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# **THE PACKASSO PROJECT: A CASE STUDY**

by

Fairouz Bishara-Rantisi

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. Kay A. Keiser

Omaha, Nebraska

August 2015

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## Abstract

### The Packasso Project: A Case Study

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University of Nebraska, 2015

Advisor: Dr. Kay A. Keiser

This qualitative study explored how graffiti artists perceived their experience of belonging to a school based program, the Packasso Project, focused on redirecting their artistic talents and re-engage them into the educational process. Five former members of the program participated in the study. Data was collected through individual, in-depth interviews with the participants to address three primary research questions related to the participants' perceptions about belonging to the Packasso Project and its connection with graffiti art and academic outcomes. Through analysis of the data, insight was provided into the various social and academic factors impacting graffiti artists' school engagement. Subsequently, three major themes emerged: 1) Need for recognition, 2) Value of relationships, and 3) School engagement. Findings from this study indicate that the majority of the participants struggled with school engagement until they became part of the Packasso Project. The insight this research provides may allow educators to create supportive learning environments in which diverse groups of students not only stay engaged in school, but also experience academic learning and success that is the byproduct of continuous engagement.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all those that made the Packasso Project possible. The adults that believe that graffiti offenders can create beautiful works of art, and the students that have hope and make a better future for themselves. All of you have made my life better.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction to the Study

There can be implications when cities and school districts fail to implement successful programs to prevent graffiti. According to Moffitt (2003), juvenile offenders first manifest their persistent antisocial behaviors during childhood, and these behaviors progressively deteriorate and transform during adolescence into acts of criminal offending, which can persist well into adulthood. Adolescents, in general, are ill prepared to cope with social and academic demands, and, consequently, tend to overcome their coping insecurities by bonding together in small, supportive friendship groups (Agnew, 2003). Maslow (1954) determined that the need to belong is the third fundamental human need, placing it above only the most basic physiological and safety human needs. However, membership to certain subcultures can come with a cost, with the potential for translating into antisocial or criminal offending activities for teenagers, like graffiti. Lack of programs and resources to abate youth graffiti can lead to an increase in more violent and drug-related crimes as the offenders age (Taylor, Marais, & Cottman, 2011)

There is a dichotomous nature of representation of graffiti artists and graffiti, where they are either seen as something that is illegal and injurious to property, or an art expression (Halsey & Young, 2006; Hookstra, 2009; Sliwa & Cairns, 2007). The representation is also polarized in the limited academic literature on the topic, where it is either seen as a problem impacting society (Gibbons, 2004; Halsey & Young, 2002) or a norm within youth culture (McCormick, 2003; Wooden, 1995.)

Regardless of the approach, according to Campos (2009), youth that actively engages in illegal urban art activities seeks immersion in a territory of transgression and subversion that provide intense emotions that contrast with the daily routines that are ruled and regulated by different entities.

The aim behind graffiti writing is not only social acceptance, but also recognition and fame (Taylor et al., 2011). Beech & Cairns (2001) claim that graffiti does not emanate from apathy, disinterest, hypocrisy or self-marginalization, but as a choice of lifestyle. By placing their tags (i.e. street names) and their paintings in positions of high prominence in streets, graffiti artists initiate and maintain their street fame. Conversely, highly visual graffiti in public spaces causes public negative reaction, which can lead the general public to demand prompt graffiti removal strategies and legislative penalties.

In May 2009 Nebraska Legislature passed LB63, § 6, which determined that “Unauthorized application of graffiti is a Class III misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class IV felony for a second or subsequent offense”. According to the Nebraska legislature, for the purposes of this bill graffiti means “any letter, word, name, number, symbol, slogan, message, drawing, picture, writing, or other mark of any kind visible to the public that is drawn, painted, chiseled, scratched, or etched on a rock, tree, wall, bridge, fence, gate, building, or other structure. Graffiti does not include advertising or any other letter, word, name, number, symbol, slogan, message, drawing, picture, writing, or other mark of any kind lawfully placed on property by an owner of the property, a tenant of the property, or an authorized agent for such owner or tenant.”

