T H E S I S

Goal setting and reflection as a tool for children summer camp

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(210 ECTS)

Date of submission for evaluation

(6/2023)

ABSTRACT

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Title of thesis: Goal setting and reflection as a tool for summer camp
Number of pages: 44 and 11 pages of appendices
Supervisor(s) of the thesis: Tero Lämsä
Commissioned by: Get Wild! summer camp (under Wildsight organization)

This research was conducted to study the impact of goal setting and reflection used during summer camp. To be specific, to find whether or not there are any improvements possible by using these methods for the Get Wild! summer camp located in British Columbia, Canada. We, adults, use these methods almost daily, in everyday life. However, there are not many practices with children despite its importance.

The Get Wild! summer camp did not have any similar activities included in their program so far. For that reason, they welcomed the idea very much. As they are an educational organization working with children for many years, they understood the potential of such development. They agreed on our cooperation to developed a goal setting and reflection sessions in order to improve their summer camps.

It was necessary to find out what the coordinators are in need of improving. A questionnaire was constructed with questions targeting the outcome. The result was heavily feedback- and communication-oriented, as coordinators desired to know more about the camp from the children perspective. After collecting the answers from the first questionnaire, a short interview was conducted. This interview served a purpose of communicating more details between the researcher and the coordinators before the summer camp officialy started.
The very first two weeks of the camp were strictly about an observation. This step helped to narrow down the structure of the week.

The development result consisted of one goal setting session and one reflection session per week. To help keeping the data from each week, an excel sheets were introduced to the coordinators. They transcribed each child's goal and reflection session. On top of that, they reported in a separate excel sheet about the past week. Another data collecting method were two questionnaires that were sent to the coordinators. It served a purpose to be able to compare the data from before the implementation and after. The last data colleting method was an observation during the summer camp.

The implementation of this study was successful. The coordinators reported that the receiving feedback and communication element improved during their summer camp. Other observations were made about more benefits from this development work for children and the coordinators.
There is still space for more improvement and further study in this field. More unexplored theories and ideas crossed the mind as, for example, the educational part of such practices could have been involved more.

Keywords: goal orientation, reflection, summer camps, early childhood, adventure education

CONTENTS

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1 INTRODUCTION

We all are familiar with the methods of goal setting and reflection. It is a big part of the environment we all are existing in, such as work, courses, school, our day-to-day life. We, as adults, can plan, conduct, reflect, give feedback, recognize a failure, and learn from it.

These practices are popular in almost every setting, but it does not seem to be so popular to practice such sessions with children. Especially young children.

I found it interesting, and I understand that there can be some limitations as young children are not fully developed yet. For example, their communication skills are not fully developed yet, and simply the whole concept can be hard for them to understand at such a young age.

Since I was a child, I have participated in a similar organization in my home country. I enjoyed my time there for many years and eventually received a training to become a coordinator on my own. As a team of coordinators, we have organized several free-time activities throughout the year. There have been many games simply for fun, games that focused on the children's technical skill development as well as games that helped with the children's soft skill development.

However, we have never had a goal setting or reflection session. Not as a coordinators team, nor with the children.

It was not until my studies with HUMAK where it became clear that these sessions have many benefits for us. Everything suddenly made sense, and I was left with a question "Why has nobody taught me this earlier?".

Here are some of the benefits that became clear as I was part of the goal setting sessions: improved time management, better understanding of progress, understanding what is realistic, learning more about self-awareness, learning how to fail and problem-solve.

Now, here are some of the benefits of reflection sessions: evaluation, deeper connection, memory practice, improvement of analysing skills, receiving, and giving feedback.

Once I realized the positive impacts of these practices on us, adults, I thought about the younger children nowadays and about the positive outcomes these sessions could have for them.

For that reason, I reached out to the Wildsight organization who is organizing multiple summer camps for younger children in the British Columbia, Canada, region. It was mine and the commissioner's belief that such practices would bring positive results, and possibly navigate the children on a path of further success in their lives.

As for my role in the research itself, I focused on the introduction, development, and implementation of a simplified sessions of goal setting and a reflection.

In this research study, you can read more about my commissioner, their specific needs for this study, the knowledge base that supported this study, data gathering methods used, the development plan, and the conclusion.

Theoretical and practical approach was combined in this research. My role was to be a developer, initiator, instructor, participant, observer, data collector, and analyser.

2 COMMISSIONER

This chapter describes the main organization, Wildsight, and its summer camp GetWild!. The summer camp branch of the Wildsight organization is the commissioner for this research. You can read about the organization background, the focus work, their ideology, and the summer camp.

There were two summer camp coordinators that worked for GetWild! in the summer 2022. They both were an immediate and important part of the research; therefore, I introduced their previous experience and their knowledge that is related to the topic.

Last part of this chapter covers the needs of commissioner. Why such research was needed, what was the idea, and who could benefit from this implementation.

2.1 Wildsight

Wildsight is an educational organization based in the Canadian Rocky Mountain region and in the province of British Columbia, Canada. Their employees are spreading their outdoor knowledge, care, and mission for more than 35 years. All together, they have six branches spread in the locations mentioned above.

Wildsight is working all year around, having many fun and educational programs and courses that focus on the local knowledge of animals, nature, local farming, recycling, forest fires, mining, Indigenous peoples and growing your skills.

Their goal and vision are to inspire a shared community desire to protect their natural world for future generations.

Sustainability, community, and knowledge are some of their main areas of focus.

Wildsight has many educational and fun courses and program for children and adults. One of their programs is their summer camp - Get Wild!

2.2 Get Wild!

Each of the six branches of Wildsight organization has their own summer camp. The one located in Golden, BC, Canada, is called Get Wild!. Summer 2022 was their eighth year of organizing a summer camp for local children. Get Wild! camp is the commissioner for this study.

The camp is for children aged between 6-12 years old. One group participates for a whole week to enjoy their time, play games, create art, and swim in the local pool. They also learn about the local surrounding, nature, ecosystem, community, and make new friends. Summer camp in 2022 was held Monday – Friday, 9am – 3pm every week between July 4th and August 19th, 2022.

The camp coordinators were two young women who both have rich previous experience with children. One woman had more experience with summer camps and youth centers, the other woman had more educational experience as a teacher. Both had rich experience of working with children with disabilities and special needs.

They both were very professional and had a lot of knowledge – fauna, flora, ecology, sustainability, First Nations, etc. Both also had an excellent leadership style and they seemed to be working together very well.

2.3 Needs

According to the final report from previous summer, summer 2021, the coordinators (different than in summer 2022) did not practice any similar sessions or exercises with children that participated in their summer camps.

The summer 2022 coordinators were already ready with their plans by the time I reached out to them in the beginning of the summer. They had the repeating weekly schedule complete, for each week of the camps. The program consisted of many games, active and passive, one field trip, and at least two educational days. They have also scheduled a meeting with another local summer camp 2022 group every week to combine their program.

Even though the whole summer 2022 has been planned in detail already, the coordinators did not have any goal setting and reflection focused practices in their weekly program. After I have introduced the research goal to the commissioner, they were very interested and shared a direct contact of both coordinators with me for further discussion and detailing. Both coordinators very also interested in the topic and understood the beneficial potential in our cooperation.

The coordinators were aware of the goal setting and reflection topic, how important it is to introduce it and practice it with younger children. As I mentioned in 2.2, "Get Wild!" where I am introducing the coordinators more, they both have had a rich experience of working with

children of all ages. They were interested in the potential beneficial outcomes that I have presented.

They agreed that it is worth the short research implementation to see if there would be a visible positive result for the camp. In case of a success, they both were interested to learn from this cooperation and include the practices in their future professional life as well.

To summarize this chapter and my commissioner's needs, the goal and aim of our cooperation and the research was to construct, introduce, and conduct a goal setting and reflection session, so the coordinators could use them with the summer camp 2022 participating children.

Both coordinators were open to add my development into their already very busy scheduled plan for the summer. The research itself became a weekly routine that they happily helped me with and helped me to monitor as I, legally, could not interact with the children too much myself.

