Leadership

programs begin with teachers as role models and eventual independence for students in terms of self-regulation and conflict resolution.

The transformed curriculum in British Columbia has core competency roots in social-emotional learning. With increasing interest in social-emotional learning, the demand for programs surrounding this topic has increased as well, particularly in inner-city schools. In addition to promoting social-emotional skills in schools, the new curriculum also aims to include all learners and meet diverse needs, thereby promoting inclusion and acceptance of all students.

This chapter has presented the main areas of research necessary for investigation in order to carry out and evaluate a universal prosocial program in a school setting. The following chapter will present the research design involved in carrying out this study.

Chapter 3: Research Design

The topic of this study required a collaborative and focused research design. The goal to improve the social-emotional capacity of students is one which works to the benefit of everyone in the school community including students, teachers, principal, and parents. Because this study could be of value to all involved, the participation of the school community in decision-making and feedback were crucial to the program's effectiveness.

This project took the form of a mixed methods action-based inquiry which was targeted at seeking the effect of promoting prosocial behaviour through leadership and self-regulation on elementary school behaviour. This was done in a way which was made clear to students, parents, teachers, and administrators involved and required everyone's cooperation through the use of questionnaires, surveys, and interviews. The core values of the program, centred on social-emotional learning, became common language in the school environment in order for staff and students to fully understand and make use of the program itself.

There are many benefits to applying mixed methodology in research, especially in the field of education and social action. Though quantitative and qualitative methods differ in the phenomena which they aim to examine, both are committed to improving the human condition and for spreading knowledge for practical purposes (Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002). This research methodology was desirable in the current study due to the intention of collecting multiple perspectives through a quantitative approach while simultaneously using small purposeful samples through a qualitative approach to gain important insight that might inform and support the quantitative data collected.

Quantitative and qualitative research can inform and strengthen one another (Archibald et al., 2015). Employing the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches utilizes the strengths of both types of research and, due to the complex nature of social sciences, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology allows for exploration on various levels to address this complexity (Creswell, 2009).

Action Research Inquiry

Action research at its very basic level can be understood as research that involves taking action which can be applied to both the people taking part in the research as well as the system on which it is acting. This action can manifest itself in many different ways within the realm of action research but the common idea of any action associated with this approach is to bring about meaningful change. This trait is arguably one of the most unique that separates action research from its methodological counterparts. Action research poses a collaborative and transformative approach to scientific studies and can be affective in many different fields, most notably those involved in social matters.

During his seminal work in 1946, Lewin likened the idea of collaboration through action research to integrated approaches of psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, and possibly economics, to solve international problems because neither could exist solely on its own. Lewin asserted that action research must be an ongoing and transformative process wherein rational social management proceeds in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action to promote further inquiry and action (Lewin, 1946). Lewin's ideas and those of his contemporaries challenged and were essentially born from the frustration caused by the limitations of common scientific and empirical ways of understanding and

addressing complex human problems (Minkler, 2000). Action research represented a revolutionary way of thinking about and addressing social change. Action research is a collaborative process between researcher and participants that involves four core steps to critical problem solving: plan, act, observe, and reflect. These steps are applied to a common problem experienced by a collaborative group of people who, working equally with a researcher, follow the steps in a repeated and revisionary cycle until a suitable solution is reached.

Action research redefines the traditional role of researcher as a co-learner through this process and places a heavy emphasis on community participation for the common interest of bringing about change. Action research is participatory and cooperative in nature and it engages community members and researchers in a joint process in which both contribute equally (Minkler, 2000). In addition to social change for common betterment, the way in which action research is presented reasserts the value of good communication, the positive impact of collaborative sharing of knowledge, focuses on the benefits of experienced evidence-based research, emphasizes the potential for positive unexpected outcomes, and promotes an ongoing commitment to the collaborative process (Stratton, 2008).

Ontologically, action researchers believe in the empowerment of people to influence and change social structures. They attempt to find new and creative ways of accommodating different values and interests in stakeholders. Though values in one location can differ greatly from one's own beliefs, researchers understand their own beliefs, make them known to participants and continue to be aware of those biases throughout the research process for the success of the research being done (McNiff,

2002). Action research involves the understanding of social constructed realities and the possible and tangible shifting of those realities. Action researchers believe epistemologically that knowledge is something that is living and changing based on individuals' lived experiences. Knowledge, therefore, is forever changing and is never complete (McNiff, 2002). This understanding is linked inherently to the cyclical structure of the action research and inquiry process.

The strengths of action research are many. With its basis in critical theory, action research decentralizes and democratizes the research process (Karim, 2000). Through this process, participants gain empowerment and ownership of the research as well as the positive change brought about by the research. It offers an opportunity for community members to share their voices which are often silenced by the status quo in a creative way. This type of research gives engaged communities the ability to shaping their environment. Action research promotes social participation, self-determination, self-reliance, and empowerment (Dickson, 2000). These are the cornerstones of community development. Action research offers strategies for increasing relevancy and reducing inequities which previously were felt by real people in real life hardships. It is often noted that individuals demonstrate personal growth through the support, programming, leadership, networking, and relevance of action research. Frequent retrospective reports state that individuals involved in action research project demonstrate stronger leadership skills, are more inclined to take on community roles, and are more inclined to take part in more action research projects because of their experience with critical thinking and problem solving (Dickson, 2000). Action research provides opportunity to feel active in

the success of social change due in part to owning the overall experience and being seen as the expert instead of the object being studied.

This project did not follow a strict participatory action plan as an area of need had already been identified and a research question had been stated; however, the researcher in the study is a part of the community and not an outsider. The voice of the researcher in this study is, therefore, two-fold and the concern in the area of behaviour in the school is valid and shared. Following the steps of action research, participation came from staff and parent surveys and interviews, as well as student leader referral forms which teachers used to identify which students would be best suited as leaders of the program. Surveys and interviews with the staff and administrator provided time to share observations of the program's progress, as well as opportunity to share experiences and reflections of the process in order to adjust approaches as needed.

Students also had the empowering opportunity to help shape the plan for success through creating and voting. The students were actively involved in leadership throughout the process. This project not only involved staff and students at the school, but included the greater community of parents as well through means of making the project common knowledge as well as parental surveys to help get a holistic view of the effect of the posed solution to the problem. As part of the action research design, parents were also asked to suggest how the ROAR program might be adapted for success going forward. The success of this project, in true action research form, was strongly dependant on participation of staff, students, and parents.

The methodology of this study followed Sagor's (2000) model of action research for guiding school improvement. Sagor stated that action research always involves the

same cyclical seven steps: selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analysing data, reporting results, and taking informed action. Selecting a focus for school improvement involves thoughtful reflection on what elements of teaching practice or what aspect of student learning is the target of investigation. In the current study, the focus was student social-emotional learning. The second step of clarifying theories took place in the form of a staff meeting in this study which will allow for staff to express their beliefs about how social-emotional learning could best take place in the school based on their observation and experience. The research question for this study had already been identified by a staff member who functioned as the researcher in this case as well. Data collection applies to informing the research question in terms of triangulation, or using multiple independent sources to answer research questions (Sagor, 2000). Data collection in this study came from the literature review in the thesis as well as surveys and interviews based on the observations of the success of the program that was implemented. Data analysis must have taken place in order for staff to reflect on the story the data tells and why things happened the way they did (Sagor, 2000). The answers to these questions have led to grounded theory which will inform taking action. Formal results of this research were to be reported in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Informally, staff were given the opportunity to share their learning and experience of the process as well. Perhaps the most important step of action research is taking action after implementing a posed solution to a research question. In the current study, this step will require the staff to reflect on the implementation of the program, make adjustments based on valid and reliable data, and

move forward with another cycle of action research for the betterment of the school environment.

Development of the ROAR Program

This program was developed based on goals associated with social-emotional learning. One of the first stages in the implementation of this program was the students' creation of the ROAR values by deciding what the acronym "ROAR" would represent. As a school community and through multiple voting and decision-making processes, the acronym was identified as *Respect Optimism Acceptance and Rejoice*. This process promoted student ownership of the program. The acronym had been predetermined in order to keep the quantity of values minimal, as well as to maintain the consistency of "Panther Pride" which has been established at the school through various efforts toward building school spirit, family and unity. The use of the word ROAR connects the school mascot to the acronym and provides an easy way for students to recall that "Panthers ROAR" when reminders of appropriate behaviour are needed.

Program peer leaders were trained to complement and reward observed peer behaviours which followed the ROAR values over a four month period. Leaders were also trained to help peers at times when ROAR values were not being followed. The development of this program was tailored to the observed social-emotional skill needs in the school and incorporated the school mission and vision statements. The program was also conducted in a way which includes faith development as it took place in a faith based school.

Participants. As a universal elementary school program, ROAR affected all students from kindergarten to Grade 7 in the school. The research data came from the

participating teachers, administrator, and parents who agreed and consented to taking part in the study. In accordance with the collaborative nature of action research, the participants were asked in a survey to describe the observed behaviour after the implementation of the program and were given the opportunity to participate in a semi-structured interview following the survey if they so chose. In addition, the staff participants helped to form the design of the program during staff meetings and informal communication with the teacher-researcher. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed by the researcher using qualitative coding and theming methods.

The adults of the school community were chosen as participants in this study in order to provide data that is representative of witnessed daily behaviours. Adults were chosen to be participants in this study because they would fully understand the goals of the research, were able to attest to witnessed changes in behaviour, and, along with the students, potentially benefit from the study if prosocial behaviours in the school increased due to the implementation of the program.

The identity of all students, parents, staff, administration as well as the name of the school remained confidential in the presentation of the data. Mention of the teachers' comments made during interviews was specified only by using either "a primary teacher of the school" or "an intermediate teacher of the school". This is similar for surveyed information obtained from parents as they are identified not by name but as being a parents of a primary or intermediate student. The administrator is referred to as "the administrator" for the purposes of reporting data.

Table 1

Research timeline

Research Dates	Research Procedures
September 8, 2015	Staff meeting—ROAR Introduction
September 11, 2015	School ROAR Assembly 1 Information and sent home to parents
September 18, 2015	Staff refer ROAR leaders Home brainstorm ROAR sheets returned to school
September 18-24, 2015	Individual class brainstorms and vote on ROAR
September 24-October 1, 2015	First one-on-one session with leaders Individual class ROAR presentations being made
October 2, 2015	School ROAR Assembly 2—presentation of voted class ROAR acronyms
October 5-16, 2015	Second one-on-one session with leaders
October 19-30, 2015	Third one-on-one session with leaders
November 2-13, 2015	Fourth one-on-one session with leaders
November 16-27, 2015	Fifth one-on-one session with leaders
November 30-December 4, 2015	Sixth one-on-one session with leaders Survey made available to parents and staff
December 11, 2015	Administrator Questionnaire
December 12-January 20, 2016	Continued additional focused work with leaders based on administrator questionnaire responses
January 20, 2016	Survey made available online for staff and parents
January 20-February 9, 2016	Interview Participants Interview Administrator Analyse data—transcription by researcher, Microsoft Excel for quantitative Include analysis results and conclusion to thesis

Data Collection

Data was collected in a variety of both qualitative and quantitative ways (see Table 1). The first piece of data to be collected was in the form of a questionnaire which was completed by the administrator. The purpose of this Likert-scale questionnaire was to determine the common social behaviours occurring within the school. The second piece of data collection was a survey that was completed by staff and parents of the school community. The purpose of this survey was to gain insight into the observed

student behaviour changes witnessed since the implementation of the program. The third data collection process was a set of five interviews of the staff and parents. The surveyed participants had the option to participate in an interview meant to further inform the study of observed changes within the school environment. The number of interviews was limited to five. The fourth piece of data that was collected was a final interview with the administrator which provided a point of reflection for the initial questionnaire and insight into the experience of the administrator in contrast to other staff and parents.

September—Staff Meeting. This universal initiative was posed to the school staff during a meeting at the beginning of the school year. The researcher asked questions in order to identify areas of weakness in social behaviour within the classrooms, on the playground, in assemblies, and in the church. The program was introduced as being aimed at developing prosocial and self-regulatory behaviour. In an attempt to make these ideas more concise and manageable for both staff and students, the representation of these ideals was set in the form of the acronym *ROAR*. The process of selecting values to represent each letter in this acronym was ultimately determined by students, however, in order to better demonstrate the acronym selection process for staff, teachers had the opportunity to brainstorm ideas on what each letter should stand for in light of the purpose of the acronym. Teachers were provided with an informational sheet which outlined the steps and procedures of this project and had an opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback, and offer any suggestions which could enhance or inform the success of the project as a whole.