Previous graffiti ordinance in the City of Omaha, Nebraska, did not carry a felony charge, but the Class IV felony under the new legislature authorizes a maximum of five

years imprisonment, or ten thousand dollars fine, or both, upon conviction. In addition to jail time and/or probation, a judge can also order the suspect to clean, repair and/or replace the damaged property, pay for restitution, undergo counseling and/or lose his or her driver's license for a year.

The Omaha community, especially in areas like South Omaha, perceived this change as a clear message to the individuals who were perpetrating the crimes, and, most importantly, as a defense of the values and image of the law-abiding community (Perez, 2012). But the anti-graffiti strategy, deploying crews to quickly erase or blot out painted surfaces, imposed a kind of natural-selection process in the graffiti subculture in Omaha (Nelson, 2012). By discouraging all but the shrewdest and most determined practitioners, the city and county inadvertently contributed to making Omaha a vibrant hub of graffiti activity, having some of the most active artists in its public schools (Perez, 2011).

Omaha South High Magnet School is the only private or public center in the metro area with a focus in Visual and Performing Arts. With the largest student population in the city, and therefore in the state of Nebraska (Nebraska Department of Education, 2014), South High has become the point of reference for students interested in the arts; but those artistic abilities are not always aimed in the right direction. South has always struggled to control the amount of graffiti that appear in its walls and around the school, and the new legislation did not dissuade the vandals from leaving their mark everywhere, causing the school to spend enormous amounts of money cleaning the graffiti (C. Riggs, personal communication, September 3, 2009).

As an effort to redirect the artistic talents of graffiti offenders in a more socially acceptable and profitable way, Omaha South High Magnet School started the Packasso

Project, with the approval of Cara Riggs, principal of the building, and under the supervision of the researcher as Curriculum Specialist for Visual & Performing Arts. The name of the initiative was a hybrid of the Packer, the school mascot, and Picasso, the famous Spanish artist with a revolutionary style that changed the art of the 20th century. The project was embraced both by the school and the community, with a variety of organizations being involved in the efforts and supporting the students in their educational and artistic journey.

The Packasso Program objectives are to reduce graffiti crime and school drop-outs associated with graffiti offenders by increasing school engagement through the implementation of three core program components: 1) Prevention: Inhibiting graffiti-crew (groups) joining through the provision of artistic opportunities not available to other students. 2) Intervention: Providing services and resources to crewmembers to assist leaving the graffiti-crew life and become engaged at school. 3) Crisis Management: Engaging in immediate reaction to vandalism and other street level incidents as they arise, and conducting ongoing monitoring activities in graffiti areas to help keep retaliations and flare-ups under control.

Currently, the Packasso Project is a well-established program both at South High Magnet School and in the Omaha artistic community. With its innovative approach to urban art, the artists help transform the landscape from ordinary to extraordinary through temporary, unexpected interventions: colorful, dynamic, thought-provoking murals. Public alleys, buildings, barriers, trucks, buses, schools, meeting rooms, dance studios, or even barns serve as canvases for temporary art all over the city of Omaha (Girmus, 2011)

Packasso Project's initiatives rely on partnerships with community organizations, private donors, and grants, and the creativity of the artists that create the site-responsive artwork. The Packasso Project does not aspire to change the definition of artwork, but rather to question the existing environment with its own language (Girmus, 2011). As Ferrell (1993, p.168) offers, "Graffiti writing is not an abstraction driven by the concept of Style, or the force of Aesthetics; it is collective activity construed out of the practical aesthetics of its writers." Packasso Project members attempt to have their work communicate with everyday people about socially relevant themes in ways that are informed by esthetic values without being imprisoned by them. Graffiti is their preferred mode of expression, and doing it legally is the goal they need to accomplish.

Different researchers such as Bourdieu & Passeron (1990), Gutierrez (2002), and Rogoff & Angelillo (2002) argue that the knowledge, skills, and abilities of graffiti artists can be seen as a product of social and cultural practices that are common of young people from different social backgrounds with different socio-political stories. These young artists portray a cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that is considered worthless socially and academically in the mainstream culture. Their skills are not valued in the academic environment because of their medium of choice.