The coordinators have had already one interesting implementation planned of their own - "Trash-Bucket Challenge". It was a weekly-based challenge for all participants (coordinators included) where the goal was to not overflow a small plastic bucket with a lid with trash by the end of each week. This their own implementation was not relevant to our cooperation, but I am mentioning it more in this study.

3 KNOWLEDGE BASE

In this chapter, you will get familiar with the knowledge base that is relevant to the research itself. The knowledge base is based on read books, articles, studies, and relevant literature about a goal setting, reflection, benefits of practices not only for adults but also related to younger children.

The last subchapter also shortly and briefly presents few relevant elements of children development and its stages in different age categories. These are important to acknowledge for the purpose of this research.

Based on the findings, I have later started with the development plan on the research implementation.

3.1 Goal setting

Goal setting is something that most people experience and apply almost daily. In school, in work, at home – really, in a day-to-day life.

One way is to do it subconsciously, another way is to sit down, think about it, perhaps write the goal down and conduct a plan. There are multiple studies about goal setting and its benefits to people. I can see it in my own study path as well – I would have subconscious goals as well as goals that I properly planned and conducted.

According to Master of Arts Courtney Ackerman (2019), goal setting is something that needs practice as it operates on a set of specific skills. It is a promising statement for the start as children are practically learners. They need to learn everything that seems automatic to us, adults. Therefore, there is a potential for a success of such implementation.

She also listed reasons why is goal setting important and beneficial. It is a list that consists of the importance of self-belief and self-confidence, its development, increasing awareness of strengths and weaknesses, an experience of success and failure, and clarifying the path ahead. It also promotes encouragement, builds responsibility, and improves decision making (Ackerman 2019). Based on this list, such practices seem highly beneficial, bringing positive impacts to our lives.

However, those benefits are rather general for all people than specifically children. Here are some examples of benefits for youth:

- Provides direction, which most youths are either seeking or trying to nail down,
- helps children clarify what is important to them and focus on it,
- allows children to take a more active role in building their own future,
- acts as a powerful motivator by giving children something to hope for and aspire towards,
- gives children a positive experience of achievement and personal satisfaction when they reach a goal (Ackerman 2019).

Goal setting can promote imagination as well – "How am I going to achieve my goal in a non-specific goal setting?" Imagination and vision are very close to each other, and almost all of us use it in our daily life when we want to achieve something. If we, as people, can start promoting and developing these skills earlier in life, it can bring the benefits and better results sooner.

Epstein (2003) mentioned in her study of How Planning and Reflection Develop Younger Children's Thinking Skills that not only goal setting but also planning is important in young children development. By engaging younger children in planning process, it encourages them to identify their goals. It also helps to encourage them to analyze their options of achieving the goals (Epstein 2003, 2).

As stated in paragraph above, by practicing with children from younger age, the development of such skills and results in improvement can be visible earlier. To support this statement and belief, Epstein (2003) also wrote that planning requires multiple actions, such as deciding, predicting, problem solving, receiving feedback. All this needs to be supported for younger children to do on their own so they can develop these skills. And all this is being promoted and developed by giving young children a chance to set goals and plan (Epstein 2003, 1-8).

Another positive learning outcome from such implementation is development of language for younger children. By discussing their plans, describing what they want to do and how they do it, not only their imagination, as previously mentioned, is being active. Their language skills are developing as well. Us, adults, are adding an important value as our vocabulary is richer. Children have another chance to observe our vocabulary skills and learn from that. More about children language development is presented in the sub chapter 3.3.

According to Jennifer Paris, Antoinette Ricardo, and Dawn Rymond (2019), children in this age group (6-11 years old) are benefitting from the goal setting practices. The children are learning about time and how to understand the concept of it. They are learning about the past, the present, and the future as well. This learning outcomes give them the ability to learn how to plan and how to work towards their goal. Again, the language development has been mentioned in relationship with the goal setting practices. Children's vocabulary and grammar can improve by communicating their goals and processes connected to the goal setting. Besides that, goal setting is also important for children to develop deeper understanding of themselves. In relationship with self-understanding, self-efficacy also play an important role in children development. Goal setting helps to practice the belief that children can carry out and complete a specific task. That can help them to believe in themselves and increase their confidence (Paris, Ricardo & Rymond 2019, 268, 286, 307).

3.2 Reflection

There are many ways of conducting a reflection session and many approaches to the whole topic of reflection. Only during my studies, we have learned many styles and ways of conducting, as well as different approaches.

It is a topic so deep and endless that it can be implied in basically any situation. When searching for the right approach, the first thought was that it will be different from the previous studies as the focus group is a group of children. Their age was 6-12 years, and not much was known about them. A desire to create a plan that would be as sustainable as possible was also playing an important part in the decision-making process.

The very first thoughts about reflection led to the Kolb's learning cycle. It seemed to be a perfect method as a base development, as it is very useful learning and teaching tool. According to David A. Kolb and Alice Y. Kolb (2013), a reflection (and observation) is the base for an immediate or concrete experience. It provides space for a new implication and a new action that can be conducted. They can be further tested and used as guides for creating new experiences (Kolb & Kolb 2013, 8). However, the Kolb's theory was specifically presented for experiential learning process and not for goal setting and reflection session. The concept is, admittedly, very similar and can be very well combined, but as the children were very young, it did not feel appropriate to introduce such complex structure.

McCabe and Thejll-Madsen (2022) presented a short list of benefits that can rise from reflection practices, such as:

- improvement of gaining a better outcome in the future,
- improvement of our performance (and skills),
- our awareness of our abilities can increase and improve,
- improvement of a success of our action plan,
- the possibility of application the gained knowledge to real life experience (McCabe & Thejll-Madsen 2022).

Same as with the goal setting, practicing the reflection at early age can bring positive results and improvement of skills sooner. Children can be ahead and have a good understanding of such outcomes. Reflection, again, can have a positive impact on the children language development. Their understanding can expand. Simple "do better" approach is, in general, not working as efficiently as evaluation and specific feedback. Not only it is not motivational and encouraging, but it also does not provide us any specific details to focus and, eventually, get better. If us, adults, are struggling to dive to the depths of this, how can younger children understand then?

Epstein (2003) also writes in her study about how encouraging young children in reflection has many benefits. It helps them to be more aware of what they are learning in the process, about the interests, their feelings and how to navigate from here. It also seems to help them with their memory: "Reflection is remembering with analysis" (Epstein 2003, 2). Reflection helps younger children to generalize the situations and compare in the future, leading to further prediction and evaluation. It allows them the possibility to be prepared in the future.

Zelazo (2004) has conducted an interesting study between children level of consciousness (LOC) and reflection. The result showed that children start to develop reflective LOC around 4 years of age. Further results shared that each reflection increases the LOC as reflection adds a depth to the experience and more details can be connected to the experience. Each added reflection (therefore, increased LOC) helped children to process the information at deeper level. And last, the higher LOC allows more complex knowledge structure to be formulated (Zelazo 2004, 15-16).

3.3 Children development

As this research was focused on children aged between 6 and 12, there is a need for brief intro-
duction into a children development. There are many stages and differences between specific
ages, and this subchapter represents the most important ones connected to the study.

Children development is often categorized into several stages, as stated above. Mcleod (2023)
summarized one of the most popular theories of cognitive development stages – Piaget's theory.
Based on the summary, Piaget's theory of cognitive development consists of four concrete
stages. These are:

- sensorimotor stage: birth to 2 years,
- preoperational stage: 2 to 7 years,
- concrete operational stage: 7 to 11 years,
- formal operational stage: ages 12 and up (Mcleod 2023).

The preoperational and concrete operational stages are the most important for this research
study as the children participating in the summer camp were aged between 5 and 12 years.
Because of that, only the older age from the preoperational stage is directly connected to this
research (year 5 to 7).