September—School ROAR Assembly 1. A school assembly was held in order to introduce the concept of ROAR to the students. Though data was not collected in this

stage of the program, it was important to introduce the concept of ROAR to the students at the beginning of the year as the program would be used to monitor student behaviour throughout the year. Because the school year can be very busy once it begins and in order to promote consistency it is integral to present new program ideas at the beginning of the school year. The researcher introduced the plan to the students with the help of the school principal. This was done with a sense of positivity and team building, making reference to the family of Panthers and school pride. A handout with information about the project was given to each student as well as a family brainstorming sheet. To begin the ownership process, students were challenged to take the information home and discuss it with their parents. The brainstorm sheet had a place for families to write their ideas about what positive behaviour in school should look like and what they think ROAR should stand for in action at the school. Students were given one week to discuss this and return the sheets to class. Of the 150 students in the school, 73 family brainstorm sheets were returned. When the family-constructed acronym ideas had been returned to the school, the teacher-researcher recorded the most common values and students discussed and voted as individual classes which acronym they thought best applied to promoting positive school behaviour based on the two most common words suggested for each letter of ROAR in that class.

The teacher-researcher used prep time to go into each individual classroom to facilitate a discussion and the voting process for the most common acronyms the students developed at home. The researcher took the place of the classroom teacher at this time to ensure follow-through of this initiative as well as consistency across the delivery of the program. This also helped to alleviate any additional stresses and program obligations

from classroom teachers. As a class, the students voted on their favorite representation of ROAR and criteria for presenting the class ideas of ROAR to the school at the next assembly was clearly explained as per the criteria sheet that was provided. Criteria included ROAR needing to be linked to specific positive behaviour in school as well as kindness and consideration for others. Students also had to be able to identify what each of the four values would look like in practice in various school settings including hallways, playground, assemblies, and church. Presentations were limited to four minutes each.

October—Referral to ROAR program. Teachers were given ROAR leadership referral forms soon after the first school-wide assembly. These forms asked teachers to refer students they felt would particularly benefit from self-regulatory and prosocial skill building for one-on-one training to be a leader. The teacher-researcher suggested that these were students who are not currently receiving funding for special needs, not accessing counselling, or on an individualized education plan or behaviour intervention plan. The referral sheet asked the teachers to explain the behaviours being displayed by the student, as well as some likes and dislikes of the child. It was noted on the form that the one-on-one training would not be a counselling session, nor would it take the place of any other external or additional support the student may need. Each teacher was one form, identifying one student who may benefit from peer leading the program. The one exception to this was in the kindergarten class where the teacher suggested there be two leaders so as to minimize any nervous feelings the five year olds my feel as well as adding additional support for the youngest leaders.

Return of referrals. Once teacher referrals had been returned, informed consent letters were sent home with the individual students selected to be program leaders. The projected time frame for this step in the process was early to middle of October. Parents were informed that their child had been referred to the program by their teacher, they were told that as peer leaders they would be trained to use simple stress coping strategies that may help other students as well as themselves, and that they would be role models for the program at the school. Parents were also informed that no information about their child specifically would be included in the research being conducted, that they had the option to withdraw from the program at any time, information about the research would be held in a confidential and safe manner and that the school would not be specified in any of the research. Contact information for the teacher-researcher was provided on the consent form as well.

Contact with ROAR Leaders—October-January. One-on-one sessions were held with ROAR leaders beginning in the middle of October. Each leader had one session per week for six consecutive weeks, until Christmas break. While the intent was to have all sessions one-on-one, there were an additional four leadership group meetings during the ROAR decision-making process. Also, due to time restrictions with regard to research and ethics approval, the students received an unanticipated additional few sessions of training in groups. During the first three sessions, rapport was built with the students through offering snacks, playing games, handing out leadership toques, and explaining the ROAR program. Their role as ROAR leaders was explained to be such that they offer help other students that seem to be frustrated on the playground, or need helpful reminders to be on task in assembly or to behave appropriately while in the hallway, or to

follow the ROAR values. Their job was also to be able to compliment and congratulate students who the leaders feel are doing a good job following ROAR values on their own. During the final three one-on-one sessions, each leader was given one or two de-stressing strategies that they could offer to a peer in need. By training the students to look for signs of stress in others, the leaders would be better able to identify those feelings in themselves as well. The main goals of working with the leaders was to build confidence, strengthen relationships, and develop prosocial skills.

October—ROAR Assembly 2. After classes voted on their favorite ROAR acronyms, another assembly was held wherein classes presented their idea of ROAR to the school community. Students were accustomed to hosting and presenting at school assemblies as this is required of one class monthly throughout the school year. Once all seven classes presented their acronym, based on common ideas or words, ROAR was able to be narrowed to one specific universal acronym. With the amount of adult-guided discussions and common language of positive behaviour, there was clear overlap in ideas between classes. Because many classes presented similar words and ideas, a school-wide pep rally and barbeque lunch was given to the whole school in celebration of the ROAR program as opposed to only one class receiving a celebratory reward.

December—Administrator Questionnaire. Following the introduction of the ROAR program to staff and students, the administrator was given an informed consent letter and a questionnaire which provided information about common student behaviour. The purpose of this questionnaire was to attain data concerning common observed student behaviour the administrator had dealt with over the previous year. While serious student behaviour having grounds for suspension and expulsion are recorded at the

school, there had not been a consistent log of minor social behaviour infractions at the school, therefore, a reflection of student behaviour on the administrator's part was required.

The questions on the administrator questionnaire were designed in such a way that would not only identify common challenging social behaviours in the school but help to identify the frequency of the behaviours arising in the school as well. A Likert scale was used in this questionnaire in order to denote the frequency at which the behaviours described in the questions had been taking place, despite the fact that this questionnaire would not yield significant statistical information as it was only completed by one participant. For example, a question asked to state the level of frequency that students were unable to solve conflict with peers without adult interjection where 1 is almost never, 2 is sometimes, 3 is often, and 4 is frequently. The use of the modified Likert scale allowed for a suggestion of frequency in behaviour and the question allowed for insight into common behaviours within the school. Though this questionnaire was not be used for data collection purposes, the results of the questionnaire helped to inform the content of the one-on-one sessions with the ROAR leaders as well as insight as to areas of improvement for the future of the program.

January —Final survey. A final survey was made available to all parents and staff online. The survey included Likert rating scales of aspects of the ROAR program based on individual experience and observation while at the school as well as at home during the implementation of the program. The survey provided each participant the option to be involved in an interview with the teacher-researcher to further discuss the

effects of the program. The data from this survey was analysed using a quantitative method.

The survey began with the participant identifying him or herself as a school staff member or a parent of a primary or intermediate student. This identification was necessary as the experience of staff and parents would differ, as would the time spent at the school during the implementation of the program. The identification of the staff and parents of primary or intermediate students also offers the potential correlation of behaviour to age. All questions applied to the time when the ROAR program was implemented until the time the survey had been completed, September 2015-January 2016. The bulk of the survey was based on a Likert scale referring to level of agreement to the posed statements where 1 is strongly disagree, 2 is disagree, 3 is agree, 4 is strongly agree, and 5 is not applicable. The increments of agreeability allowed for participants to demonstrate how strongly they feel about their opinions and observations while the option to select not applicable allows for questions particular to the behaviour witnessed in the classroom or home settings. The final questions on the survey asked the participants specifically whether in their opinion the ROAR program has positively impacted student prosocial behaviour, self-confidence, and school behaviour with possible responses of *yes*, *no*, or *no opinion*.

January — Interviews. The final formal contact with participants took place in the form of individual interviews. The participants for these interviews included two staff members and three parents who indicated their willingness to participate on the survey. Staff A interview and Staff B interview were both approximately ten minutes long. Parent A interview lasted approximately five minutes, Parent B interview was approximately 13

minutes and Parent C interview was approximately 12 minutes long. The researcher facilitated the five interviews by asking guided questions about the ROAR program's effectiveness and observed effect on behaviour based on the participants' responses to the final survey. This gave willing participants the opportunity to give feedback and share experiences of the ROAR process and its impact on students. The interviews were audio recorded on a password protected recording device for theming and analysis using a qualitative coding method.

The interviews took place in a semi-structural format. The interview questions appealed to the success of the program and asked participants to elaborate on the questions posed on the surveys. Though the participants' survey responses were not be able to be linked to the participants in the survey, the interview questions were gauged to further explain the observed effectiveness of the ROAR program. For example, in searching for more information about the ROAR leaders, the researcher asked, "Can you comment on the effectiveness of the ROAR leaders?" These types of questions allowed for more information to build upon and support answers provided on the survey. The interviews also provided the researcher the opportunity to ask for suggestions to improve the program, allowing for the cyclical nature of action research to occur.

January — Administrator interview. The final formal contact with the administrator was in the form of an interview. The interview took place in the principal's office and was audio recorded for theming and analysis. Interview questions were similar to those of the individual interviews and included questions geared to the number of referrals to the office for anti-social behaviour since ROAR had been implemented.

Data Analysis

The survey data was analysed using a quantitative method which focused primarily on the calculation of the mode for response frequency for each statement. Using the mode for statistical purposes with this survey was the most effective quantitative point of analysis because it revealed the highest frequency of answers for each statement where the responses *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree*, *strongly agree*, and *not applicable* were indicated. This type of analysis was most helpful in comparing results of the survey between participants. While the mean could have been used for this survey, the average response between only five possible non-quantitative statements would not yield any additional imperative information in terms of the information required to answer the research questions in this study. The median would not be as useful as the mode either because the middle point in this set of data would not reveal any additional information because statements which required responses on the survey differed in subject matter. For example, one statement referred to participants' previous knowledge of social-emotional learning while another statement referred to participants' opinions of the effectiveness of ROAR leaders as role models. The difference in the various statements on the survey provided little necessity for comparison between statement responses in this regard. The statistical analysis focused primarily on the mode of each separate statement on the survey for this reason. The results are presented in a table in the results chapter of this document.

Creation of themes

The interviews were analysed using various methods of coding and theming. Repeated words and phrases throughout the interviews were logged as codes as well as words or phrases that may not have been repeated but were relevant to the effectiveness

of the program. Intensity coding was also used where the researcher felt the interviewee had expressed high levels of passion and interest in response to interview questions. Moments of the interview were logged as high intensity if the participant spoke at great length about a certain topic, if the participant was visibly animated and engaged in the interview process, and if the participant used elaborate examples or extensive vocabulary to respond to the interview questions. In addition, versus coding was used where participants would describe conflicting values in response to a question. For example, a parent participant explained that previous to the ROAR program the school had seemingly intended to build leadership in students but focused that leadership skill building on the students who did not seem to need it. This statement was logged as natural leaders versus periphery leaders, using language from the participant in order to label the code.

The five interviews were analysed on three separate occasions. Upon the initial analysis, there were 102 codes. In order to condense this list and narrow the possible number of themes stemming from the codes, the researcher grouped together the codes that pertained to a specific timeframe. For example, a group of identified codes stemmed only from a question referring to common social behaviours prior to the implementation of the ROAR program whereas the majority of the other codes were in reference to the changes in behaviour after the implementation of the ROAR program. For this reason, codes and themes for the time prior to the ROAR program were logged on a separate table than those pertaining to the time after the implementation of the program. After the separation of codes based on timeframes, there were 36 codes describing the time before ROAR was implemented and 66 codes describing the effect of the ROAR program after

implementation. The 36 codes before the ROAR program (pre-ROAR) was started were gathered into three recurring themes of *Disruption*, *Need for Emotional Awareness*, and *Inclusivity*. Codes of Disruption were noted on 28 separate occasions; codes describing the Need for Emotional Awareness were logged 11 times, and Inclusivity was also referenced 11 times. The 66 codes "post-ROAR" were gathered into the themes of *Leadership in Community Building*, *Communication*, and *Ownership*. Leadership in Community Building was referenced on 82 occasions throughout the five interviews. These codes ranged from terms involving team building, references to ROAR leaders, as well as confidence building. Communication codes were evident 44 times during the interviews. These codes described the common language offered by the program as well as the social interactions observed during the implementation of the program. Ownership was referenced in codes 13 times throughout the interview process. These codes included the involvement of students and families in creating the program as well as the personal choices involved in social-emotional learning as described by the participants.