Reengaging graffiti artist into the educational process requires defining the quantity and quality of physical and psychological energy that students invest in their schooling. Astin (1984) claims that the learning will occur in direct proportion to that engagement, but students need to be engaged in social relationships at school that will recognize and appreciate their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). McNeely & Falci (2004) take this concept further claiming that connection to school is not enough, that the

engagement of high-risk students such as graffiti offenders is highly dependent of the individuals within the school community with whom the connection is formed.

Although these arguments are all legitimate and have important empirical support, more research is needed to help understand the implications of graffiti offenders that belong to school programs and their engagement or reengagement in the educational process. The available literature about school engagement and graffiti offenders neglects to combine both perspectives. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how graffiti offenders have lived the experience of belonging to a mentoring program that focuses specifically on the needs of graffiti offenders and that provides opportunities for them to succeed with their skills.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Youth involved in graffiti offenses are a growing group in our public schools, and they often struggle to remain engaged in education. The available literature in this understudied area has focused on the experiences of graffiti offenders disconnected from their educational experience or school engagement and success. Hence, it is necessary to conduct a study that explores the phenomenon of school engagement in graffiti offenders.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question that this study is aimed to answer is, how do past Packasso Project participants describe their school engagement? This research will also address the following research sub-questions:

1. How do past Packasso Project participants perceive their experience of belonging to the group?

2. How do past participants perceive the relationship between membership to Packasso Project and academic outcomes?
3. How does being part of Packasso Project change the students' perception of graffiti art?

### **Rationale for Study**

This qualitative case study is important and needed for several reasons. First, a gap exists in the graffiti offenders' literature, where the perspective of the youth is not taken into account to understand school engagement. The available literature has focused on the deterrent of graffiti offenses, the hidden aspects of graffiti culture, or school engagement of disaffected adolescents. The majority of the scholarship has also been mainly quantitative. Therefore, the second goal of this study is to focus on qualitative findings in order to gain in-depth understanding of how the members of a carefully crafted graffiti-mentoring program describe their educational experience and the relationship between the membership to the mentoring program and academic outcomes. Third, graffiti offenses are common phenomena in urban areas, and affect both the local economy and school success. Fourth, this study will add new knowledge to this neglected area, but it will also provide information to educators and policy makers to better understand the needs of graffiti offenders. Fifth, the graffiti studies conducted have used data from large urban centers in both the East and West coast in the US, UK, or Australia. This study will be conducted in a large Midwestern city where graffiti is increasing in number. Finally, this study will provide information for future researchers who wish to study school engagement of graffiti offenders.

## **Rationale of Qualitative Methods**

The purpose of this qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Creswell (2014) claims that qualitative research is an inquiry process to explore social or human problems, and that the researcher builds a holistic picture that reports the views of the participants while conducting the research in a natural setting. Therefore, using a qualitative methodology allows the researcher to study the phenomenon of graffiti offenders and school engagement in its natural setting. The use of qualitative methods in this research is supported by Creswell (2014) for the following reasons:

1. Collection of data at the site the participants experience the issue.
2. The researcher is the one that actually gathers the information; they don't rely on instruments developed by other researchers.
3. The ability to use multiple sources of data.
4. The use of inductive and deductive analysis by using data to build patterns, categories, and themes.
5. The focus is on the meaning the participants assign to their experiences.
6. The research process is fluid and flexible; it changes as the field experience demands it.
7. It addresses the researcher's process of self-awareness and bias.

## **Limitations of the Study**

This study is a single example of the reflections of six Midwestern graffiti artists on their experiences on the Packasso Project and school engagement. While this study will fulfill its intention of providing new insights into a poorly understood phenomenon,



its findings cannot be considered to be representative of the experiences of all teenage graffiti artists in all geographic locations. Many more exemplar studies of this type are needed to make such a generalization.

### **Definition of Terms**

Martinez (2009) defines the following terms related to graffiti:

**Background.** The colors or designs that sit behind the letters. Originally done to separate the letter from the tags and other designs lying beneath the artworks to make it stand out.

**Blackbook.** A graffiti artist sketchbook, sometimes also called “piece book.” It is often used to collect other writer’s tags, and future plans for bombing and piecing.

**Bomb.** The action of doing graffiti. Painting a tag, or doing throw ups, or piecing in a certain area.

**Bombing.** To write graffiti art.

**Burner.** A full-fledged piece. Large full blown, with multiple color fills, background, characters, wildstyle letters, etc. Heavily detailed.