Mcleod (2023) then presented basic characteristics for each development stage. The "preoper-
ational" means that the children's thinking is pre-operations, they cannot use the logical way of
thinking yet. During this stage, children are developing a sense for thinking by the ways things
appear, not the logical reasoning yet. Children are thinking rather symbolically than logically,
their view of the world is dominated by the way it looks rather than how it is. They are not yet
capable of problem-solving type of thinking. Children are also still considered to be egocentric
until around 7 years. Around that time, thinking progressed from egocentric as children develop
an ability to see from other point of view (Mcleod 2023). Lefa (2014) also presented a summary
of the preoperational stage of children development. Based on his description, children in this
stage are using symbols and objects to understand and reason what is happening around them.
Their language is developing faster as they can use images and symbols (compared to previous
stage). Their vocabulary and sentencing are more logical, they start to form full sentences rather
than one- or two-word phrases (Lefa 2014, 5). These descriptions are going to be very valuable
for the analysis chapter. Some of the findings of the research is directly linked to the develop-
mental stage for the specific age.

Another age group also needs to be introduced as they participated in the research. Specifically, children between 7 and 11 years old are part of the same developmental stage, the concrete operational stage. Mcleod (2023) introduced this stage as the third stage of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. This period lasts between 7 to 11 years of age and the children are able to develop organized, rational thinking during this stage. However, they are able to use the logical thinking only to physical objects, therefore the "concrete operational" name (Mcleod 2023). Lefa (2014) also stated that children are capable to use their logical thinking for reasoning the basis of concrete evidence. According to him, children are capable of logical thinking that explains their physical experience. Abstract problem solving is also starting to develop in this stage. (Lefa 2014, 5). Again, these characteristics are important as some of the research findings are linked to that in later chapters. It is quite easy to see the developmental stage line between the children aged 5 to 7 years.

Petty (2010) introduced more detailed study of children development year by year from birth to 8 years. Specifically, the age 6, 7 and 8 is important to mention here. In addition to previous characteristics, her description of the development is very similar. She also added that children around 6 and 7 years old develop their language skills by listening and telling stories (real or imaginary). Children in this age also tend to engage with adults more, and they have more structured sentences. By the age of 8, children are more descriptive, their speech and writing has improved, and they are capable of a conversation on adult level (Petty 2010, 123-129, 135-140, 147-150). The importance of language development has been previously mentioned in goal setting and reflection sub chapters. It was marked as an important positive outcome and improvement for the children. We can see in more details now how important it is for children to develop their language skill.

Petty (2010) has touched another very important element, children's development of understanding of time. Children at 6 years old do not have the full understanding of a time sequence yet. They start to understand time in sense of connection with a certain event, such as "It is 8am, the school starts", however they just start to understand more complex time management - the days of the week. On the other hand, children that are 7 years old have already a better understanding of the week. They understand that days are repeating in a loop. Children that are 8 years old have a full understanding of the time of the week and start to understand and use calendars (Petty 2010, 126, 139, 150). This knowledge is also very important as the later observational results touch this topic.

4 DATA COLLECTING METHODS

In this chapter, each data collecting method that was used is described. In each subchapter, you can read about the theory behind each method, why it was the most appropriate choice for this research study, and what was done to conduct each method successfully.

Appropriate literature sources are mentioned to underline the theory of these methods. I have also used graphs and picture to project the theory of the methods better.

Before the detailed description of each method, a chronological appearance of the research actions should be explained.

First, an original plan was structured. That was created in the late spring 2022 when the commissioner had accepted my research study proposal. It included the idea of the research study, the development, the implementation, and the conduction of a goal setting and reflection sessions for the Wildsight! summer camp 2022. It was a mind mapping board with ideas, knowledge, and focus points.

After that, in June 2022, we have had a first face-to-face interview with the camp coordinators. More about this method in subchapter 4.1. Shortly after the first interview, I have structured a first survey and sent it to the coordinators. More explanation about this method in subchapter 4.2. When the summer camps started in the beginning of July 2022, I have joined for the first two weeks only to observe and potentially ask additional questions. You can find more information in the subchapter 4.3.

Once I collected the first interview notes, answers from the first survey, and the notes from the observational period, it was time to introduce the final development product to the coordinators. More about the development process in chapter 5.

4.1 Interviews

As a first data gathering method, an interview seemed to be the most suitable option to start the research development process with.

After exchanging few emails with the camp coordinators, we scheduled our first face-to-face interview in the middle of June 2022. The goal of this interview was to discuss very first details

of the research in person between both parties, such as: the time schedules, roles during the research process, program and exercise options, ideal outcomes, focus areas, etc.

This first interview's style was unstructured and open. The unstructured interview style is known as a qualitative data gathering method. They also stated that it is necessary for unstructured interviews to be started with detailed knowledge and preparation (Zhan & Wildermuth 2009, 250-251). To support this statement, both parties did have notes about what needed to be discussed during the conducted interview. Me and the coordinators did have a rich knowledge about the goal setting and reflection topic, about summer camps, and younger children.

George (2022) stated that this style of interview is good to use when, for example, the conducted research is depending on the connections with the research participants (George 2022). In connection to this statement, both parties were in a position of exploration and collecting information from each other during this interview. We did have a mutual understanding of how beneficial this cooperation and research might be, for both sides.

Everything that was discussed was noted on a paper that was used later as a guideline for me, a main researcher. It helped me during the actual goal setting and a reflection practice development stage.

In the end of the research period, in August 2022, there was a second and final interview conducted. The goal of that interview was to talk about the research itself, the success and fails, to share opinions and feedbacks. In my opinion, to wait before conducting this second and final interview was not a good idea. It was the last day of the research period and memories were still fresh.

For this second and final interview, same method of unstructured style was appropriate. There were very few prepared questions, however, by this point I had also conducted a final survey that the coordinators were about to receive within the upcoming week. The final survey was holding more specific questions related to the research; therefore, this final interview was very short but direct and informative. More about the survey process in the upcoming chapter.

4.2 Surveys

Very shortly after the first interview in June 2022, I conducted a survey for the coordinators. The purpose of this survey was to gain more specific knowledge about the coordinators, their approach to this research, and their desired outcomes as they were the ones directly involved

with this study. This survey was also focused on gaining knowledge on the specific areas that needed the improvement of using a goal setting and reflection sessions, at least according to the summer 2022 camp coordinators.

It was clear that to be able to collect and compare data, there will be a need for at least two surveys - "before" and "after". I started by creating a "before" questionnaire for both coordinators to answer (Fig. 1 in Appendices).

Basic information was collected about both coordinators and their previous experience related to this research. Majority of this survey was focused on collecting specific answers to the questions that would help to navigate what exactly needed the improvement and what the focus of the development plan specifically needed to be about.

After the research part, when the summer camps were over, a second and final questionnaire was structured - the "after" (Fig. 2 in Appendices). This second and last questionnaire was focused on the final feedback, and collection of answers related to the "before" survey. The questions were structured as a continuum of the "before" survey.

Structuring a good and successful survey is not so simple. Wildemuth (2009) presented two general ways of conducting the survey questions. The questions can rise from the researcher's own experience, direct observation, perhaps a situation or even event of a current topics in the field. Another way of conducting a survey question can rise from the gaps that are logical and are in the researcher's state of knowledge of the field. She also explained the second scenario as a possible proposed theory that the researcher is not sure if it can be explained in a new situation. According to her, these ideas come from reading, conversations, or the researcher's own knowledge of the topic. (Wildemuth 2009, 11-12).

In this research, the survey questions were based supporting the second explanation, as both researcher and commissioner were interested in this topic.

Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta (2021) presented during a thesis-oriented webinar few points of how to structure a good survey, such as the length, clear layout, easy and simple, yet direct questions, logical order of questions, and a good, simple introduction. The questions should also not be leading in any specific way (Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta 2021).

Overall, the questionnaire method was a necessary and a very important technique to involve in the research. It was also one of the most direct techniques to collect the quantitative data

needed from both coordinators. The surveys would allow a direct comparison after the data was collected for analyzation. In both surveys, I used dichotomous type of questions as well as multiple choice type, scaling type, open-ended type, and multiple-choice type. Based on the variety of question types, both structured surveys were qualitative and quantitative in certain parts at the same time (Dudovskiy 2011).