The administrator interview was analysed separately from the staff and parent interviews due to the unique perspective of the administrator. The administrator interview questions differed from the staff and parent interview for this reason. While the interviews were both focused on the effectiveness of the ROAR program, the administrator interview provided a closing point of reflection for the initial administrator questionnaire as well as provided the researcher with the feedback from particular interactions and experiences unique to the administrator during the process of implementing the ROAR program. The administrator provided insight into a more global,

school-wide perspective and was able to provide suggestions and plans based on that perspective for the future implementation of the program.

The administrator interview yielded 18 codes. This set of codes was derived in much the same way as the staff and parent interviews, using the same types of coding and theming. The 18 codes were gathered together based on similarities of subject and content and were gathered into two major themes of *Community Identity* and *Creation of Values*. Codes correlating with the Community Identity theme occurred on 31 separate occasions during the administrator interview. Codes corresponding to the theme of Creation of Values were present twelve times.

Trustworthiness

As a mixed-methods approach, this study has strengths in supporting evidence of results both qualitatively and quantitatively. The interviews were analysed using a qualitative content approach (Saldaña, 2013). The quantitative analysis of the surveys involved robust parametric testing.

Ethical Considerations

Working closely with children in a school setting as a teacher researcher poses minimal risks. There was a possibility of a student becoming embarrassed by being nominated by a teacher to be a leader in the school-wide program. It is my job as both a teacher and a researcher to inform the students they could not be forced to be a school leader, this was their own choice. I was also obliged to make them feel comfortable and safe in the environment which they work in. Because of the one-on-one sessions in the leadership aspect of this program, there was the potential for students to self-disclose a serious incident. If disclosure did take place, it is my obligation as a teacher to report

such admissions in order to protect the child. The adult participants of this study stood no potential risk for harm. While complete anonymity could not be guaranteed, as the study took place in a small school within a small community, confidentiality in terms of documentation was ensured by securing all information on a password-protected device.

Conclusion

This project took the form of an action research inquiry. The development of the program involved the cooperation of the whole school community. The program was under constant revision and the school community contributed to the changes needed for the unique setting.

The development of the ROAR program happened in various phases throughout the first four months of the school year. These phases included introducing the program to staff and parents, brainstorming the acronym, referring ROAR leaders, and working one-on-one with leaders. Each phase involved the collaboration of staff, parents, and students.

Data was collected through an administrator questionnaire, participant survey, interviews with parents and staff and an interview with the administrator on the effectiveness of the program. The interviews were analysed using various types of coding and theming resulting in themes relating to witnessed behaviours prior to ROAR, after ROAR, and from the administrative perspective.

This chapter has presented the methods by which data was collected and analysed, as well as the procedure for the implementation of the program, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of the study. The next chapter will present the results of the described survey and discussion of interviews.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This study used a quantitative administrator questionnaire, a quantitative teacher and parent survey, and qualitative interviews to communicate the observed effectiveness of the ROAR program in this school setting. The questionnaire was only completed by the administrator of the school and was not used for data collection but rather to inform the development of the program in the school. Though no data from this questionnaire is reflective of the effectiveness of the program, results of the questionnaire are indicated within this chapter due to its vital impact on the creation of the program as a whole and as it provided a reference point for some of the more common school-wide behaviour witnessed before the implementation of the ROAR program.

Results of the survey are presented in this chapter and discussion of these results is based on the majority responses, or modes, of each set of data. The data reflects the relationship of the participants to the school as well as the average amount of time each participant spends at the school. The results reflect the most frequent responses indicated for each statement with regard to the effects of the program on the survey. Also included in this chapter are the results of the coding and theming used to analyse the interviews. These are broken into "Pre-ROAR", "Post-ROAR", and "Administrator" categories as separate sets of data to distinguish between and among timeframes in the program as well as to provide separate analysis for the administrator interview based on the differentiated questions asked.

Administrator Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was given to the administrator on December 11, 2015 (see Table 2). While the ROAR program had already been in effect since September, the

Table 2

Administrator Questionnaire Results: Numbers Reflect Administrator Reflections on the Frequency of Common Student Behaviour Prior to the Implementation of the ROAR Program.

Behaviours of Students Referred to the Office	Frequency of Behaviours
Anti-social or socially inappropriate behaviour	4
Speaking disrespectfully to staff	2
Unable to solve conflict without adult interjection	4
Speaking disrespectfully to peers or bullying	3
Engaging in arguments with staff or students	3
Appear angry	4
Appear sad	4
Appear anxious	4
Describe an unrelated reason for upset	4
Seem contrite after meeting with principal	4

1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = frequently

administrator was asked to reflect on the behaviours among the students over the previous school year, prior to the implementation of the ROAR program. For each statement regarding common student behaviour referred to the office over the past school year, the administrator circled numbers on a modified Likert scale where 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = frequently. The most-frequent student behaviours referred to the office included anti-social or socially-inappropriate behaviour and students being unable to solve conflict with peers without adult interjection. In addition, the instances of intermediate boys sent to the office were reported as frequent while girls and primary students were almost never sent to the office for undesirable behaviours. Frequent visible emotions demonstrated by students referred to the office included anger, sadness, and anxiety. The administrator also indicated that students frequently describe an external or seemingly unrelated reason for the outburst despite the

conflict and frequently seem contrite after meeting with the principal and discussing the issue. The administrator also indicated in writing that approximately 12 students per week were sent to the office for disruptive behaviour with two or three recurring students. In addition, the principal also indicated that student referrals to the office increased near major school breaks such as long weekends, Christmas, spring break, and summer. This questionnaire revealed elevated levels of emotional distress among students in the school as well as apparent external factors for such distress.

Survey Results

The survey was made available online through UNBC FluidSurveys to the parents of 150 students as well as the 18 staff members of the school for a period of three weeks. A hard-copy newsletter about the survey and survey website address was sent home to each family in the school and a similar information sheet was posted in the staffroom for the duration of the survey as well. For additional ease of accessibility, staff were sent an email with the link to the survey attached. Teachers were asked to ensure students were writing notes to parents in their planners reminding them about accessing the survey. In addition, a verbal reminder about completing the survey was given to students in daily morning announcements in the school.

The survey was made accessible and the newsletter was sent home to parents on January 20th, 2016. Within the first 24 hours, six participants had completed the survey and one participant had indicated willingness to take part in an interview. By January 22nd, there were 10 completed surveys and two confirmed interview participants. On January 25th, the responses grew to 14 with one additional interview participant and by January 28th, there were 21 total surveys completed and five confirmed interview

Table 3

ROAR Survey Results: Participants' Relation to School. Numbers Reflect Total Number of Participants who Identified Being a Parent, Teacher, or Educational Assistant.

Participant Relation to School	Number of Participants
Parent of primary student	6
Parent of intermediate student	8
Parent of primary and intermediate student	3
Primary teacher	3
Intermediate teacher	2
Prep teacher	1
Educational assistant	2

participants. There were originally six total interview participants but one participant decided to withdraw prior to the scheduled interview. When the survey was closed on February 11, there were 25 completed surveys and five voluntary participants had taken part in an additional interview.

The majority of participants in the survey were parents of intermediate students in the school with a representation of 32% of the total number of participants (see Table 3). These participants, combined with those who identified as parents of both primary and intermediate students, collectively represented 44% of the total number of participants. Second highest to the parents of intermediate students was the participation of parents of primary students in the survey. Parents of primary students alone represented a quarter of the total number of participants. Combined with parents of both primary and intermediate students, the representation of primary parents was 36% overall. Lower participation rates were found among teaching staff and educational assistants. Due to fewer people in this particular pool of participants, especially in comparison to the school population of the parents of 150 students, there were evidently scarcer staff participants than there were

parent participants. Within the limited number of staff, there were only four primary teachers in the school, three intermediate teachers, four prep teachers and seven educational assistants. These numbers indicate that in the primary sector of the school, only one teacher did not participate in the survey. Within the intermediate sector all eligible teachers participated in the survey bearing in mind the teacher-researcher is also an intermediate teacher in the school. Researcher participation in the survey, despite being teaching staff and having first-hand experience of the program, has the potential to present greater bias in the data. For this reason, the teacher-researcher did not take part in the survey. Based on the number of completed surveys, the educational assistants had the lowest participation rate at just under a third of the total number of possible participants. These data demonstrate the rate of participation from various types of participants in the survey as well as provides a lens from which to view subsequent data in consideration of the majority population relation to the school.

In addition to the relationship of participants to the school, the participants were asked to indicate how many times per week they visited the school (see Table 4). This number allowed the researcher to determine the frequency at which the participants were able to observe student behaviour. In addition, this question provided the researcher with an idea of how well informed the subsequent responses regarding observed behaviour would be. Frequency of visits to the school denoted the level of participants' exposure to student behaviour and was important in understanding the responses of the participants in the context of observed behavioural effects of the program. To that end, nine participants indicated they had the opportunity to witness student behaviour between zero and two

Table 4

ROAR Survey Results: Participants' Weekly Presence at the School. Numbers Reflect the Total Amount of Participants Who Indicated Respective Amounts of Time at the School over the Course of the Program since September 2016.

Participant Presence at School	Number of Participants
Less than three times per week	9
More than three times per week	7
Five times per week	9

days per week, seven participants reported being in the school community three or four times a week, while the nine other participants spent time at the school every day of the school week. Approximately one third of the participants indicated they are at the school five days per week. It can be deduced that the majority of these participants were teachers or staff due to the fact that all staff work full time except for part-time teachers. This deduction allows for one or two parents to have indicated their presence at the school to be a full five days per week. Most parents indicated they were at the school less than three times per week which means these participant observations were limited to one or two weekly exposures to student behaviour. Though the majority of parent participants spent less than three times per week at the school, there were only two fewer participants who experienced the school environment more than three times per week. Staff and parent participants combined, 64% of participants who completed the survey responded to the posed statements based on experience at the school over three times per week.

The survey statements regarding the effectiveness of the ROAR program were designed in such a way to demonstrate the participants' prior knowledge of social-emotional learning prior to describing the influence of the program (see Table 5). This provided insight into the familiarity participants had with the social behavioural content

Table 5

ROAR Survey Results: Data Representing Responses of 25 Participants on the Effectiveness of the ROAR Program. Numbers Reflect the Total Amount of Participants That Indicated Each Respective Statement in Response to the Observed Effects of the Program.

Survey Statement	Response				
	SD	D	A	SA	NA
I have previous knowledge of SEL	1	4	14	4	2
I am aware of what the ROAR program is	0	0	14	11	0
The purpose of the ROAR program is clear in the school community	0	2	11	12	0
The children seem excited about the ROAR program	0	1	11	13	0
I have heard children use the word ROAR to describe appropriate school behaviour	0	3	18	3	1
ROAR leaders are visible in the school community	0	1	12	8	4
ROAR leaders are role models to their peers	0	0	16	7	2
I have witnessed ROAR leaders helping others with conflict	0	4	11	4	6
I have seen children respond positively to ROAR leaders	0	1	15	4	5
Children are following ROAR expectations	0	1	19	2	3
I have noticed children demonstrating improved self-regulation skills	0	2	13	5	5
Children seem to communicate effectively	0	1	17	5	2
Children use the ROAR acronym language outside of school	0	6	10	4	5
Children need less adult-intervention for behaviour	0	12	8	2	3
Students stop disruptive behaviour in class when reminded of ROAR	0	2	15	2	6

Children speak to adults respectfully	0	0	19	5	1
Children speak to one another respectfully	0	1	21	1	2
Students are more attentive in class	0	4	14	1	6
Children are more attentive in assembly	0	1	13	4	7
Children are more attentive in mass	0	2	11	4	8

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, NA = Not Applicable

of the survey statements. Nearly three-quarters of the participants agreed they had prior knowledge of social-emotional learning, leaving only seven participants without knowledge in this area. All participants agreed they had knowledge of what the ROAR program is and of the participants, 92% indicated that the purpose of the ROAR program was made clear in the school setting. When asked about the student interest in the ROAR program, 24 of the 25 participants agreed or strongly agreed that students were excited about the program. This excitement may have been demonstrated by the students vocally in the school as roughly 84% of the participants indicated having heard students use the word ROAR to describe appropriate behaviour at school. The survey statements regarding recalling times of specific witnessed behaviours have higher rates of "not applicable" as 16% or more of respondents selected this response in eight questions regarding the observed behaviours in the school.. The highest frequency of agreeance was to the statement concerning ROAR leaders as role models to their peers. Of the 25 participants, 92% (n=23) agreed or strongly agreed that ROAR leaders are role models to their peers Ninety-six percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that students spoke to one another respectfully after the implementation of the ROAR program.