**Caps.** The interchangeable spray can nozzles fitted to the can to modify the width of the spray. Both fat and skinny, and countless types in between. Also referred to as “tips.”

**Character.** An illustrated figure added to a piece to add emphasis or push the idea of the burner forward. Sometimes the character takes the place of a letter in the piece.

**Crew.** A closely-knit band of graffiti writers. Crews are not gangs, although they are sometimes confused as such. Many times writers are members of more than one crew at any particular time.

**Old School.** A general term used to refer to an earlier time of writing. Generally refers to the '70s and '80s, but can also be a decade of reference, meaning a writer in 2009 may refer to the '90s as old school, and a writer from the '90s may refer to the '80s as such and so on.

**Piece.** Short for “masterpiece,” requiring more time than a throw up. A piece incorporates 3-D effects, many style elements, color patterns, and more. Characters and symbols are also used. “To piece” also refers to the act of going out to paint graffiti, but not tagging.

**Tag.** A writer’s signature, his “nom de plume.” It is also the most basic form of graffiti; it is essentially the writer’s logo. The action of signing the name is referred to as “to tag.”

**Tagger.** As opposed to a writer, a tagger only tags and never paints pieces.

**Throw up.** The name of the artist in quickly drawn bubble letter with one or two colors and an outline. Done very quickly, used to cover space, grab attention, and show that the artist was there.

**Writer.** Someone who practices the art of graffiti.

### **Outline of Dissertation**

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters and an appendix section. The first chapter will provide an introduction to the history of graffiti, graffiti offenses, and school engagement; the rationale for the study; the rationale for using qualitative

methods; statement of the problem; and the research questions. Chapter two will present a comprehensive review of the literature. The third chapter will describe the research methods; selection of participants; data collection and analysis methods; validation strategies used to increase the validity and reliability of the study; potential bias issues; and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter four will present and highlight the conclusions of the case analysis. Each participant experience will be described in great detail along with the themes that emerge from the study. Themes will be presented accompanied with artifacts. The last chapter will discuss the results of the study; the implications for theory development; practice; public policy; future research; the strengths and limitations of the study; a conclusion; a section of lessons learned; as well as the references used in all the chapters of this dissertation. There will also be an appendix section that will include copies of the internal review board approval from UNO; the informed consent forms; interview protocols; the demographic questionnaire; the observation protocol; and the artifacts that the participants provided and were used in the non-participant observation.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

Graffiti, scratched or written public marking, is considered to be the first form of human art. In the United States, the GIs of World War II and the Korean War wrote the phrase “Kilroy was here”, which was the precedent to hobos, railroad workers, gang members and others adding grease-penciled monikers to boxcars that crossed the country from sea to sea. When two new developed products, Magic Markers and aerosol spray paint, hit the shelves of stores all around the United States, ingenious hands turned those tools into an art medium (Austin, 2001).

Kids like CORNBREAD, TITY, and COOL KLEPTO KIDD spray painted their names all over Philadelphia in the late 1960’s (Gastman, Rowland, & Sattler, 2006). Yet it was in New York in the late 1960s and early 1970s where a generation of young men started to write their street names — TAKI 183, PHASE 2, SNAKE, JUNIOR 161 — “in ever increasing volume” (Gastman & Neelon, 2011, p. 20). Despite the white flight to the suburbs and the near bankruptcy state of New York, this generation realized that they could communicate with the entire city by painting the one thing that crosses every boundary of class, area, race, and neighborhood: the New York City subway system. The first few signatures were very simple, even though they stood out, but each successive batch grew in color, size, and flourish. Their reference materials, being all kids under twenty, were comic books, Sunday funnies, cartoons, toys, advertisements, candy wrappers, cereal boxes, and album covers (Gastman & Neelon, 2011). According to Austin (2001), the anger the graffiti provoked was remarkable and not comparable to any

other art movement in human history. Still, for all the hatred that graffiti spawned among adults, the fact that it was a youth movement meant that elders had to take an uncomfortable responsibility for the neglected surroundings that the youths were born into.