Both surveys were sent to the coordinators via email.

4.3 Observation

Observation method was another important method for the data collection. The observation period started after the first interview and first survey as soon as it was possible to join the camp program physically. The observation method was used for the whole duration of the summer camps and was one of two main data collecting methods.

This specific method for this part of research was 1used for its rich and significant advantages. Wildemuth (2009) presented this method as an opportunity for the researcher to collect information directly about the event, to see the process themselves. She also explains that the direct observation allows the researcher to gather more precise data. The data can include information about the duration, observation of a particular behaviors and their sequences, the general timing, and a duration (Wildemuth 2009, 209-210).

The coordinators requested their first week of camps (July 4th – 8th) to have without any data collecting procedures, as it was their first year working for Get Wild! camp as well as their first year working together. They both wanted to see if the whole program they have created is working how it was supposed to. Their own goal during this very first week was to observe the camp operations, and potentially improve what seems not to be working with the group itself. The potential improvement would help the research itself, so we agreed to continue our cooperation this way.

The first time it was possible to join the camp physically was the second week (July 11th – 15th, 2022). Ever since, my physical appearance was present every week until the end of the camp.

The second and third week of camps (July 11th – 22nd, 2022) was about observation mainly. How is the whole group coping, how is the operation of the camp, how are the children (some

were new each week, some were coming back for multiple weeks). What games are they playing, what is the field day, when would be the best time to conduct research practices, and what approach would be the most suitable one.

After those two weeks of observation, we have discussed with both coordinators what was observed. We have shared perspective from both sides about what would be the most beneficial plan for both parties and the children as well. A final plan was then developed based on the data collected from the first interview, survey, and this two-week observation.

The observation part of the data collecting was very important as the summer camp plans were already formed by the time of our agreed collaboration. However, both coordinators were open-minded and welcoming to the development idea. Therefore, we agreed on the observation method to analyze how to continue from here.

A writing-diary technique was used for this qualitative method. The diary consisted of notes that seemed important – everything that was heard, seen, observed, felt, listened to, and thought about. Notes were about the program, the camp, the coordinators, the children, the environment, the weather, and other important aspects for the research.

As for other methods of obtaining a data by observing, it is not legal to record the children without the parental agreement. Legally speaking, it was also not in the organization power to request such a document. The situation and camp setup was also not ideal to obtain data from observation by recording.

Wildemuth (2009) introduced different types of observation. Specifically, she mentioned participant and nonparticipant observation. The participant observation is a type where the observer is also a participant in the events that are being observed. In the other scenario, nonparticipant observation, the observer is there only and strictly to observe (Wildemuth 2009, 210). Based on the descriptions she provided, both types have been used during the observation period.

George (2023) describes few disadvantages of the observational data collecting method. Data might struggle to be considered a reliable source. They might lack a conclusive result and cannot make firm statements as the data is based on the researcher's personal observation, not hard data. Also, the observed participants behavior might change due to the fact they know they are being observed. (George 2023). During the research implementation, there was not a single

scenario indicating a different, pretended behavior. In general, the rational of it was that the observed children were not paying enough attention to the observer. They seemed to be occupied with their friends, the program, their games, and personal interests within the camp.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

The first subchapter is about the development plan itself. It focuses on detailed, chronological description of the development process. This subchapter is a chronological continuing of chapter 4, specifically subchapter 4.3.

The second subchapter focuses on description of development method that was used for the practical research part. It also answers a question why it was used, and how. Relevant literature supporting this method can also be found in the first subchapter.

In the third subchapter, I go into the details of modifications. As this implementation has never been tried out before, we needed to stay flexible with the research process. More about this part of research in subchapter 5.3.

The very last subchapter presents in more details already mentioned trash-bucket challenge as an interesting addition to the camp beside the research study itself.

5.1 Development process

Once the data collecting part was over, and needed data was collected, the development process was ready to start. The data collecting methods have provided a very rich insight of how the camp is being proceeded, how is the group, how the coordinators are working, and when it would be suitable for the development implementation.

After the two-week observation, we have talked with both coordinators once again. I have shared the gained insight and we discussed what is the best way to proceed now.

Originally, before the data collection part, the idea of the whole process was different from my side. That plan consisted of a goal setting session on Monday, one reflection session on Wednesday, and a final reflection session of Friday.

The reason for the Monday goal setting was for the whole group to set goals for the whole week. Connected to that, the Friday reflection session was about finding a closure. The whole group would reflect on the Wednesday's program that was very educational oriented – the camp would visit local farmer's market where a local seller would have a 10–15-minute presentation about their goods. During these farmer's market visits, there was a lot to potentially reflect

about. Starting with the educational presentation that would differ each week to learning how to spend or save money.

Unfortunately, the farmer's market representative did not want these presentations to continue. They referred to it as a "liability issue", therefore we could not participate anymore. Also, due to the full program structure, we evaluated with the coordinators that the Wednesday reflection session would not be possible as we had a lack of time for it.

For a moment it seemed like there was another chance of conducting the reflection session on Wednesday. As the camp group was not allowed to participate the farmer's market presentation, the coordinators quickly had a "plan B". This plan consisted of visiting the local Metis Nation instead.

Metis Nation is a local First Nation Society that resides in Golden and its surroundings. Their group is formed by Metis First Nation members. Their goal and focus are to spread the knowledge of Metis First Nation to all the people interested that live in the Golden valley.

The camp group started to visit them every Wednesday during my second week of observation, July 2022. The Metis Nation program was good and very educational. It consisted of an introduction to the community, storytelling, and interactive program for the children. It seemed to be a perfect opportunity for a mid-week reflection session.

However, I was fast to discover that the Metis Nation narrator included their own short and interactive reflection session with the children at the end of their program. Therefore, we agreed with the coordinators that there is no need for another reflection session from our side. Also, the Metis First Nations' place was situated next to the main road in town. The group sat in their teepee for the program duration but as soon as the program was over, we needed to move and allow another group to take their place. It was very busy and noisy for our group to sit in the open place and have a reflection session. A relocation was needed immediately after the program's end, and we did feel that the relocation itself was only another disturbing element for the group.

With all this being presented, the final development plan formed. One goal setting session on Monday morning and one reflection session on Friday that was related to the goal setting from Monday.

This final plan was conducted for the first time during the fourth week of camps, the last week of July 2022. It seemed to be working well for all participating parties – both coordinators were grateful that the sessions are not too long and are straight forward. The children seemed to be cooperative as it did not take too much of their time and attention. I, as a researcher, was happy that the whole development process and implementation seemed to be successful, providing data to collect for my research.

A structured and simplified excel sheet for goal setting (Fig. 3) and reflection (Fig. 4) was structured. The goal of these sheets was to help all the participants to keep track of what the children said as their goals. It also helped as an additional data collecting method for later analyzation.

NAME, AGE	YOUR GOAL FOR THE WEEK	HOW CAN YOU ACHIEVE IT	IS YOUR GOAL REALISTIC	WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPERIENCE THIS WEEK
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				

Figure 3. Weekly Goal Setting sheet.

NAME, AGE	DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL	HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE IT	WHAT TO DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME	HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT	WHAT DID YOU REALLY ENJOY	WHAT DID YOU MISS
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						

Figure 4. Weekly Reflection sheet.

A "weekly report" was also structured. It helped to collect data from each week from both coordinators. This sheet was for the coordinators to report immediately after each week (Fig. 5). It was crucial that it would be filled out as soon as possible, as the coordinators could forget some important elements from the finished week.

It served perfectly as a collection of immediate impressions, opinions, ideas, feedback, notes, and their observation. This "weekly report" was also used by me while analyzing as it allowed me to collect an insight version of the experience.

In general, the coordinators had a chance to notice the impact, changes, or issues daily. I had a chance to be present only on the days of the sessions.