The results of the survey most notably revealed that students are excited about the ROAR program and are speaking respectfully to staff and peers. Ninety-six percent of participants indicated student excitement about the program in comparison to the one participant who did not while 100% of the participants who found the question applicable indicated students were speaking respectfully to adults. In addition, the survey indicated that the program is well-known and its purposes are clear in the school community. Rates of reported adult-intervention in social conflict among students did not decrease according to the survey where nearly half of the participants indicated disagreement with the statement regarding students needing less adult intervention. The presence of the ROAR leaders as role models was noted in the 100% agreement from the participants who found the statement applicable to their observations as was the effort of students to follow ROAR expectations after the program's implementation.

Results of Interviews

Six semi-structured interviews took place with staff, parent, and administrator participants. Two teaching staff members were interviewed (Teacher A and Teacher B), three parents (Parent A, Parent B, and Parent C) and the administrator. One set of questions was used in the teacher and parent interviews and a separate set of questions was used in the administrator interview (see Appendices [H]). The interviews were transcribed and analysed by the researcher using qualitative coding and theming methods. The codes and themes of the interviews were separated into the categories "Pre-ROAR", "Post-ROAR", and "Administrator" (see Table 6).

Pre-ROAR. One of the first items on the list of interview questions for staff and parents asked participants to describe some of the common social behaviours they may

Table 6

Pre-ROAR: Resulting Codes and Themes From Staff and Parent Interviews Describing Observed Behaviours Before the Implementation of the ROAR Program and the Number of Times They Verbally Occurred Within the Interviews.

Theme	Code	Frequency
Disruption	impulsivity	
	picking on	4
	fights	
	squabbles	2
	disruptive	
	getting on someone else's case	
	frustrating	
	difficult	
	sassy	
	overwhelmed with homework	2
	needed extra attention	4
	attachment	
	violence	
Need for Emotional Awareness	deal with own emotions	
	emotions	
	feelings	
	emotion of the week	
	co-regulating	
	identify how they are feeling	
	making themselves better	
	mad	
	empathy	
	stress	2
	crying	
Inclusive	inclusive	6
	helping	
	anti-bullying	
	friendly	
	natural leaders vs periphery	
	leaders	

have witnessed prior to the implementation of the ROAR program. Because this question did not specify a type of behaviour, responses included both positive and negative

behaviours. While a combination of positive and negative behaviour were represented in the responses, the majority of descriptions of witnessed behaviour prior to the ROAR program corresponded to the theme of disruption. When discussing observed negative behaviours, participants noted many conflicts among students including fights and squabbles as well as students requiring, and sometimes demanding, extra attention from teachers and other adults in the school. These rates of disruptive behaviour were implicit across all interviews and the frequency of the codes relating to the disruptive theme outnumbered the other two themes in the pre-ROAR category by nearly double with the next highest reported theme indicating the need for emotional awareness.

Disruptive. Participants described negative behaviours from students as those which frequently interrupted classroom routine. These types of disruptive classroom behaviours were described by Teacher B as, "[some students] need to be the centre of attention in class by making jokes and calling out". Teacher B continued to describe other sorts of disruptive behaviour between students as, "acting out violently, kids getting stressed out and kind of like crying". Teacher A also eluded to disruptive behaviour and fighting amongst students saying, "there's always picking on and fights and squabbles on the playground." Teacher A went on to explain that, "there's a lot of impulsivity in a lot of our students. And I think that tends to happen especially with children who are of a lower sort of socioeconomic area that they come from". While teacher participants reported more events of disruptive behaviour in class, parent participants described more social disruptions that could be witnessed on the playground or before and after school. Parent A described her observations of, "lots of fighting, lots of arguing. Lots of going up to the teachers to help resolve and lots of kids on the wall". Parent C described some

social situations where she had seen exclusion taking place where, "you would get certain kids that as a group would exclude somebody and you could see that whether it was because of interest or whatever but I could see that".

Need for emotional awareness. The theme for students needing emotional awareness was reflected through many repeated codes relating to students being unable to regulate emotions. This theme is quite connected to the theme of disruption in that students displaying lack of regulation skills has the potential for creating disruptive environments in the school setting, however the two themes were separated so as to reflect the identification of areas of specific weakness for the students' social-emotional development. The participants described a multitude of visible identifiers for emotional distress including anger, stress, crying, and the inability to deal with one's own emotions. This seemed to be a common concern for the adults in the school community with twelve recurring indicators of similar expressions of concern.

When describing the need for emotional awareness, Teacher B described how, "if a child is not doing well socially, if their social and emotional state is not in good health then they are not going to be able to learn or to be able to do any of the higher skill functioning that you want them to do as a teacher because they're too stuck on their emotional needs". In addition, Teacher A explained, "the importance of children being able to kind of identify how they're feeling and have that metacognition and be able to like respond so that you as a teacher don't have to be co-regulating every child in your classroom". Teacher A reiterated the importance of emotional awareness in stating that students need to know, "how to treat each other and how to deal with their own emotions".

Inclusive. The most positive behaviour descriptive responses reflected values in inclusivity at the school. Participants frequently described the school as having a welcoming and inviting atmosphere where children were included in activities across age and grade groups. The school's anti-bullying efforts and student helping was highlighted, as well as the strengths of the natural leaders among the students in the school. Every interview participant referenced the inclusivity of the students at the school.

Parent C described in detail the inclusive environment endorsed at the school through her experience as a member of the parent support group and parent of three children in the school. She felt the school has always been, "Very inclusive, a lot of inclusive behaviours, lots of friendly comments. Greeting, like lots of children excited to see each other and expressing that and I didn't often hear or wasn't able to say, "Oh, you can't play"." Teacher B also remarked on the inclusivity of the students in the school stating, "I think our kids are always really good at being inclusive and being inclusive across the grades is I think a big one because even at recess time you'll see it's not always the same grade groups that interact and intermingle with one another".

Post-ROAR. In the interview, participants were asked to describe any changes in behaviour they may have witnessed over the course of the implementation of the ROAR program (see Table 7). While overall the participants expressed they had not seen a marked change in the general population of the school, they all spoke to the improvement of leadership in community building, particularly within the experience of the ROAR leaders, the positive aspects of using common language for expectations within the school setting, and the powerful nature of student and school community ownership of the program.

Table 7

Post-ROAR: Resulting Codes and Themes from the Staff and Parent Interviews Describing Observed Behaviours After the Implementation of the ROAR Program and the Number of Times They Verbally Occurred within the Interviews.

Theme	Code	Frequency
Leadership in Community Building	ROAR leaders	12
	potential	3
	clarify	5
	confidence	9
	responsibility	
	thrived socially	
	student of the month	
	positive	3
	team	7
	self-regulate	2
	student participation and ideas	
	involving families	3
	sense of community	8
	school pride	
	values	2
	school culture	7
	fostering leadership	
	every child	
	general population	
	together	
	staff	4
	more involved	5
Communication	expectations	3
	terminology	
	talking to students	
	language	10
	schema	
	say something to a kid	
	respond	
	social	3
	social emotional learning	
	connect more easily	
	unified	3
	help	3
	interactions	
	excited	3
	acceptance	
	respect	7
	resolve	3

	playing how to treat each other	2
Ownership	children need to learn children being able do it on their own self-regulation metacognition 5 point scale focus on themselves our own thing job choice point of view	2 3 2

Leadership in community building. Across the five interviews of staff and parents, each participant expressed the positive impact of the program on leadership and community development. Codes pertaining to the theme leadership in community building appeared over 140 different times across the five interviews. In many cases the participants went on at length about the sense of community and leadership within the roots of this program and for this reason four of the five interviews were coded as high level intensity in discussions involving this particular topic. Four of the five interviews were over ten minutes in duration and all four of those participants spent approximately 50% of the interview alluding to leadership in community building within the program. In response to the question asking about the major strengths of the program, all five interview participants described leadership and community as the most apparent effect of the program.

On the topic of leadership in the ROAR program, Parent B explained her perspective on the selection of leaders as, "the main thing is that these are kids that wouldn't normally get centered or put in the leadership role for things because they are

not excelers". This sentiment was expressed again by Teacher B in her opinion on the effect of the program on the ROAR leaders, "just to see them really blossom. I think that they have come a long ways in what I have seen in just that they take it very seriously and that it's really kind of like a feather in their cap that they have been chosen to be a ROAR leader". This statement also supports the confidence building that was noted by other participants. Parent C commended the program's leadership aspect in saying, "I think identifying it early and starting to plant the seeds of what leadership looks like as they are growing is key especially in the primary grades and I think the school did do well". Parent C also mentioned the collaboration in terms of teamwork in her comment, "I think that there is more of a team approach with them, like at the beginning of the year when the ROAR program was being introduced and the idea of contributing to a school spirit like a broader school perspective". In addition, Teacher B commented on the community building nature of the program in stating, "that's really good to then not just include students but then having the families to buy in to hopefully have that sense of community and culture cultivated at the school".

Communication. Communication was the second highest recurring theme throughout the interviews at a frequency of 56 corresponding codes across the five interviews. Communication in this context was noted when participants discussed language, respectful verbal interaction, communication with parents, and the importance of clarification of expectations in a school setting. The most frequently recurring code within this theme was that of language. With the exception of respect, language was discussed on average five times more frequently than any other code under the umbrella theme of communication. The most common dialogue around language was that of the

necessity of common language used throughout the school and at home through the use of the ROAR values. While parents seemed to appreciate the labeling of specific values to follow at home and at school, teachers expressed appreciation of the potential for common language across the classrooms as well. As Teacher A explained, "[the ROAR program] has a lot of potential to be like a stepping off point for all sorts of social emotional learning and language and changing a lot of things in our school and I like that".

Ownership. The final theme in the Post-ROAR category of witnessed behaviour during the interview process was identified as ownership. Many participants eluded to the fact that because the program had been essentially developed by the students and their families, there was more buy-in and sense of greater ownership than if it were developed by teachers alone, for example. Participants chose to describe the ROAR process as being a powerful ownership piece in that students' choices were reflected in the values and their points of view were taken into consideration in the development of the program. Teacher B in particular noted the unique value of the program in saying, "it's really positive including student ideas and student participation and trying to create a program that is not all top down and is kind of grass roots". The participants expressed that not only was the program developed in collaboration of the whole school community, the basis of the program allows for ownership of one's own feelings and emotions as well. The program, according to the participants, allows for students to be more cognoscente of how they are treating one another and to take ownership of their interactions, reactions, and feelings.

Administrator interview results. Of the six total interviews, the administrator was most expressive and engaged in the interview. The administrator used expressive

Table 8

Administrator Interview: Resulting Codes and Themes from the Administrator Interview Describing Observed Behaviours after the Implementation of the ROAR Program and the Number of Times They Verbally Occurred within the Interviews.

Theme	**Code**	**Frequency**
Community/Identity	culture	3
	community	7
	faith community	3
	panther	6
	panther pride	8
	family	7
	leadership	7
	common language reflection	5
Creation of Values	creating values	8
	direct involvement	4
	individual impact	3

language in her description of the effects of the ROAR program and her passion was made evident through her body language as well as her descriptions and answers to the posed questions (see Table 8). The administrator took part in this interview with a visibly positive and interested attitude and seemed excited to be discussing the effects of the ROAR program in her school. While the administrator disclosed the ROAR program has not been in the school quite long enough to see a marked difference in every student yet, "the biggest strength of the program is that clearly we have changed through this program the school culture of our school and that is no small task".

Community and identity. Among the most prevalent descriptors the administrator used to describe the effects of the ROAR program in the school was the powerful sense of community and identity building in the school. Within the principal's fifteen minute interview she made reference to community identity building 47 times.

The high frequency of this theme is echoed in the rate of the similar theme of leadership in community resulting from the staff and parent interviews. The theme of community and identity building was coded as such in descriptors such as school identity upon mention of the Panthers, family, and community. The administrator often used the term family to describe the school community and used these common phrases when explaining the positive impact of the ROAR program in the school setting. One of the most important features of the ROAR program in meeting the school vision and mission statements for the principal was answering the question, "have we taught our students who don't have family networks that are kind, respectful, loving, and accepting and rejoice in their own gifts, have we taught these people the important values of what families are all about?" In addition, the administrator affirmed the role the ROAR program has had on continuing to develop the faith community in stating, "not only the values have been created but now they're starting to be lived out and they are starting to be established and worked right through and are weaving through our faith community". The administrator reported that the ROAR program is a step toward bringing together the school family for those students who need it most.