Graffiti had brief moments of exposure in the media through the 1970s and early 1980s, but it truly broke through in 1984. Following initial appearances in the background of early rap videos, graffiti was soon packaged as part of the “four elements” of hip-hop, alongside break dancing, rap, and DJing (Mason, 2009). With a dance, a vocal music, an instrumental music, and a visual art, hip-hop was a complete package of human expression with few parallels. Following on the heels of Charlie Ahearn’s film *Wild Style* (1983) came Henry Chalfant and Tony Silver’s documentary *Style Wars* (1983) and the publication of Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper’s book *Subway Art* (1988). Suddenly, the secret was out. The youth culture of hip-hop flew around the United States and the world, its four elements, calling an entire generation of kids to action (Mason, 2009).

### **The Issue of Graffiti**

Youth that actively engages in illegal urban art activities seeks immersion in a territory of transgression and subversion that provide intense emotions that contrast with the daily routines that are ruled and regulated by different entities (Campos, 2009). The aim behind graffiti writing is not only social acceptance, but also recognition and fame (Taylor et al. 2011). By placing their tags (i.e. street names) and their paintings in positions of high prominence in streets, graffiti artists initiate and maintain their street fame. Conversely, highly visual graffiti in public spaces causes public negative reaction,

which may lead the general public to demand prompt graffiti removal strategies and legislative penalties (McAuliffe, 2012).

Although approaches vary from one city to another, municipalities have employed a wide arsenal of strategies to combat graffiti (Black, 1997), which is seen as a transgressive act of property crime that results in spiraling cost for cities (Dickenson, 2008; Iveson, 2009, 2010; McAuliffe, 2012; Taylor, 2012; Weisel, 2013). Researchers agree that as the wars on graffiti have escalated, so too have the cultural rewards of those engaging in its activity (Beech & Cairns, 2001; Cruz Salazar, 2010; Iveson, 2010; McAuliffe, 2012; Sliwa & Cairns, 2007), to the extent of characterizing the graffiti writer as the superhero that overcomes the adversity and challenges that are set before him to create art (Campos, 2009, 2013).

Graffiti writers belong to a relatively small minority of adolescents that seek non-conforming social identities that actively challenge societal norms (Halsey & Young, 2006; Taylor, 2012; Taylor & Houghton, 2008), and their graffiti activity becomes their entry port into juvenile crime (Taylor, 2012). A large body of research has consistently established that delinquency is often linked to school engagement (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Libbey, 2004; Liska & Reed, 1985), and adolescents at the at-risk continuum tend to have such a weak sense of school belonging that they use their illegal acts as a way of connecting (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Taylor, 2012).

### **School Engagement**

School engagement is essential to normative adolescent behavior (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Pittman & Richmond, 2007), and although definitions of

engagement vary across studies (Reschly & Christenson, 2012), for the purpose of this research engagement is the effort put forward completing a task (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Wang & Degol, 2014), and involves active, goal oriented, focused, and constructive behaviors and interactions (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). There is a wide body of research (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Hirschfeld & Gasper, 2011; Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003) that supports three distinct but mutually reinforcing dimensions of engagement: Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. The first two aspects have a direct link to the school social bond, while the last one lacks that characteristic.

Behavioral engagement refers to participation activities at school, both academic and non-academic; emotional engagement refers to the positive disposition and affective responses toward the educational processes and practices; and cognitive engagement is the mental effort one is willing to put into academic tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004; Hirschi, 1998). Behavioral engagement predicts less delinquency because of the time spent doing homework or other school activities. Emotional engagement at school reduces misconduct because it helps create emotional connections with school staff and peers (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998), which decrease substance use, delinquency, and it may strengthen parent-child bonds. There is no known research assessing the effect of cognitive engagement on delinquency.

Student engagement is shaped by context, therefore when students have positive learning experiences, supportive relationships with adults and peers, and reaffirmation of their developmental needs in learning context, they are more likely to remain actively engaged in school (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). However, disengagement from school does not necessarily start in high school, but often in elementary or middle school

(Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani 2001), and it is widely recognized as the principal long-term social and psychological process that may turn motivated students into high school dropouts and delinquents (Alexander et al., 2001; Finn, 1989; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Li & Lerner, 2011; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1997).