WEEKLY REPORT :)	COORDINATOR 1	COORDINATOR 2
HOW MANY CHILDREN PARTICIPATED THIS WEEK?		
HOW MANY PARTICIPATED THESE NEW METHODS?		
WAS THIS WEEK SUCCESSFUL? (NEW METHODS WISE)		
WAS THERE A COMMUNCIATION IMPROVEMENT?		
WAS THERE A DIRECT FEEDBACK FROM CHILDREN? (USING THESE NEW METHODS)		
WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST HELPFUL THIS WEEK?		
WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE FOR NEXT WEEK?		
DO YOU FEEL THAT CHILDREN WERE MORE PRESENT IN THE ACTIVITIES, GAMES, ETC?		
DO YOU FEEL THAT CHILDREN UNDERSTOOD THE GOAL SETTING AND REFLECTION MEANING?		
COMMENTS, IDEAS, SOMETHING YOU HAVE NOTICED		

Figure 5. Weekly report sheet.

5.2 Action research

As the main development approach for the research of this thesis, the action research method seemed to be the most adequate choice. It has allowed me to underline the connection between an "understanding and changing" together with a "theory and practice".

"Action research can be defined as "an approach in which the action researcher and a client collaborate in the diagnosis of the problem and in the development of a solution based on the diagnosis". In other words, one of the main characteristic traits of action research relates to collaboration between researcher and member of organisation in order to solve organizational problems" (Dudovskiy 2011).

The cooperation between the researcher and the coordinators relates to Dudovskiy's description. The research was based on our collaboration, and the goal was to solve the commissioner's problem.

Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta (2021) presented few basic elements of this method as collaborating through participation that involves formulating the plan, evaluating the outcomes, and developing further strategies. She also mentioned that it is a process of following steps repeating in cycles (Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta 2021). Dudovskiy (2011) perfectly represented the main principles of the action research with the following graph. It also supports Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta's statement about repeating cycles.
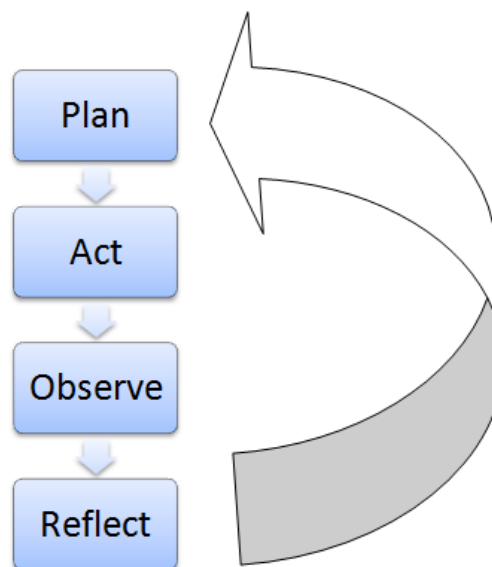
Figure 6. Action research principles by John Dudovskiy (2011).

Dudovskiy (2011) also describes the action research as a study that consists of spiral of self-reflective cycles. Therefore, he presented the action research cycle (Fig. 7). The cycles are as following:

1. Planning,
2. implementation and observation,
3. reflection of the consequences, re-planning,
4. action and more observation,
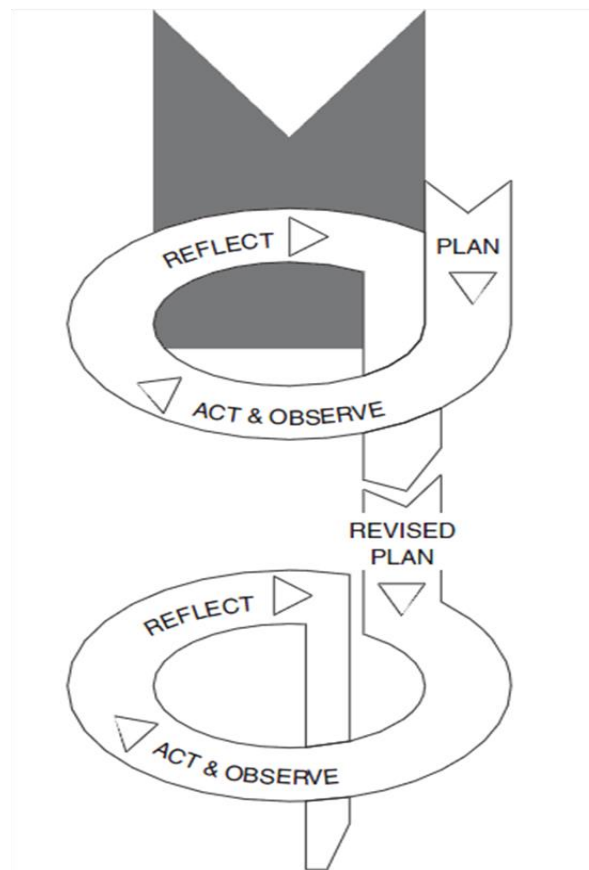5. more reflection (Dudovskiy 2011).

Figure 7. Action research cycle by John Dudovskiy (2011).

Again, it completely supports and is aligned with Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta's statement. We can clearly see the repeating patterns where each new cycle gives the researcher a new opportunity to see and fix any previous problems or update the implementation. As a main researcher, I have used this repeating cycle in the research multiple times. I wrote about it in more details in chapter 6.3, "Modifications".

This Dudovskiy's action research spiral reminded me Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Fig. 8). We can see the clear repeating patterns both graphs.
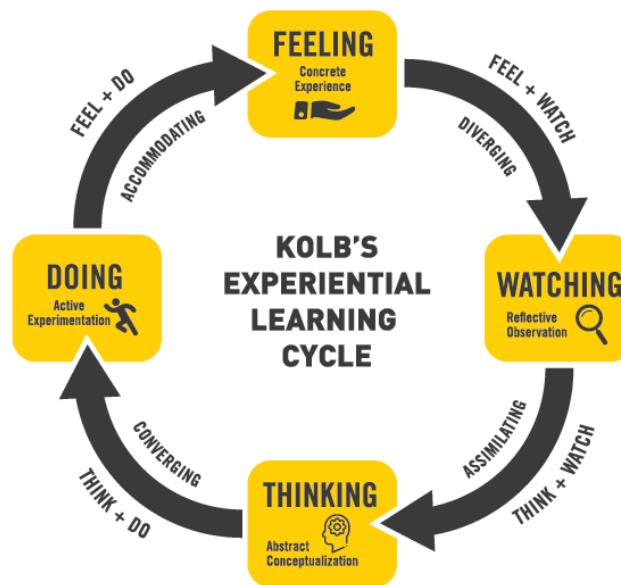
Figure 8. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. University of Windsor.

The action research method was chosen not only because of the option to include the participants (children and both coordinators) but because it also gives a lot of space for reflection throughout the research itself. When there was an element in the cycle that both parties have felt is not working properly, and needs to be fixed, we had the time and space to reflect on it. We did think of new ideas and options, chose the best one and tried again with the new changed approach.

5.3 Modifications

Once the actual implementation started, we knew that we would need to stay open minded and flexible about the research process. It has never been tried out before; therefore, adjustments were expected. In this sub-chapter, I will describe what we changed, when, and why.

During the very first week of my implementations, last week of July 2022, we have noticed that some children do not seem to fully understand some of the questions that were related to the sessions. To be specific, especially the children aged between 5 and 7 (yes, there were after all

few younger children that 6 years old) did not understand the "Is your goal realistic" question. As explained in subchapter 3.3, children in this age do not have their logical thinking developed yet. There have been attempts of different expressions, usage of more "children friendly" vocabulary and explanations, yet without a better success. They were rather becoming more and more confused.

After this, we decided to leave this question out completely and use a different approach to discuss the realistic matter. For example, if some child would try to set an unrealistic goal, an explanation of why it is not a realistic goal was offered to that child. If the child wanted to continue in a short discussion about the reasoning, the coordinators supported that.

After the first week of the implementation, it was obvious that the "What are your expectations for this week" question needs to be eliminated as well. It came to our realization that the children can have collectively very high expectations that we cannot fulfill. As a prevention of setting the children up for a failure and disappointment, we discontinued this question.