Creation of values. The second and final theme of the administrator interview was centred on the importance of the creation of values. Again, this theme can be viewed in connection to the previous theme of ownership among the staff and parent interviews as well. The administrator described the creation of values as a school community as an integral part of the program and school culture over 15 times within the span of her interview. The administrator described the positive effects of creating values together as a school saying, "I believe having them directly involved and them creating the values and

living the process of the ROAR program out has impacted them strongly". Not only did the administrator reflect on the impact of the ROAR program on students, she also expressed the vested interest of the staff in saying, "not just our students but our staff as well, people have embodied the values". While she made reference to the collaborative process of identifying the values within the school, the administrator described the impact of the process explicitly in stating, "it's a project that entails the whole school body as well as the teachers, staff and families, I think it's impacted them, again, in a way that's been positive and has helped their growth".

Discussion of the Results

The discussion of results will identify connections between the questionnaire, survey, and interviews. Findings of this study across the described domains will be linked to current studies in order to support the evidence presented in the questionnaire, survey, and interviews. Connections and discussion will be described in terms of the identified necessity of the program and program response. The differentiation between teacher and parent observations will be discussed as well. Findings of the study will be summarized and implications of this study on the culture of the school will be discussed.

Necessity of the program. The initial questionnaire by the administrator and the first questions in the staff and parent interview were meant to give a snapshot of common social behaviours among the students in the school prior to the implementation of the ROAR program. Identifying areas of strengths and weakness was crucial in going forward with one-on-one work with ROAR leaders as well as identifying the need for social-emotional intervention at the school. The administrator, staff, and parents indicated that students were impulsive and disruptive prior to the ROAR program. Student

behaviour was reported as being attention seeking, reflective of sadness, stress, aggression, and anger sometimes presented in violence at the school. These attributes are reflective of the Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative (2015) study in which the children were reported as demonstrating lack of self-regulatory skills because they struggled with paying attention, ignoring distractions, inhibiting impulses, regulating emotions, and maintaining a state of being calm, focused, and alert. Based on the results of this study, the observed behaviour of students disclosed by the school community in terms of the repeated disruptive behaviour prior to September, warranted the implementation of a social-emotional learning program such as ROAR.

Program response. The results of the questionnaire, survey, and interviews collectively reflect a positive response to the ROAR program and reinforce the results of similar studies. The positive impact of the ROAR program manifested itself over various different domains including community, leadership and identity building, ownership in the creation of values, and creating common language of expectations in the school community. While the positive implications of the program were quite evident throughout the data collection process, the program was not observed to have had a large impact on behaviours throughout the school and some suggestions for improvement and ideas for the future were implied most notably through the interview process.

One of the most predominant strengths noted about the ROAR program was its ability to strengthen and build on community values. Community building was reflected in the many comments about creating common core values together and as a team and also through the involvement of the school's faith-based community as well. Not only were the students and parents involved in the process of creating values, the school pastor

was also a special member of the ROAR leadership team. The ROAR values reflected the faith community of the school especially in the Rejoice value. The presence and involvement of the pastor as well as the acknowledgement of a faith value by the families mirrored the findings of Passe and Willox (2009) that the inclusion of religion in schools in a well-planned effort may lead to a stronger society, one in which religious differences are understood, appreciated, and even celebrated. The students' decision to incorporate the faith-based values of respect, acceptance, optimism, and rejoice echo the acceptance of multiculturalism and diverse religious backgrounds Passe and Willox identified in faith-based schools. The incorporation of faith values in the program reflects the positive effects of religion in schools that Feinberg (2013) witness in his study as considering religion in schools a live option for understanding their world and the people in it. The ability for students to create a program reflective of their unique identity as a school was referenced by Parent C in her statement, "the team spirit piece and the school spirit piece which this school has always had a good identity around but I think that really was some glue for it, some cohesiveness for that kind of like, 'Yah, we are the panthers,' but this kind of gave other elements to what that spirit was and how they defined it. And it's neat that they made it". It is evident that through the ROAR program, students were able to celebrate their identity as a faith-based community while building social-emotional skills and taking ownership as well.

In terms of leadership, the results of the study of the ROAR program echo those of Bickmore's (2001) study of leadership and mediation in demonstrating that young students are capable of learning to help each other to resolve interpersonal conflicts in school through peer support, tutoring, leadership and mediation. The ROAR leaders were

commended on their individual improvements and growth through the ROAR program process as reflected by Teacher A in his interview, "I've seen changes in ***** in particular, the student from my class who is a ROAR leader because when responsibility has been put on him, he has thrived socially because of it". Echoing this reflection on the positive individual effects of the ROAR program, the majority of the participants indicated on the survey that ROAR leaders were role models to their peers. In connection to the marked improvement on an individual basis, Parent B, the parent of a ROAR leader, described her son's journey as a leader and the transformation in terms of his confidence level. In describing the marked change in her son's confidence, Parent B said, "That is the biggest thing for him because he never had it before." She went on to explain that since the implementation of the ROAR program, "stuff has happened that he like never thought to try for and 'whatever' was his attitude before but now he seems to be more really trying." This change in confidence stems from the ownership process involved in creating values as school as well as giving students opportunities to be leaders among their peers who would not normally come forward to volunteer or be an obvious choice as a leader. This sentiment was expressed by Parent C, as well, whose children were not ROAR leaders but when reflecting on the leadership aspect of the ROAR program she expressed, "the ones that stand out aren't having problems with leadership skills, it's the ones that aren't and the ones that probably just don't know what those steps are or what they're missing". The results of the importance of leadership and the empowerment of students reflects Elias' (2006) notion of the importance of distribution of leadership where ideally each member of the school environment will see that the mantle of leadership touches everyone who has a vested interest in the school. In

the case of the ROAR program, leadership was distributed to the students in order for them to contribute to the school community while fostering confidence and social skills simultaneously. In addition to building confident leaders, the ROAR program was developed in such a way where students can become self-regulated through co-regulation, modeling, and eventually independence as echoed by Florez's (2011) three teaching strategies that are critical for scaffolding children's development: modeling, using hints and cues, and gradually withdrawing adult support.

Many interview participants discussed the importance of common language through the ROAR program. The use of common language in the ROAR program is reflected in its successful counterparts such as PATHS described in the literature review prior to this chapter. Due in part to its succinct and limited expectations and goals, the PATHS program has been shown to improve students' ability to identify and understand emotion, fluency in communicating feelings, and increase their ability to manage emotions as Greenberg at al. (1995) found in their study of the effectiveness of the PATHS program in school settings. The use of a limited number of values or expectations in the ROAR program likewise makes it easier for the students to follow and remember.

Teacher versus parent observations. The teachers seemed to have a more clear understanding of the ROAR program and gained more exposure to the program than did the parents. This was most likely due to the fact that teachers have the opportunity to view student interactions more frequently than parents do and they also gain further information and knowledge about the program through staff meetings and other more informal interactions at the school. Many participants indicated "not applicable" in

response to statements involving recollection of witnessed behaviours at the school most likely due to the 36% of participants who indicated experiencing the school atmosphere less than three times per week. An additional reason as to the lack of opportunity for parents to witness ongoing behaviours at school is the often varied structure of the family unit within the low SES location of the school. Parents in these communities can be single-income families and working conditions can be such that parents are not able to be present to drop off and pick up students from school. Many students may walk to and from school alone as well. In addition, parents from low SES families may lack information about what happens at school due to student truancy as well. Students who are frequently absent from school do not receive the same exposure to events at school and would be unable to communicate details to parents upon request. This level of truancy, along with lack of social-emotional skills among low SES students was notably reflected in the study by Nolan et al. (2013) who found truancy to increase between 14% and 78% among low SES students yearly. This may also be a contributing factor of the low completion rate of the survey as well. If students were not at school to receive the notices, reminders, and additional information about the program and survey, parents would be unable to complete the survey. In addition, low SES families do not always have access to internet which would hinder their ability to take part in the online survey as well.

Many participants indicated on the survey that they disagreed with the statement that students need less adult-intervention in conflict with peers. This may be a reflection of low SES families, as well, due to the severe lack of social-emotional skills among children from these families. As Rochette and Bernier (2014) found in their study on low

SES implications on child development, students from low SES families often have more difficulty with executive functioning skills such as impulsivity control and conflict resolution. For these students, exposure to a social-emotional learning program over a four month period may not be long enough to see a marked improvement in these competencies. Further to this point, all of the staff interview participants including the administrator eluded to their opinions that the program had not yet been in effect long enough to see wide-spread change in behaviour among the students, although the potential for this change was evident.

Conclusion

The questionnaire and preliminary interview questions in this study helped to identify common social behaviour among students prior to the implementation of the ROAR program. Results indicated that staff and parents agreed that while students often displayed disruptive behaviour, the general atmosphere of the school promoted inclusivity. Participants expressed the efforts of the school staff and community in creating a positive atmosphere despite many children's struggles with emotional self-regulation and disruptive behaviour. These descriptors of previous common behaviours warranted the application of social-emotional learning program in the school.

The survey allowed participants to express their opinions on the effectiveness of the program. The general response of the effectiveness of the program was positive across the data in the survey. The survey results did not demonstrate a significant change in behaviour across the school population particularly with regard to students being unable to solve conflict without adult intervention. Survey results were positive, though, in the reported observation of students following ROAR values, their excitement about

the program, and students speaking respectfully to one another and adults in the school setting.

While the behavioural effects of the program were not far-reaching, interview participants reported significant behavioural changes in individual students particularly in the case of ROAR leaders. Interview participants described the positive effect of the collaboration of the school community in creating ROAR values and selecting ROAR leaders who would not normally step forward in leadership roles. This has evidently helped to build student confidence. In addition, interview participants expressed their gratitude for the program's common language in the school and at home as well.

There was a marked difference in the recollection of parent and teacher observations. This is true, also, of the unique perspective of the administrator. Information is not always presented to parents a clearly as it is at school and it was evident that some parents did not have enough information or in some cases experience at the school to form a confident opinion on the effectiveness of the program.

This chapter has presented the results of the questionnaire, survey, and interviews. This chapter has also discussed the results in the context of the school and analysed the results within the conceptual lens and in reflection of the literature review. The next and final chapter will conclude the discussion, reflect on the purpose of the study and the research question, and present the researcher's hopes for the future of the ROAR program.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

My experience as a teacher and my life of working with youth has led me to develop a passion for fostering positive social competency and behaviour in children. It has often astonished me that so much time and effort is put into teachers' professional development on types of assessment and innovative curriculum implementation instead of focusing on the needs of students today who lack the foundational skills required to enjoy and appreciate the highly educated staff that is meant to teach them. Children face many stresses in today's society which impact their ability to learn, focus, have positive interactions with peers and adults, and to feel confident in their identities and skills. It was my goal in the development of this thesis to focus on fostering these traits in the students who attend the school at which I teach.

I have had the privilege of experiencing the exponential growth of the school over the past three and a half years. During my time as a teacher there, the school has been under new leadership and has taken steps toward improving the school identity and culture in various exciting ways. The school's administrator has worked diligently to foster a "Panther Family" among our growing number of staff and students with everything from "Panther Pride" t-shirts to wall murals and custom "Panther" banners around the school. As a result of these consistent efforts, our students from diverse backgrounds and, sometimes unstable home lives, have been able to experience a sense of belonging and family within the school setting. Before the implementation of the ROAR program, the school had already taken positive and influential steps toward promoting prosocial behaviour and positive self-esteem through strengthening school pride. The ROAR program was a suggested and logical next step for the school.

The collaborative creation of the ROAR values was an excellent display of the impact of the strides toward school unity thus far. Families had the opportunity to have their own values reflected in the school and it became ultimately the students' decision as to what the most important values in their school were. The selection of Respect, Optimism, Acceptance, and Rejoice demonstrated a keen interest in the fair treatment of others and the self as well as positive attitudes and celebration of identity. These qualities are unique to the school in that the qualities were selected by the families and students, the acronym reflects the identity of the school mascot representing team spirit, and the values reflect faith-based qualities cherished by the school community and parish. For this reason, the results of this program implementation are specific to the school and cannot be generalized to apply to all elementary school settings. The ROAR values are now proudly displayed in all seven classrooms, the library, the school office, multi-purpose rooms, the gym, assembly space, and ROAR posters have been sent home to parents to display at home as well. The ROAR values are now presented on all monthly school newsletters and at the bottom of all memos sent from the school office. Students are able to identify the core school values and can easily describe how these values look, sound, and feel in the school. This program has enhanced, and in some ways changed, the school environment. It has been a pleasure to watch the ROAR program unfold in the school. I have witnessed the impact on the individual students, particularly the ROAR leaders. Their confidence levels have increased and their abilities to self-regulate are slowly improving. I hope to see a continued change in students' behaviour as we moved forward with the program in years to come, making new leaders in the school as we advance. In agreement with the sentiments of many of the interview participants, I feel

that the program has not been in place long enough to see a marked change in the general behaviour of the students in the school. I do believe, however, that with more time the ROAR program has the potential to bring about behavioural change throughout the majority of the school population. While there has not been a significant change in overall prosocial and self-regulatory behaviour in the school, the school culture has taken steps in creating an environment where the opportunity of behavioural change is possible.