Despite the large amount of research that has been conducted on engagement, there is still lack understanding of how the different dimensions interact with each other and to what extent specific interventions can produce improvement in school engagement. The insight this research will offer will allow educators to provide supportive learning environments in which graffiti offenders not only stay engaged, but also experience the academic learning and success that is the byproduct of continuous engagement.

### **Interventions**

Graffiti triggers emotional responses from residents and governmental officials everywhere, and for this reason graffiti vandalism is a priority for many communities (Black, 1997). The damage caused by graffiti vandalism in the city of Omaha, Nebraska, has become more prevalent, to the point that the annual cost to taxpayers to remove graffiti is \$650,00 in municipal budget, with an estimated \$750,000 with private contributions (City of Omaha, "Graffiti Abatement", 2014). Omaha's city code defines graffiti as follows, "The defacing, damaging or destroying, of any public and private building, structure, place, or vehicle belonging to another, without the permission of the owner or occupant, by the spraying of paint or marking of ink, dye, or other similar substances, or by etching."



The city of Omaha covers 130.6 square miles and with a population of 408,958 is the largest city in the state of Nebraska. Approximately 25% of the city's population is under the age of 18 years of age (2010 U.S. Census). Nationally, the at risk age group for graffiti crimes is young males between the ages 15 to 23 (Wiesel, 2013). In 2013, there were 37 individuals arrested for graffiti vandalism in the city. Juveniles of less than 18 years of age committed about 41% of these crimes. In 2014 there was an increase in the number of arrests, 44, with juveniles being responsible for 35% of the crimes.

In August of 2011, the City of Omaha presented an Anti-Graffiti Blueprint Report developed by The Graffiti Consultants, a consultant company focused on the development and implementation of highly successful graffiti reducing strategies. The plan consisted of 26 specific recommendations to abate graffiti in Omaha through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary plan that coordinated a citywide effort (City of Omaha, 2011). However, none of the recommendations included specific efforts to partner with the local public schools or the creation of programs that would redirect the artistic talents of the local graffiti offenders, hence, still leaving a void in the efforts of diminishing graffiti activity in Omaha. Omaha's struggles are not isolated in the battle against graffiti. Urban areas have been attempting to decrease the issue of graffiti by using different concepts, some very creative, to promote urban change regeneration (Kan, 2001; McAuliffe, 2012).

In the last few years there has been a development all over the world of legal graffiti programs to promote an avenue for graffiti writers, such as mural art programs, although Taylor and Marais (2009) claim that those initiatives do not

discourage graffiti from occurring. Nevertheless, there is a body of research (Artz, 2013; Kan, 2001; Taylor & Marais, 2009) that supports the long-term benefits for communities by lowering the probability of graffiti reoccurring in the area where legal graffiti murals have been painted. Taylor (2012) concludes that “treatment programs can be proposed that effectively rehabilitate rather than simply punish recidivist graffiti offenders” (p. 66), and it is under this premise that the Packasso Project was created.

There are other initiatives around the country to raise awareness about the negative effects of graffiti, such as the grassroots education program Graffiti Hurts-Care for your Community, which uses education and prevention activities (Graffiti Hurts, 2014). There is no research, however, on school based programs that provide continued support for high school graffiti vandals to reduce the participation in illegal graffiti activity and increase the level of school engagement.

## Chapter 3

### Research Methods

The purpose of this study is to understand how graffiti offenders experience belonging to a mentoring program that is aimed to serve their needs, and the impact that experience has in their school engagement.

#### **Research Design**

This research study used a multiple case study design, which, as described by McDuffie & Scruggs (2008) involves an in-depth exploration of a single case of the phenomenon under study. Mertens (2010) explains that case studies focus on the understanding of a particular case within a complex context, and Stake (2013), highlights the difficulty of defining a case study as a unique form of research, because the case study is not defined by the methodology, but by the specificity and uniqueness of its system.

#### **Case Selection**

In order to gain multiple perspectives, this study used purposeful selection (Maxwell, 2013). To achieve this, five graffiti offenders and participants in Packasso Project were selected to be part of this research study. The participants were selected based on Maxwell's (2013) goals for purposeful selection, focusing especially on those participants that best represented the setting and with whom the researcher was able to establish the most productive relationship. Thus, the participants were graffiti offenders that had been part of Packasso Project for more than a year and that during that time had a direct relationship with the researcher of this project. These two dimensions allowed getting a clear picture of school engagement in graffiti offenders.