Instead of that, a question "What did you miss this week" was involved in the reflection session. It provided the coordinators very good direct feedback straight from the children's perspective.

It also came to our attention during the first week that the goal setting session seems to be rather "dull". It seemed to be boring, not interactive enough and not interesting for the children. We have collectively decided to change the session to an "ice breaker" activity for the upcoming week.

It has worked very well as some children were new, some were returning. They all sat in a circle with the coordinators and one by one was introducing themselves, saying what their goal is for the week. They played a variety of memory games to remember their names and their goals. Both these outcomes were the main goals of the ice breaker activity. It became more interactive, they seemed to have fun and learned something about each other. It helped to become closer as a group and to bond with the coordinators.

Second week of the implementation, first week of August 2022, was not as successful as the first week. Children were very restless and were having issues to participate in the program in

general. They did not cooperate the whole week very easily. Based on that experience, a decision has been made to break the big group into smaller groups for each session. It seemed to be a success, given the group dynamics that week.

For the third week of the research, second week in August 2022, a completely new approach was introduced. The coordinators recorded the reflection session for the very first time. It appeared to be little easier for the coordinators and me in few new ways. By the session being recorded, none of us needed to have a computer as it is faster than handwriting. We all could be more present and have an uninterrupted discussion with the children. They seemed to be occasionally distracted by the computer, the writing, and by one of the coordinators not fully being present in the moment.

For the fourth and final week, third week of August 2022, the recording method was used as a main method for data collecting from the children. It was used for both, goal setting on Monday and a reflection on Friday. It seemed to be working very well, even though it appeared to be more work afterwards as the answers needed to transcribe into the sheets anyways.

We have also continued to split the group into smaller groups for the sessions. It took more time for each session, but as it was the final week, the coordinators were more relaxed about their scheduled plan.

As for limitations in general, what needs to be mentioned is the weather that summer. It was very challenging, heat waves lasted for the whole duration of the summer camps. The camp is outdoors only, therefore the group had nowhere to hide in a cooler building. The children were very exhausted by the high temperatures, some days were very challenging for cooperation. We all felt that has been one of the biggest challenging aspects of the whole implementation.

5.4 Trash-bucket challenge

The trash-bucket challenge was an element that the coordinators presented as their own goal-oriented exercise throughout each week. It served as a group exercise for them and the children. The goal was not to overflow the trash bucket during the week. The trash bucket was a small plastic bucket with a lid on, and, as the name says, it was for their trash.

The educational part behind this exercise was to teach the children the "Leave No Trace" policy, not to litter and not to bring too much unnecessary trash. Also, recycling was a big part of this

process – only non-recyclable items could go in the bucket. Recycling is more limited in Canada than in Finland and we were also in bear-country. That means no bio waste trash or composts accessible outside.

I was happy to know more about this exercise. It is a perfect way of educating the children about the recycling and the Leave No Trace policy in a very interactive way. It was interesting to see how the children reacted – would they be interested, would they understand, would they interact?

Once the camp started and the children were introduced to the Trash-Bucket Challenge, they became interested in that. They were learning about the trash, recycling, waste pollution and felt bad, so they wanted to help the local community. It was possible to hear some children having a conversation at the lunch time. They were sharing how they asked their parents to pack their lunch without any plastic trash, so they do not overflow the bucket. They seemed very proud of themselves about it.

Another time I was a witness to a scenario when one child wanted to throw away their plastic packaging to a bin, but another child stopped him, saying it goes to "our" bucket, meaning camp trash bucket.

If the week was successful and the bucket did not overflow, the coordinators bought some treats for the children on Friday. It was mostly ice cream, due to the heat waves. The children did not know there would be a prize, so they would not be only motivated by the prize vision.

This exercise was not connected to the research study itself, but it was very interesting concept. It was a smart way to educate the children about a topic they most probably would not be interested in if it would be implemented with a simple presentation.

6 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter of thesis covers the description of the analyzing process in the first subchapter. The second and third subchapter cover the results of quantitative and qualitative data that were found. During the quantitative data collection part, there were only two people to collect the data from. Therefore, it is being referred to as "answers collection" from now on.

The results are based on the analysis process of the data obtained and collected during the research part.

6.1 Analysis

Once the practical part of the research, the summer camps, was over, a data and information gathering process started.

All the notes, the observing journal, the interview questions and answers, the surveys were collected. Also, all the goal setting, reflection, and all weekly report sheets were gathered. That all together was providing very crucial data and notes that also needed to be considered and analyzed.

The analyzing process began by categorizing the information. Two categories were created for qualitative date and the answers collection (quantitative data). All the data was divided by weeks, that helped to store it organized. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, it was obvious that there is not as much quantitative data as qualitative as there were only two people to collect quantitative type of data from. However, even though the answers collection was presented in a smaller scale, it still allowed me to collect very straight froward data to work with.

During the analyzing process of the surveys, strong focus was on the comparison of "before" and "after" the implementation. The questions from "after" were related to the ones from "before" and therefore, the answers were meant to provide clear feedback of whether the whole research was a success or not. More about this in the following subchapter 6.2.

The definition of the process is described as an analysis where the researcher is expected to use the raw numbers from the research and turn them into a meaningful data by using a rational and critical thinking. It is important to use far and careful judgement as well (Dudovskiy 2011).

There are multiple ways of how to analyze quantitative data in general, by using different specific programs on a computer. Those methods seem to be working very well for a large amount of data collected from quantitative data participants. However, in this specific research case, there were only two participants, only two answers in total for each conducted survey. Therefore, there was no need to use such a complex analyzing method. It was easier to use simple comparison of the answers from the data gathering portal.

The qualitative data analysis seemed to be more complex for this research. There was much more material to organize into categories, view, analyze, write down notes, and do it again. The data was collected from more than one qualitative research methods, such as interview and mainly observation. Also, a goal setting, reflection and a weekly report sheet were structured to help keep notes of what the children have said.

Generally, the qualitative data findings are marked as less reliable than the quantitative. It is because in quantitative research methods the researcher works with hard, theory supporting or destroying numbers. In qualitative research the researcher has a lot of non-numeric data to work with. The qualitative data analysis is described as a process where the description, interconnection, and classification meet with the researcher's concept. The researcher needs to be able to interpret and explain the data (Graue 2015, 8).

After deeper study and evaluation of multiple analysis methods, the triangulation method was the chosen one. To be even more specific, the methodological triangulation method. This method allows the researcher data collection by using at least two different methods. Graue (2015) also refers to this method and its usage as a higher confidence in the results. In her usage description, she describes the triangulation analysis process as a comparison between data obtained from multiple research methods. If the additional method confirms the results of the first one, the whole analysis method is immediately stronger and more reliable (Graue 2015, 9).

Wildemuth (2009) also mentioned the methodological triangulation method in her book:

"Triangulation of multiple data sources and data collection methods will increase the rigor of this approach. In addition, it can be used to support theory testing and development, as well as simply to describe a phenomenon of interest" (Choemprayong & Wildemuth 2009, 58).

In general, the methodological triangulation can be a combination of different qualitative research methods only, as well as a combination of different qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Figure 9 below represents a perfect visual example.
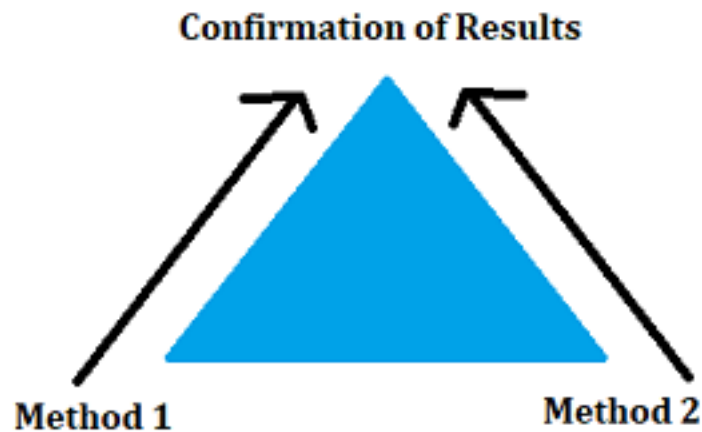

Figure 9. Triangulation in Research by Stephanie Glen from StatisticsHowTo.com.