The future is bright for the ROAR program. The ROAR program has been endorsed by our staff at professional development days, the program has been featured in the city newspaper, and principals from other schools have expressed keen interest in how our school has implemented the program and what our plans are moving forward. Most recently, the ROAR program received high commendations during an internal evaluation report of our school. The next steps for ROAR have been discussed amongst staff and it has been decided that ROAR tickets will be given out by leaders as a form of a positive reward system for following ROAR values. I plan on continuing one-on-one and group sessions with the ROAR leaders for the remainder of this school year in order to further the social-emotional learning and self-regulation skills of our leaders. I hope to focus these remaining sessions on targeting weaknesses in individual leaders and offer more strategies for overcoming those social and behavioural weaknesses. When we look to the future, our staff can imagine our ROAR leaders becoming mentors for the next wave of ROAR leaders. In addition, the administrator has expressed interest in bringing our school into the community with the help of our ROAR leaders.

Recommendations

Based on my research I have four recommendations related to methodology and delivery of the program, and the pedagogy relating to the background knowledge needed to deliver a well-rounded social-emotional learning program. The following recommendations stem from my experience of the program development and implementation in terms of what worked and what did not. Recommendations were also derived from participant feedback and informal conversations about the ROAR program in the school community.

Recommendation One

Throughout the creation and delivery of the ROAR program, I found it challenging to work with multiple teachers' schedules in order to meet with ROAR leaders when I would have liked to. I had originally planned to meet with ROAR leaders on my own preparation time at school so as not to take recesses away from leaders. This did not always happen due to the important curriculum content and lessons the students would miss if they were to leave class for the ROAR meetings. I attempted to limit this type of conflict by having teachers approve a schedule I developed based on my own preparation time, however teachers cannot always be sure exactly what topic they will be covering each lesson or how well students will grasp the concepts. For these reasons it was sometimes impossible to take the ROAR leaders from class even if for only ten minutes. Meetings happened at recess time more frequently than I would have liked and although the students and parents did not mind, I would recommend avoiding this as the program continues because children need social play breaks during the day. In addition,

many of the ROAR leaders are students who struggle with academics or being in the classroom in general so their recess time is especially important to their success at school.

Recommendation Two

The findings of my study suggest a need for social-emotional learning intervention in the school. While addressing the social-emotional needs of the students was the number one goal of the program, it is important for the steps forward to be informed by pedagogical literature and research on the subject. ROAR leaders should receive more strategies geared toward self-regulation, for example, in order to promote their own regulation as well as mentor other students on these skills while following the CASEL framework. I believe students must receive training in current and evidence-based practices in order for there to be a significant improvement in self-regulation and prosocial behaviour. I would like to concentrate on this type of training for the ROAR leaders in the future.

Recommendation Three

During the interview process and informal interactions, parents provided constructive feedback about the program regarding the dissemination of information about the ROAR program. Suggestions for the future of the ROAR program included announcing to parents who the ROAR leaders are through a newsletter especially for those parents who could not attend the ROAR assemblies that were held at the school in order to introduce the ROAR leaders and clarify the purposes of the ROAR program. This would help parents to build common language at home and allow them to refer their

children to look to specific leaders as role models within the school setting at times of social conflict.

Recommendation Four

Though this study took the form of an action research project, it was suggested that the teachers become more involved in the development of the program going forward. Teacher A suggested that teachers become more involved with what ROAR should look like in the school in terms of common expectations and language. The common language was a positive remark from many of the participants but it was suggested that teachers come together to brainstorm exactly what those expectations should look like, sound like, and feel like in the school setting in order to promote consistency among teachers and locations within the school. In addition, teachers expressed a keen interest in the future development of the program and voiced their desire to contribute more to the future tasks of ROAR leaders as well as the use of ROAR tickets as a reward program.

Reflections

My personal steps forward in light of the small successes I have witnessed in the development and implementation of the ROAR program include creating a manual for the program. In order to promote community among our faith-based schools across the diocese and to promote awareness of the ROAR program, the superintendent and principals from other schools attended assemblies at our school celebrating the ROAR program. Throughout this process I have had multiple educators and administrators inquire as to how the program was developed and how to reproduce this program. In

addition I have seen administrators of other schools, upon witnessing the effects of this program asking, "Do we have school pride?" Though the exact program could not be replicated in another school, I do believe a template for the collaborative development of this program could be used in any elementary school setting in order to bring about similar school culture change. This program is built on the foundation of school pride and sharing of equal values which is something I believe can exist in all schools. The implementation of such programs in elementary schools would not only help to enhance individual levels of confidence but foster acceptance of others, leadership skills, and school spirit through creating a sense of belonging and pride. I believe these are key ingredients to preparing students not only for academic success but success in life in general. Providing a program manual may help to foster these building blocks of school pride, confidence, leadership, and unity in other schools.

Through carrying out this study I have observed the strength of a positive school atmosphere and open-minded staff. The administrator, pastor, and my colleagues fully took part in the development of this program and became advocates for ROAR and I am grateful for the dedication they have all demonstrated in this endeavour. I appreciate the continued support of the parents, grandparents, foster parents and families of our students who helped to make the program reality in our school. Were it not for the collegiate partnership among our staff and school community I feel that the ROAR program would not have made the impression it has, nor would it have been as successful.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire Research Participant Information Letter

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *The Observed Behavioral Effects of a Universal Social-Emotional Learning Program in an Elementary School Setting* as part of my Master of Education (MDL) degree. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Graduate Student/ Researcher: Jenna Johnston

Program: Multidisciplinary Leadership (MEd)

University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-563-5201 (work) email: jjohnston@cispg.ca (work)

***Purpose of the Research*:** As part of my Master of Education degree, I am conducting a questionnaire to gain an understanding of any observed behaviours you have witnessed before the implementation of the R.O.A.R program and common behaviours referred to the office.

Why were you asked? You were asked to take part in this research project because you are familiar with the children at the school and have had the opportunity to observe their behaviours. In addition, as the administrator of the school, you have a unique perspective on the common serious social behaviour infractions across all grades in the school.

What is involved? The research involves your participation in a questionnaire which should take you less than ten minutes to complete. The questionnaire will pose questions geared to reflecting on past common student behaviour you have witnessed that has led to students being sent to the office over the last year as principal of the school.

At any point during the process you may choose to stop participation in the study. If you choose to withdraw, your information will not be used in the study and it will be destroyed through deletion from the data set. You also have the option to review the resulting report once it is complete.

What are the benefits of being involved? Your involvement in this questionnaire will help to shape the R.O.A.R. leadership sessions and the type of social-emotional strategies used in the training of the student leaders for the betterment of social-emotional skills and behaviour. With your help, we will be able to identify the strengths and short comings of student behaviour in the school and will be better able to adjust and improve the R.O.A.R. program.

What are the risks in taking part? There are no potential risks in taking part in the questionnaire. If you do not like the questions or do not want to participate, you simply stop filling in the questionnaire.

How will my information be kept confidential and anonymous? Before submission of the final thesis paper, all identifying features of the school, staff, students, and parents will be removed by me. The type of information that will not be included is your name and any other recognisable information. Because you are the sole administrator in the school, anonymity of your identity as an administrator cannot be guaranteed.

How will my information be stored? All data will be stored and retained by me on a password-protected computer in my locked office in my house in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Northern British Columbia. The data will be stored for five years and destroyed after the five-year period.

How can I make contact if I have any questions or concerns? You may contact the researcher via email at jjohnston@cispg.ca. If you have any questions and for concerns and complaints, please contact the UNBC REB at 250.960.6735 or email at reb@unbc.ca.

Research Participant Consent Form

If you agree to the following statements, please sign in the designated place below.

You understand that you have been asked to be in a research study
You have read and received a copy of the participant information letter
You understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research study at any time
You understand the benefits of participating in this research study
The issue of confidentiality has been explained to you
You understand who will have access to the information you provide
You have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study

Name of participant	Signature of participant	Date
Name of researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

Appendix B

Administrator Questionnaire 1:

Introduction to R.O.A.R.

Please answer the following questions describing student behaviour referred to the office last school year (2014-2015) to the best of your ability by circling **1 almost never**, **2 sometimes**, **3 often**, and **4 frequently**. Keep in mind typical student referrals to the office. Once the questionnaire is complete, please place it inside the envelope provided, seal it, and place it in my mailbox in the school office.

Students are displaying anti-social or socially-inappropriate behaviour at school	1 2 3 4
Students are speaking disrespectfully to staff	1 2 3 4
Students are unable to solve conflict with peers without adult interjection	1 2 3 4
Students are unable to 'calm down' after an upset	1 2 3 4
Students are unable to follow classroom routine	1 2 3 4
Students are speaking disrespectfully to peers or are bullying their peers	1 2 3 4
Students are displaying physically violent behaviour at school	1 2 3 4
Students are verbally threatening staff or students	1 2 3 4
Students lie about their involvement in an incident	1 2 3 4
Students deny their involvement in an incident	1 2 3 4
Students engage in arguments with staff members	1 2 3 4

Students are outwardly defiant in class	1 2 3 4
Students have social conflict during recess time	1 2 3 4
Students are boys	1 2 3 4
Students are girls	1 2 3 4
Students are in primary grades (K-3)	1 2 3 4
Students are in intermediate grades (4-7)	1 2 3 4
Students' issues are resolved in 10 minutes or less	1 2 3 4
Students are being disruptive in class	1 2 3 4
Students are unable to focus in assembly	1 2 3 4
Students have conflict in classroom line up	1 2 3 4
Students have conflict with hallway transitions	1 2 3 4
Students appear angry	1 2 3 4
Students cry	1 2 3 4
Students appear sad	1 2 3 4
Students appear anxious	1 2 3 4

Students appear nervous	1 2 3 4
Students describe an external reason for the outburst despite the conflict	1 2 3 4
Students describe an unrelated reason for the outburst despite the conflict	1 2 3 4
Students seem contrite after meeting with you as the principal	1 2 3 4
Students' parents are contacted due to the seriousness of the incident	1 2 3 4

Please estimate approximately how many students get referred to the office per week for anti-social or inappropriate behaviour.

_____

Appendix C

Survey Research Participant Information Letter
(Downloadable on the Survey Website)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *The Observed Behavioral Effects of a Universal Social-Emotional Learning Program in an Elementary School Setting* as part of my Master of Education (MDL) degree. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Graduate Student/ Researcher: Jenna Johnston

Program: Multidisciplinary Leadership (MEd)

University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-563-5201 (work) email: jjohnston@cispg.ca (work)

***Purpose of the Research*:** As part of my Master of Education degree, I am conducting a survey to gain an understanding of any observed behaviours you have witnessed during the implementation of the R.O.A.R program and its effectiveness on socio-emotional skills in the school.

Why were you asked? You were asked to take part in this research project because you are familiar with the children at the school and have had the opportunity to observe their behaviours over the last several months.

What is involved? The research involves your participation in an anonymous survey which should take you less than ten minutes to complete. I will pose questions geared to any potentially-observed changes in student behaviour. The survey will be accessed online for your convenience.

At any point during the process you may choose to stop participation in the study. If you choose to withdraw, your information will not be used in the study and it will be destroyed through deletion from the data set. You also have the option to review the resulting report once it is complete.

What are the benefits of being involved? Your involvement in this survey could help to shape the school environment for the betterment of social emotional skills and behaviour. With your help, we will be able to see the strengths and short comings of the R.O.A.R. program and will be better able to adjust and improve.

What are the risks in taking part? There are no potential risks in taking part in the survey. If you do not like the questions or do not want to participate, you simply close the page and your responses will not be saved.

How will my information be kept confidential and anonymous? Before submission of the final thesis paper, all identifying features of the school, staff, students, and parents will be removed by me. The type of information that will not be included is your name and any other recognisable information. On the survey, you will not be required to state your name but will be asked to indicate whether you are a parent or teacher of a primary or intermediate student.