## **Data Collection**

The researcher identified the participants of this study. The researcher contacted Packasso Project members that met the criteria, and asked them if they would be interested in participating in the study. When the Packasso Project member agreed, the researcher scheduled a visit with the participant and explained the purpose of the study and what participating in the study entailed. For this study, data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, collection of artifacts, and a reflective journal.

**Interviews.** The participants were interviewed individually, and the interview lasted one to two hours and was conducted in their homes or another location of their choice, and in the language they felt more comfortable with, either Spanish or English. The interviews were audio recorded. Also, during the interview, the researcher took notes. Participants were reminded that breaks were allowed if they needed to do so. They were also informed that to protect their identity they needed to provide a pseudonym. Each participant was provided a consent form in English or Spanish and told that they might withdraw from the study at any point.

A draft interview protocol was developed for this study. The protocol was divided into eight questions. These questions were divided into six sections. The sections included questions about the Packasso Project experience; questions about school engagement; questions about the participants' feelings about graffiti activity; questions about stopping illegal graffiti activity; questions about suggestions and/or advice to other graffiti offenders and the school system; and the last section asked the participants to provide any information they would like to add that they felt was important. The demographic sheet inquired about gender identity; age; ethnicity; highest

level of education; language preference; favorite and least favorite subjects; time doing graffiti; police record; questions about situations where they did graffiti.

**Artifacts.** The artifacts gathered for this study included blackbooks or sketchbooks of the participants, their art pieces, and their personal journals or writings. For the purpose of data analysis, the artifacts were photographed or copied, and any identifiable information was erased. The original documents were returned to the participants.

**Reflective Journal.** The last form of data was keeping a reflective journal and field notes. Morrow & Smith (2000) argue that the use of a reflective journal adds rigor to qualitative inquiry, as the researcher is able to record his/her reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. The journal entries and notes created by the researcher evolved into contact summary sheets (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By summarizing the main concepts, issues, themes and questions, the researcher used the result to plan the next contact, suggest new codes, and reorient the research process.

### **Data Analysis**

Before the data was analyzed, the researcher transcribed all interviews, artifacts, journal entries, field notes, and summary sheets. The process of transcribing allowed the researcher to become more acquainted with the data (Maxwell, 2013; Mertens, 2010). The researcher created files for the interviews, artifacts, journal entries, field notes, and summary sheets that were password protected. All files were saved in the computer of the researcher under password, and in the Internet in a cloud system password protected as well. The researcher used narrative analysis as the unit of analysis for coding. The data was not coded sentence-by-sentence or paragraph-by-paragraph, but coded for

meaning. Narrative analysis focuses on the stories that are told in different format, and pays more attention to the content than to the way the story is told (Mertens, 2010). The researcher used the qualitative software Dedoose for data management and analysis.

This study followed a multiple case study design where the data is analyzed case by case through triangulation of data (Maxwell, 2013; Mertens, 2010) to prevent the biases of a specific method. The researcher created descriptive codes, just mere attributions of the phenomena, and pattern codes, which most appeared during the re-reads or at the end. The researcher started with a list of codes that anticipated what would be found in the analysis. The researcher checked the data and generated labels and categories and looked for regularly occurring phrases to create the codes (Creswell, 2014). To name the codes, the researcher used three letters that were likely to elicit the meaning of the category.

Therefore, interviews, artifacts, field notes, and summary sheets were analyzed for each case as multiple data sources, and memos were used to serve as an audit trail to document the progression of the study.

### **Validation Strategies**

Validation of the research assures that the findings of the researcher are accurate from other points of view, such as that of the participants or the readers of the account (Creswell, 2014). Credibility for this study was achieved using the validation strategies of triangulation, researcher reflexivity, rich description, and peer debriefing.