The process of methodological analysis is generally described as a collection of all data in a text form, categorizing the data, reading through carefully over and over. Once similarities are found, more comparison needs to be done to prove the theory or research and underline the trustworthiness of the study. It is a repeating process until the researcher cannot find anything new to the results.

6.2 Quantitative data results

In the first thesis proposal and the first thesis draft that was submitted, possible positive outcomes of this implementation were presented. Those ideas were mainly based on the studied literature. However, previous personal and professional experience had a little influence as well. The ideas of possible outcomes consisted of the following list:

- The children might be clearer at communication of their needs.
- All participants might bond easier at the beginning (children and coordinators), as the goal setting session can be used as an ice breaker activity.
- The children might be more present while learning as these methods might help them realize and understand what they just learned or participated in.

- It might have a positive result for the children's future development as they would encounter such structured activity at early age.
- It would be a good chance for the coordinators to receive a direct and straight feedback from the children, therefore they could improve the camp, activities, and themselves in a leader role.

First, the questionnaire analysis was proceeded. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, there were only two participants, therefore only two answers were collected for both questionnaire and then compared. In the following results part, "before" questionnaire is referred to as first questionnaire. "After" is referred to as second questionnaire.

In the first one, there were questions that were leading to an opportunity to have follow-up questions in the second questionnaire for a better comparison. The major focus of the questions was on the improvement of different elements by using the conducted development methods.

Based on the findings, there was an improvement of communication between children and the coordinators. A question whether the coordinators would appreciate the improvement of communication was asked in the first questionnaire. They both answered "yes". In the second one, a follow up question was asked whether they feel that the communication was improved. They both answered "yes", again.

Interesting, unexpected outcome was discovered while comparing the qualities that were important for coordinators. In the first questionnaire, many answers from both coordinators were based around feedback from the children. Below are the answers to question "Imagine, you could have a conversation with children on adult level. What would you like them to tell you?"

Responses (Summer camp coordinator - before implementation) Number of respondents:2	Responses
1	I would love to know what they enjoyed the most, what they had hoped to do in camp that week, and any feedback on ways we could have improved the week

2	If they're having fun. I think that's everyone goal. Things we could do better. How we could improve. Do they feel good (appreciated, valued, loved) while at camp?

Figure 10. Answers to question "Imagine, you could have a conversation with children on adult level. What would you like them to tell you?" from the first questionnaire.

Another example was collected from a comparison of first and second questionnaires. In the first one, they were both asked to rate the importance of the possible outcomes of the following: better communication, clearer idea of children's expectations, feedback from children, educational element for children, and possibility to improve for next year. The rating was from 1 to 5 – 1 was "not important", 5 was "very important".

They both independently agreed only on two elements – feedback from children, again, and the possibility to improve next year. All remaining elements had different importance to each of coordinator.

In the second questionnaire, they were both asked to rate it again. The only change was to rate the success, not the importance. Again, 1 was "not successful", 5 was "very successful".

Based on the answers provided, again they both independently agreed that the biggest success was in fact not the communication itself. They both rated feedback-related elements as the most successful – clearer idea of the children's expectations, and their feedback towards the coordinators.

One more obvious result appeared based on the answers analysis. Neither of the coordinators had a feeling that their relationship with children improved. They both rated their relationship exact same in the second questionnaire as they did in the first one.

Min value	Max value	Average	Median	Sum	Standard Deviation
7.0	8.0	7.5	7.5	15.0	0.7

Figure 11. Rating of a relationship between coordinators and children, from the first questionnaire. 0 – minimum, 10 – maximum.

Min value	Max value	Average	Median	Sum	Standard Deviation
7.0	8.0	7.5	7.5	15.0	0.7

Figure 12. Rating of a relationship between coordinators and children, from the second questionnaire. 0 – minimum, 10 – maximum.

To summarize the analysis of all these answers, they both independently agreed that they found the development implementation successful and would use it in the future.

6.3 Qualitative data results

The analyzing process of the qualitative data after categorizing continued by comparing the data week by week, group by group. During that analyzing phase some repeating patterns started to show.

For example, it became obvious quickly that the younger children aged 5-7 did not fully understand the concept of week. They understood the word, however they did have a hard time to think of a goal that would keep them occupied for the whole week. Mostly, they gave us goals that were short term rather than long term. On the other hand, children of 9 years and older appeared to have a very good skills or self-explanation. They were very providing very mature explanations, descriptions and were self-aware. These developmental processes are covered more in subchapter 3.3.

A lot of younger children at age 6 and 7 had the same repeating answer that they would like to have fun or make friends. Petty (2010) stated that children aged exactly between these years are very socially driven. They enjoy playing in a group, make friends, and socialize with other children. It is obvious that they start to be less adult-dependent, and it is evident that they need to make friends (Petty 2010, 121-122, 133-134). This development stage is more covered in subchapter 3.3.

A comparison of the most successful week to the least successful week was very valuable. During the least successful and most challenging week, week two of the development implementation, there was one child (age 9) who was being very behaviorally difficult. No specific conditions were shared, but it was obvious that also other children are very bothered by this child. That whole week was very hard to cooperate as a group, play group games, do any group

exercise without further drama. Therefore, the goal setting and reflection sessions were also very challenging.

After further analyzation and comparison with the most successful week, the data pointed towards the fact that group dynamics plays a big role. During the most successful week, week three of the implementation, everything seemed to be working perfectly. The group formed very nicely, the children were very nice to each other, actively listened, responsive, invested in the activities. The whole group was "in the flow".

Each week, there has been a little modification to improve the implementation. After comparing qualitative data from all the weeks, the very last week of camps was the biggest success in efficiency. For each session, the big group was divided into smaller groups. The groups were intuitively formed as groups of friends. Those that were not currently participating a goal setting or reflection session, they were running, and playing around with their friends. Therefore, based on the data collected by observation, it seemed that as long as their friends were around, the children are happy and more focused. They seemed to be more calm, more respectful towards each other, actively listening each other.

The final part of the data analysis compares the answers of repetitively participating children. These children were very excited the first week and set goals that were not very deep. The goals were "I want to have fun", "I want to make friends", "I want to run really fast". These children made a big progress with the repetitive exercises and thought about the upcoming program more deeply. Later, the ideas for goal setting were for example "I want to make a perfect tie-dye t-shirt", "I want to win the rafting race with my raft" (a field day trip was rafting that week), or "I want to participate in 15 different games". You can see the progress of their understanding of the concept of these sessions. They thought about their goals in more depth, more connected to the actual summer camp and were very determined. This data was collected by observation, the goal setting and reflection sheet.

Following that, In the second survey one of the coordinators reported that during the final week of camps, some of the children would randomly start talking about the goals. They were talking either about their own goals they remembered or some new ideas. However, the coordinator noticed that it is new, and something she has not noticed before.

7 CONCLUSION

The goal and aim of the study were to create a goal setting and reflection session as helpful tool for summer camp. Such research was developed with the intention for the camp and its coordinators to improve. Focus area of the implementation was rather to improve communication between the children and the coordinators that any educational intension behind.

This specific research showed that the final improvement was specifically about the children feedback to coordinators than about communication itself. However, in the end feedback is a form of communication as well. By using these sessions, it became clearer for the coordinators what is expected of them, what the children are interested in, what are their focus activities, what do they like more and what less. It can be a very powerful tool to use for the coordinators in their future professional life. That way they can also receive feedback that can indicate whether they might need to improve something about their leadership from the view of the participating children.