How will my information be stored? All data will be stored and retained by me on a password-protected computer in my locked office in my house in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Northern British Columbia. The data will be stored for five years and destroyed after the five-year period.

How can I make contact if I have any questions or concerns? You may contact the researcher via email at jjohnston@cispg.ca. If you have any questions and for concerns and complaints, please contact the UNBC REB at 250.960.6735 or email at reb@unbc.ca.

Research Participant Consent Form

If you agree to the following statements, please go directly to the survey; if you do not wish to participate, please exit with my thanks for participating thus far.

You understand that you have been asked to be in a research study
You have read and received a copy of the participant information letter
You understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research study at any time
You understand the benefits of participating in this research study
The issue of confidentiality has been explained to you
You understand who will have access to the information you provide
You have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study

Appendix D

R.O.A.R.

Final Survey

Please indicate your connection(s) to Sacred Heart School:

____ I am the parent of a primary student

____ I am the parent of an intermediate student

____ I am a primary teacher

____ I am an intermediate teacher

____ I am an educational assistant

How often do you have the opportunity to observe student social interactions?

____ less than three times per week

____ more than three times per week

____ 5 days per week

Please indicate your answers to the questions below by marking an 'x' in the respective columns **1 strongly disagree**, **2 disagree**, **3 agree**, **4 strongly agree**, **5 not applicable**.

	1	2	3	4	5
I have previous knowledge of social emotional learning					
I am aware of what the R.O.A.R. program is					
The children are aware of what the R.O.A.R. program is					
The purpose of the R.O.A.R. program is clear in the school community					
The children seem excited about the R.O.A.R. program					
I have heard children use the word R.O.A.R. to describe appropriate school behaviour					
R.O.A.R. leaders are visible in the school community					
R.O.A.R. leaders are role models to their peers					
I have witnessed R.O.A.R. leaders helping others with conflict					
I have seen children respond positively to R.O.A.R. leaders					

Children are following R.O.A.R. expectations					
I have noticed children demonstrating improved self-regulation skills					
Children seem to communicate effectively					
Children use the R.O.A.R. acronym language outside of school					
Children need less adult-intervention for behaviour					
Students stop disruptive behaviour in class when reminded of R.O.A.R.					
Children speak to adults respectfully					
Children speak to one another respectfully					
Students are more attentive in class					
Children are more attentive in assembly					
Children are more attentive in mass					

In your opinion, has the R.O.A.R. program been effective in promoting prosocial behaviour?

_____ yes _____ no _____ no opinion

In your opinion, has the R.O.A.R. program enhanced school spirit?

_____ yes _____ no _____ no opinion

In your opinion, has the R.O.A.R. program improved student confidence?

_____ yes _____ no _____ no opinion

Are you willing to take part in an interview about the effects of the ROAR program?

_____ yes _____ no

Please indicate your name and email address if you are willing to take part in the interview.

_____

Appendix E

Interview Research Participant Information Letter

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *The Observed Behavioral Effects of a Universal Social-Emotional Learning Program in an Elementary School Setting* as part of my Master of Education (MDL) degree. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Graduate Student/ Researcher: Jenna Johnston

Program: Multidisciplinary Leadership (MEd)

University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-563-5201 (work) email: jjohnston@cispg.ca (work)

***Purpose of the research*:** As part of my Master of Education degree, I am conducting an interview to gain an understanding of any observed behaviours you have witnessed during the implementation of the R.O.A.R program and its effectiveness on socio-emotional skills in the school.

Why were you asked? You were asked to take part in this research project because you are familiar with the children at the school and have had the opportunity to observe their behaviours over the last several months.

What is involved? The research involves your participation in an audio-recorded interview. I will pose questions geared to any potentially-observed changes in student behaviour. The questions asked will be similar to those on the survey you have completed previously, but I will ask for more in-depth and insightful answers and descriptions.

At any point during the process you may choose to stop participation in the study. If you choose to withdraw, your information will not be used in the study and it will be destroyed through deletion from the data set. You also have the option to review the resulting report once it is complete.

What are the benefits of being involved? Your involvement in this interview could help to shape the school environment for the betterment of social emotional skills and behaviour. With your help, we will be able to see the strengths and short comings of the R.O.A.R. program and will be better able to adjust and improve.

What are the risks in taking part? There are no potential risks in taking part in the interview. If you do not like the questions or do not want to participate, you simply

disclose this to me and I will stop the audio recording of the interview and your information will not be used in the study.

How will my information be kept confidential and anonymous? Before submission of the final thesis paper, all identifying features of the school, staff, students, and parents will be removed by me. The type of information that will not be included is your name and any other recognisable information.

How will my information be stored?

All data will be stored and retained by me on a password-protected computer or personal audio-recording device in my locked office in my house in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Northern British Columbia. The data will be stored for five years and destroyed after the five-year period.

How will my information be stored? All data will be stored and retained by me on a password-protected computer in my locked office in my house in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Northern British Columbia. The data will be stored for five years and destroyed after the five-year period.

How can I make contact if I have any questions or concerns? You may contact the researcher via email at jjohnston@cispg.ca. If you have any questions and for concerns and complaints, please contact the UNBC REB at 250.960.6735 or email at reb@unbc.ca.

Research Participant Consent Form

If you agree to the following statements, please sign in the designated space below.

You understand that you have been asked to be in a research study
You have read and received a copy of the participant information letter
You understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research study at any time
You understand the benefits of participating in this research study
The issue of confidentiality has been explained to you
You understand who will have access to the information you provide
You have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study
You understand that this interview will be audio-recorded

Name of participant	Signature of participant	Date
Name of researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

Appendix F

R.O.A.R.

Final Interview Questions

1. Briefly describe your background knowledge of social emotional learning.

2. Previous to this school year, what were some of the common social behaviours you may have witnessed at our school?

3. Through the implementation of the R.O.A.R. program, what change in behaviour did you note in the students?

4. What is your opinion on the effectiveness of the R.O.A.R. leaders?

5. What do you think are the major strengths of the R.O.A.R. program?

6. What improvements would you suggest for the R.O.A.R. program?

7. What additional comments, if any, would you like to add?

Appendix G

Administrator Interview Research Participant Information Letter

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *The Observed Behavioral Effects of a Universal Social-Emotional Learning Program in an Elementary School Setting* as part of my Master of Education (MDL) degree. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

Graduate Student/ Researcher: Jenna Johnston

Program: Multidisciplinary Leadership (MEd)

University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way, Prince George, B.C. V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-563-5201 (work) email: jjohnston@cispg.ca (work)

***Purpose of the Research*:** As part of my Master of Education degree, I am conducting an interview to gain an understanding of any observed behaviours you have witnessed during the implementation of the R.O.A.R program and its effectiveness on social-emotional skills in the school.

Why were you asked? You were asked to take part in this research project because you are familiar with the children at the school and have had the opportunity to observe their behaviours over the last several months. In addition, as the administrator of the school you have a unique perspective on the common serious social behaviour infractions across all grades in the school.

What is involved? The research involves your participation in an interview. In the audio-recorded interview, I will pose questions geared to reflecting on common student behaviour you have witnessed since the implementation of the R.O.A.R. program as well as your perception of the students' ability to follow the R.O.A.R. values.

At any point during the process you may choose to stop participation in the study. If you choose to withdraw, your information will not be used in the study and it will be destroyed through deletion from the data set. You also have the option to review the resulting report once it is complete.

What are the benefits of being involved? Your involvement in this interview will help to shape the R.O.A.R. program going forward. With your help, we will be able to identify the strengths and short comings of the program and provide insightful feedback to adjust and improve the R.O.A.R. program.

What are the risks in taking part? There are no potential risks in taking part in the interview. If you do not like the questions or do not want to participate, you simply let

me know and I will stop the audio recording of the interview and your data will not be used.

How will my information be kept confidential and anonymous? Before submission of the final thesis paper, all identifying features of the school, staff, students, and parents will be removed by me. The type of information that will not be included is your name and any other recognisable information. Because you are the sole administrator in the school, anonymity of your identity as an administrator cannot be guaranteed.

How will my information be stored? All data will be stored and retained by me on a password-protected computer or personal audio-recording device in my locked office in my house in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Northern British Columbia. The data will be stored for five years and destroyed after the five-year period.

How can I make contact if I have any questions or concerns? You may contact the researcher via email at jjohnston@cispg.ca. If you have any questions and for concerns and complaints, please contact the UNBC REB at 250.960.6735 or email at reb@unbc.ca.

Research Participant Consent Form

If you agree to the following statements, please sign in the designated place below.

You understand that you have been asked to be in a research study
You have read and received a copy of the participant information letter
You understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research study at any time
You understand the benefits of participating in this research study
The issue of confidentiality has been explained to you
You understand who will have access to the information you provide
You have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study
You understand that this interview will be audio-recorded

Name of participant	Signature of participant	Date
Name of researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

Appendix H

R.O.A.R.

Administrator Final Interview

1. How do you think the students have responded to R.O.A.R.?

2. Based on your observations, has the R.O.A.R. program been successful in promoting prosocial behaviour?

3. How much of a difference have you noticed in frequency in any of the behaviours that you had indicated as high occurrences on the initial questionnaire? For instance, you indicated that X was a high-frequency behaviour. Is it still? You also indicated that … Is it still?

4. What are some, if any, of the most noticeable changes in the school since the implementation of the program?

5. What are the program's strengths?

6. What are some ways that we can improve the program?

7. What are some ways that we can improve the implementation of the program?

Appendix I

From:"Superintendent>
Subject:Re: ROAR Approval
Sent date:Thu, 10 Sep 2015 04:13:08 PM
To:Researcher
Cc:"Principal

Dear Jenna,
I approve your study of the ROAR project thesis proposal at XXX Catholic School. I look forward to hearing about your learning and discussing how you might share your learning with others.
Thank you for your initiative and leadership.

Sincerely

, Superintendent
Catholic Independent Schools Diocese of PG
www.cispg.ca <http://www.cispg.ca/>

On Thu, 19 Nov 2015 10:40:49 -0800, Rebecca Gilbert <rgilbert@cispg.ca> wrote:
November 19th 2015

To whom this may concern:

I approve the R.O.A.R. program and research being carried out in Sacred Heart School by Ms. Jenna Johnston.

Sincerely,

XXX BA, BEd, MEd.

Rebecca Gilbert
XXX School Principal
250-XXX-XXXX

"A little bit of MERCY makes the world less cold and more just" Pope Francis

Appendix J

R.O.A.R. Program

Staff Information Sheet

The purpose of this information sheet is to explain the R.O.A.R. program that will be implemented in our school this year. In addition, this sheet will outline the role you and our students will play in the development and implementation of this program as well as the research and data collection methods that will be used in the development of my thesis paper as part of the requirements for my masters of education degree at UNBC. The goal in implementing this program in our school is to bring about positive change in student behaviour, increase kindness and empathy, and to create universal expectations for our students. This program is in line with our school mission and vision statements and will connect at all levels of the new B.C. curriculum.

What is the R.O.A.R. program?

R.O.A.R. is a social emotional learning program geared toward prosocial skill development and self-regulatory behaviour. The acronym R.O.A.R. will be used to further identify our school's Panther Pride and will represent four positive behaviours we would like to see happening in our school. The program has been designed as part of my thesis work at UNBC and my research is aimed at observing ways in which this program may influence student behaviour in our school.

What does R.O.A.R. represent?

While the word 'roar' has been chosen for our school, the students will be responsible for determining what each of the letters will stand for through many adult-guided discussions about positive behaviour in our school. During these discussions, our students will explore social emotional values such as empathy, self-awareness, self-confidence, social awareness, positive relationship building, and positive decision making.

Who will be the adults guiding R.O.A.R. discussions?

The R.O.A.R. program will be introduced to our students during an assembly near the beginning of the school year. The assembly will be hosted by myself and Ms. Gilbert where we will have a short explanation of the program and a quick brainstorm of positive behaviours as a school. Following the assembly, students will take a family brainstorm sheet home to complete with the adults at home. The goal will be for students to return the sheet to the school within a week of getting the sheet with an idea of what the acronym should stand for based on the discussions they had at home. Once the sheets are returned to the school, I will come into your class to have a discussion about the most common R.O.A.R. values decided upon at home and the students in each class will vote on their favorite representation of R.O.A.R.

How will the final representation of R.O.A.R. be determined?