This research was based on more qualitative data than quantitative. Unfortunately, qualitative data is considered to be less trustworthy than quantitative for its lack of hard, provable data. There can be many disruptive elements to the qualitative data collecting method – studied people's behavior can chance drastically. They can act differently as they know somebody is watching, they can feel under pressure for interview, their answers are not always covered with hard and provable data. A specific method called methodological triangulation was used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

Quantitative research method, on the other hand, are much more trustworthy. They provide hard numbers that are not possible to influence. For this research, only one quantitative data collecting method was used – the questionnaire. The main reason of the questionnaire was to collect a hard, evidential data about the success of this implementation.

Beside the qualitative data colleting method, there were also other limiting elements that need to be considered for the practical process. The biggest limitation was the weather in summer 2022. In Golden, Canada, heat waves occupied the town for many, many weak. It has made the program very challenging, as the camp is mainly outdoors. Children were often exhausted from the heat, not very cooperative, and many times the coordinators needed to change the daily program as the only thing that made the children happy was to visit local spray park and pool.

Timing was another challenge to work with. More specifically, not enough time in the scheduled program anymore. When we have agreed about our cooperation, the whole summer program was structured, and there was not enough space for more developed and more thorough weekly exercises.

The last minor challenge was the participation of the children. The camp is structured to be weekly, therefore some children participated only for one week whether some participated for multiple weeks or the whole summer. Combined with the heat waves, it was happening often that some children would not feel well or simply did not want to participate some specific days. That, of course, was not very beneficial for the data collection part.

In general, this development project and research study was a success. All the collected data analyzed and the presented results in the previous chapter points to the fact that this implementation was a good development project and has positive benefits. The feedback from both coordinators was very straight and evidential. Even though the implementation was not as educational as some of us would have hoped, the beneficial results were visible.

It is possible to use goal setting and reflection practices during summer camps as a tool for improvement. Based on the coordinators' answers, the implementation helped them to gain a clearer idea of the children's expectations. It also helped to collect direct feedback from the children. Both these elements are important for the summer camp to reflect on their own, possibly improve and grow. They both answered that they would be interested to continue using such methods in the future.

As for the children's development, some children started to show improvement during the observation period. They would start to think of deeper goals rather than simple "I want to have fun" type of goals. Some children started to be more specific, think about the upcoming program and games they want to play (or how many). They started to include that in their goal setting session. It was obvious that they were learning about the concept and started to understand more and more.

However, there is still space to grow for such implementation. It would be a better idea to construct such practices with more children-friendly approach. Even though we have kept the sessions short, sometimes the children would be obviously bored and lose interest by distraction. The distraction could be from different sources, but it indicated that there could have been more space given for more children-friendly activities.

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APPENDIES

The first and second survey are attached to this part of thesis.

Figure 1. The first survey.

Summer camp coordinator - before implementation

☐ Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Hi! Welcome to my survey, Part 1 - before :)

Part 1 is focused on topics and questions from before the implementation of my research.
I am going to keep it simple, yet rich for collecting data that I can later analyze and compare with Part 2 - after.
Note that this can be anonymous and I will use information provided only for my thesis research.

Let's start with some background information about you.

1. How old are you? *

○ 18 - 20
○ 21 - 23
○ 24 - 26
○ 27 - 30

2. How long have you been working as a summer camp coordinator? *

○ This is my first summer
○ 1 - 2 summers
○ 2 - 3 summers
○ 3 - 5 summers
○ More than 5 summers

3. How old are usually children you work with during the summer camps? More answers possible. *

☐ 4 - 6
☐ 7 - 9

☐ 10 - 12

☐ 13 - 15

☐ Older than 15

4. Please, describe an experience or situation that you learned a lot from as a coordinator.

*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Can you describe an experience or situation that was a learning lesson for you but not positive?

(You did learn from it but would not like to experience again)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. How old are usually children you work with during the summer camps?

More answers possible. *

☐ 4 - 6

☐ 7 - 9

☐ 10 - 12

☐ 13 - 15

☐ Older than 15

Moving on to some details about the summer camps 2022.

7. How would you rate your relationship with children?
(0 - strictly professional, 10 - I am their best friend) *

0

0   10

8. Please, rank these qualities based on how important you think they are for a job as a coordinator.
(1 - not at all, 5 - very important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Patience *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Clear communication *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listening *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Leadership *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Creativity *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Self-awareness *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Empathy *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attentiveness *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Previous experience with kids *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Flexibility *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

9. During the past few weeks, how many children came to you with their vision of the camp? About program, games, outcomes, goals, etc...
(0 - none, 10 - all of them) *

0

0   10

10. If any did, can you remember what was it about?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Would you, as a coordinator, appreciate an improvement of communication with children? *

○ Yes, it would be helpful

○ No, I think we are good

12. Would you be willing to do an exercise that might improve the communication with children?
(About 15mins long, more benefits possible from the exercise) *

○ Yes

○ No

13. Imagine, you could have a conversation with children on adult level. What would you like them to tell you?
(Summer camp connected) *

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

In this last part, I would like to know more about your goals and what outcomes would you like to have by the end of the summer.

14. What is your personal goal for the summer 2022 as a coordinator? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Please, rate how important these possible outcomes would be for you as a coordinator.
(0 - not at all, 10 - very imporant)

	1	2	3	4	5
Better communication *	○	○	○	○	○
Clearer idea of kids expectations *	○	○	○	○	○
Feedback from children *	○	○	○	○	○
Educational element for children *	○	○	○	○	○
Possibility to improve next year *	○	○	○	○	○

16. Any other idea of a possible outcome?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Can you think of any possible negative outcome? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. In your mind, how would you recognize these new tools/methods as successful? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. In case of success, would you like to use introduces methods in the future? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

20. Any last ideas, comments, etc?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Figure 2. The second survey.

PLACE YOUR LOGO HERE

Summer camp coordinator - after implementation

☐ Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Hello ladies! One last time :)

First of all - I would love to thank you for the opportunity this summer. I know I came a bit late into your program but you have been both very welcoming and open minded.
I really appreciate that.

Secondly - CONGRATS ON THE BUCKET CHALLENGE!
From what I have observed, it was quite a success! Great idea, kids were into it and motivated and it just seemed to be another tool how to get the kids to cooperate and play as a team :)

Last but not least - I have created this final part of survey.
I am basically coming back to the original questions and once I will collect the answers from this part, I can start comparing and analysing.

1. What would you say that the average age of children was over the summer? (Does not need to be 100% correct, just your personal guess) *

○ 6-7
○ 8-9
○ 10-11
○ 12

2. Looking back, what was the most educational moment/element for you during this summer? Positive or negative. *

_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

3. Was there any negative experience that you would wish to prevent? How would you prevent it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Let's go through some questions that are connected to the "before implementation" survey.

4. How would you rate you relationship with children after the full summer? *

0

Strictly professional 0   10   I am their best friend

5. In the last survey, you both ranked the importance of almost all these qualities as 5.
On this scale, would you say any of these qualities improved for you over the summer?
(1 - not at all, 5 - yes, very much)

	1	2	3	4	5
Patience *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Clear communication *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Listening *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Leadership *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Creativity *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Self-awareness *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Empathy *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	1	2	3	4	5
Attentiveness *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Previous experience with kids *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Flexibility *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6. Would you say that kids' own goal-setting initiative improved? Did they maybe came up with their own goals on their own? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I do not remember

7. Any specific example or would you like to comment more?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Coming to the last part of the survey - the outcomes of implementation.

8. Do you have a feeling that the communication between you and children improved? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I cannot say

9. Coming back to your personal goal for the summer - have you met your goal? :) *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I am not sure

10. In the previous survey I asked about the importance of these possible outcomes.
Now, how would you rate their success?
(1 - not noticable, 5 - very successfull)

	1	2	3	4	5
Better communication *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Clearer idea of kids expectations *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Feedback from children *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Educational element for children *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Possibility to improve next year *	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. Any other outcomes that you have noticed?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Have you noticed any negative outcomes from the implementation? *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. In general, do you have a feeling that the methods were a success? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I am not sure

14. Would you use these methods in the future? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I am not sure

15. And last!
Any comments, ideas, stories to tell, ect...? :) *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You did it!
Thank you so much, have a lovely winter and perhaps see you enxt year in Golden :)