Once each class has voted on their favorite representation of R.O.A.R., students will be responsible for presenting the acronym to the school at an assembly to be held in October. I will set criteria for each presentation and will explain details in each of the classes during their voting session. If your students want extra time to prepare for the presentation, I will be available to supervise groups at recess times. Once presentations have been made, Ms. Gilbert and I will meet with the R.O.A.R. leaders where they will vote on the final acronym representation. The class with the winning acronym may receive a celebratory reward!

What is my role in the R.O.A.R. program?

Your role in the program will be to refer students to become leaders of the R.O.A.R. program. Near the beginning of October, I will give you a referral form on which you can recommend one student to a leadership position. In addition, I will be relying on your feedback and comments to gauge the success of the program and adapt it as the year goes on, so if you notice a change or lack-thereof in behaviour in your classroom or within our school, please do let me know. In addition, I will be asking you to fill out a survey on the success of the program to date in December. On that survey, you will have the opportunity to take part in an interview with me, if you so choose, based on your observations during the implementation of the program.

How will my identity and our school's identity remain confidential?

In all written work regarding this program, our school name will not be used, nor will those of any of our staff, parents, or students. In the discussion of results derived from the survey and interviews, teachers will be identified only as "a primary teacher" or "an intermediate teacher".

What are our students' roles in the R.O.A.R. program?

Our students will all gain exposure to the R.O.A.R. program and will be responsible for following each of the R.O.A.R. values in our school. The R.O.A.R. leaders will be responsible for complimenting and encouraging R.O.A.R. behaviour among their peers as well as helping their friends to make better R.O.A.R. choices by being role models in their classes. Leaders will meet with me for six one-on-one sessions between the beginning of the program and December. During these sessions, the leaders will have discussions and activities involving prosocial and self-regulatory strategies. Some activities will include dramatic role play, reflections, and art.

R.O.A.R. Timeline

Date	R.O.A.R. Event
September 11, 2015	Assembly 1 Family brainstorm sheets go home
September 18, 2015	Family brainstorm sheets return to school Teacher leadership referral due
October 2, 2015	Assembly 2 Class R.O.A.R. presentations (30 minutes total!)

October 9, 2015	Final R.O.A.R. acronym announcement @ end of mass

Thank you, in advance, for your support during this endeavour. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With Panther Pride,

Jenna Johnston
jjohnston@cispg.ca

Appendix K

R.O.A.R. Program

Family Information Sheet

The purpose of this information sheet is to explain the R.O.A.R. program that will be implemented in our school this year. In addition, this sheet will outline the role you and your family will play in the development and implementation of this program as well as the research and data collection methods that may be used in the development of my thesis paper as part of the requirements for my masters of education degree at UNBC. The goal in implementing this program in our school is to bring about positive change in student behaviour, increase kindness and empathy, and to create universal expectations for our students. Data in this study will only be that of adult observation of student behaviour. This program is in line with our school mission and vision statements and will connect at all levels of the new B.C. curriculum.

What is the R.O.A.R. program?

R.O.A.R. is a social emotional learning program geared toward prosocial skill development and self-regulatory behaviour. The acronym R.O.A.R. will be used to further identify our school's Panther Pride and will represent four positive behaviours we would like to see happening in our school. The program has been designed as part of my thesis work at UNBC and my research is aimed at observing ways in which this program may influence student behaviour in our school.

What does R.O.A.R. represent?

While the word 'roar' has been chosen for our school, the students will be responsible for determining what each of the letters will stand for through many adult-guided discussions about positive behaviour in our school. During these discussions, the students will explore social emotional values such as empathy, self-awareness, self-confidence, social awareness, positive relationship building, and positive decision making.

Who will be the adults guiding R.O.A.R. discussions?

The R.O.A.R. program has been introduced to our students during an assembly at the beginning of the school year. The assembly was hosted by myself and Ms. Gilbert where we gave a short explanation of the program and a quick brainstorm of positive behaviours as a school. Following the assembly, students received a family brainstorm sheet to complete with their families at home. The goal in your family completing this worksheet will be for students to have an in-depth conversation with you about appropriate behaviours and actions at school. This conversation can take place anytime over the span of a week after your child brings the sheet home. The sheet must be returned with an idea of what the acronym should stand for based on the discussions you and your family had at home. Once the sheets are returned to the school, I will go into your child's classroom

to have a class discussion about the most common R.O.A.R. values decided upon at home and the students in each class will vote on their favorite representation of R.O.A.R.

How will the final representation of R.O.A.R. be determined?

Once each class has voted on their favorite representation of R.O.A.R., students will be responsible for presenting the acronym to the school at an assembly to be held in October. I will set criteria for each presentation and will explain details in each of the classes during their voting session. This is a presentation that can be completed at school and will not be considered homework. Once presentations have been made, Ms. Gilbert and I will meet with a group of R.O.A.R. leadership students where they will vote on the final acronym representation. The class with the winning acronym may receive a celebratory reward!

What is my role in the R.O.A.R. program?

Your role in the program will be to support and guide discussions around positive behaviours and actions in school. You are encouraged to take note of any changes in behaviour you might see while at the school, in school masses or assemblies you may attend, as well as any changes in behaviour at home during the implementation of the R.O.A.R. program at Sacred Heart School. In addition, I may ask you to fill out a survey on the success of the program to date in December. On that survey, you will have the opportunity to take part in an interview with me, if you so choose, based on your observations during the implementation of the program. Please watch for more information about this process later in the school year.

What is my child's role in the R.O.A.R. program?

Students will all gain exposure to the R.O.A.R. program and will be responsible for following each of the R.O.A.R. values in our school. The R.O.A.R. leadership students will be responsible for complimenting and encouraging R.O.A.R. behaviour among their peers as well as helping their friends to make better R.O.A.R. choices by being role models in their classes. One student from each class will be nominated by their teacher to become a R.O.A.R. leader. Leaders will meet with me for one-on-one sessions on how to be R.O.A.R. leaders. During these sessions, the leaders will have discussions and activities involving prosocial and self-regulatory strategies. Some activities will include dramatic role play, reflections, and art.

Please watch your child's planner for any R.O.A.R. program updates, consent forms, and surveys. Thank you, in advance, for your support during this endeavour. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With Panther Pride,

Jenna Johnston

Grade 4/5 Teacher
XXX School
jjohnston@cispg.ca

Appendix L

R.O.A.R.

Student name: _____'s Family Brainstorm Sheet

At Sacred Heart School, we are a family of Panthers and Panthers ROAR! Please take some time to read the information sheet to learn more about the R.O.A.R. program being implemented in our school this year and use this sheet to help guide a family discussion about what R.O.A.R. should look like in our school. Please return this sheet to the school by **September 18, 2015**.

R What are some positive behaviours, feelings, or actions you'd like to see in our school that begin with the letter R? Use the space below to write your ideas, then circle your family's favourite one!

O What are some positive behaviours, feelings, or actions you'd like to see in our school that begin with the letter O? Use the space below to write your ideas, then underline your family's favourite one!

A What are some positive behaviours, feelings, or actions you'd like to see in our school that begin with the letter A? Use the space below to write your ideas, then draw a rectangle around your family's favourite one!

R What was your family's second favourite positive behaviour, feeling, or action you'd like to see in our school that begins with the letter R? After you decide, write that word in big CAPITAL letters in the space below!

Appendix M

R.O.A.R.

Student Leadership Referral Form

The purpose of this form is to refer one of your students to be a leader of the R.O.A.R. program. You may choose any child in your class that you think will most benefit from the six one-on-one sessions on social emotional learning offered to each R.O.A.R. leader. R.O.A.R. leaders will be expected to watch for, congratulate, and encourage R.O.A.R. behaviour among their peers, as well as practice R.O.A.R. behaviour as a role model themselves. Once this form has been returned to me by **September 18th**, I will contact you regarding appropriate scheduling of sessions.

Please be advised that R.O.A.R. leadership training sessions are not to take the place of counselling, learning assistance, or any other academic or emotional assistance the student may be accessing inside or outside our school.

Please note that a parental informed consent must be on file for this student to participate in the R.O.A.R. leadership program.

Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Name of referred student: _____

What does this student enjoy doing in his/her spare time?

_____

What are some of this student's strengths?

_____

Briefly describe the social behaviour this student displays when interacting with his/her peers.

_____

_____

Briefly describe the social behaviour this student displays when interacting with adults.

_____

_____

What (if any) are some concerns you have about this student's behaviour at school?

_____

_____

Additional reasons for referring this student to be a R.O.A.R. leader:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The following section is for teacher-researcher use only

This student has a signed parental R.O.A.R. program consent form on file ☐

The best R.O.A.R. leadership session times for this teacher, student, and teacher-researcher are:

Morning recess time ☐

Lunch recess time ☐

Teacher-researcher prep time on Monday ☐

Tuesday ☐

Wednesday ☐

Thursday ☐

Friday ☐

Appendix N

R.O.A.R.

Leadership Parental Consent

We are a family of Panthers at XXX School, and Panthers ROAR!

Dear parents and guardians,

Thank you for your help in developing the R.O.A.R. program at our school. As part of the R.O.A.R. program, students will be nominated by their teachers to become R.O.A.R. leaders. One student per class will be nominated.

What is the role of a R.O.A.R. leader?

R.O.A.R. leaders will act as role models to their peers. It will be their job to congratulate peers on great R.O.A.R. behaviour and to encourage consistent effort in terms of excellent school behaviour, self-awareness, and social awareness.

How does my child become a leader if he or she is nominated?

R.O.A.R. leaders will meet with Miss Johnston one-on-one for six lessons on how to be a R.O.A.R. leader. These lessons will teach students to become more aware of others and their feelings, to recognize excellent behaviour, and to help others when they are in need.

When are the R.O.A.R. leadership sessions?

R.O.A.R. leadership sessions will take place during school hours. We do not intend to miss recess times for these sessions.

What is the benefit of my child being a leader?

While all students will be a part of the R.O.A.R. program, leaders play a special part because they will become experts in their school on social emotional learning, self-regulation, and decision making skills. As R.O.A.R. leaders, the children will have the opportunity to make friends, build relationships and practice their new skills. In addition, all R.O.A.R. leaders will get a special hat for being on the leadership team and to identify them as such.

If your child, at any time, decides he or she does not want to be a R.O.A.R. leader, he or she is free to withdraw.

How does my child being a R.O.A.R. leader effect the research portion of the program?

As the R.O.A.R. program has been designed as a part of thesis work at the University of Northern British Columbia, research on the program will be conducted. No data, however, will be collected from students. The data in this study will be based on adult observation of behaviour and will have no identification of students involved in the process. All names and identifying features, including the school name, will remain confidential in the final report.

How do I contact the researcher if I have any questions, comments, or concerns?

You may email Miss Johnston at jjohnston@cispg.ca .

R.O.A.R. Leader Participant Consent Form

Do you understand that your child may be asked to be part of the R.O.A.R. leadership team?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Have you read and received a copy of the leadership participant information letter?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you understand that your child is free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the program at any time?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you understand the benefits of participating in this program?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you understand that the leadership positions involve six one-on-one sessions about social emotional skills?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you understand that none of your child's information will be used in the data collection of this project?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you understand the confidentiality of this project?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you know how to contact the researcher?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the study?	Yes ☐	No ☐

_____ _____

Name of student Name of parent

_____	_____	_____
Signature of parent	Signature of student	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

Appendix O

R.O.A.R.

Student name: _____'s Presentation Criteria Sheet

Because we are a family here at XXX School, we work together to make big decisions about how best to represent our Panther Pride! Please use the criteria below to work with your classmates to create a presentation on your class' favourite R.O.A.R. values.

1. Your class-decided R.O.A.R. acronym must be clearly visible on the poster board provided.

2. Your R.O.A.R. acronym must reflect positive behaviours, feelings, or actions.

3. There must be at least 4 students in your class to present your R.O.A.R. acronym.

4. You must be able to say what each R.O.A.R. value looks like, sounds like, and feels like in our school (just like in our class discussion).

5. Presentations can be a maximum of 3 minutes long (you will be timed!).

Other notes:

- This presentation will take place at a school assembly on **Friday, October 2nd**!
- You may be as creative as you like (colour, drawing, singing, dancing, costumes, and fun are encouraged!)
- Remember this is about Panther Pride, so represent your school and your class in a wonderfully positive way!

Miss Johnston's door is always open, so if you have questions or just need time to work on this awesome presentation, don't be afraid to ask!

Happy R.O.A.R.ing!

-Miss Johnston