As stated before, the data will be triangulated with the different pieces of information collected (i.e., interviews, artifacts, memos, field notes, contact sheets). The researcher, having connection with graffiti herself, will provide a section where she

describes her story as an artist and her stand on the issue, as well as potential bias. The rich description will be achieved by presenting the participants' voices under each theme and by providing detailed description of each of the cases. Finally, the researcher will secure the assistance of a peer defriever that is familiar with qualitative data analysis and that agrees to serve in this role for the time this study takes place.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants will be treated in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board (IRB). Although there are no identifiable risks of participating in this study, some considerations will be kept in mind with dealing with Packasso Project members. First, all the participants will talk about their experiences members of the Packasso Project and school engagement, second, there is a possibility that Packasso Project members may feel uncomfortable discussing their experiences or talking about personal situations. Lastly, given that this study deals with graffiti offenses and illegal acts, there is the potential that the participants may feel the pressure to answer all the questions designed for the interview given that the researcher holds a position of power.

All these considerations will be incorporated during the research design stage, and every caution will be taken to ensure that the participants feel safe, comfortable, and have the freedom to withdraw from the study if they feel the need to do so.

### **The Role and Background of the Researcher**

I am an artist by nature. For as long as I can remember I have always had a pen or pencil in my hand and this has always been my way of coping with my surroundings. My experiences in a dysfunctional family that led me to seek art as a way of life is a

repeated story for many youngsters that find comfort in the rush the graffiti creation produces. My passion for art slowly morphed into education and a career as an adult - I hold bachelor and master degrees both in Fine Arts and Art History - but for most kids that passion does not have a happy ending, and transforms into a felony charge that can land them in prison for a long period of time. That passion for art as self expression and a way to escape reality connects me emotionally to the participants of my study, and while that connection will help me understand their mental process more clearly, it can also lead me to make assumptions that can compromise my studies.

As I take into consideration how I feel about the topic of graffiti, the people that create it, and the environment in which it exists, I have to admit that my fascination for its social dynamics and the level of artistic skills those artists display might make it hard to discern the real attributes of the world I am studying from the mental model I have created over the years. My prior connections to the graffiti movement, my personal relationships with the young people that will participate in my study, and my own personal experiences will be at the same time an asset and a deterrent for my research.

I cannot reflect on my own identity and how it might potentially affect my research without describing my beliefs and what my expectations are when it comes to working with graffiti offenders in redirecting their artistic talents and re-engaging them in the educational process. I believe in the power of positive, healthy relationships; I believe in human kindness and having the courage to do what is right for no other reason than it is what we are supposed to do; I believe in hope, and in supporting, building, nurturing other people's hope both short and long term; I believe in vision, in working collaboratively to improve our current best; I believe in the goodness of all people, and



that each individual has the potential for greatness; and I believe in celebrating, whether is it laughing or crying. I believe in remaining positive in the face of adversity, being thankful for the smallest things, and living passionately as often as I can. I believe in celebrating and respecting differences, and using those opportunities to learn, grow, and better myself.

It cannot be denied that my personal experiences have marked me deeply and have shaped the person I am today, generating a number of biases that might affect profoundly any research I choose to attempt if I am not aware of their presence. It is my personal responsibility to identify them and set them aside not only to become a successful researcher, but also to be a better person.

## Chapter 4

### Research Findings

The purpose of this research study was to explore the phenomenon of school engagement in graffiti offenders that belong to a mentoring program, the Packasso Project, and how they lived that experience. The following research questions informed this study: (1) How do past Packasso Project participants perceive their experience of belonging to the group?; (2) How do past participants perceive the relationship between membership to Packasso Project and academic outcomes?; and (3) How does being part of Packasso Project change the students' perception of graffiti art?

During in-depth interviews, the participants described their experiences with graffiti and belonging to the Packasso Project. They also discussed their perceptions of school and engagement.

The research findings that this chapter reports are based on analysis of the following data sources: semi-structured interviews, demographic sheets, artifacts, and the researcher's reflective journal.

### **Background**

The participants of this study were comprised of 5 graffiti artist former members or Packasso Project. They ranged in age from 20 to 22 years old; two were female, and three were male. On average, participants had been doing graffiti for five or more years; only one participant had been doing graffiti from 1 to 3 years. All five participants identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Three of the participants reported being high school graduates, and two described themselves as having some college, no degree. In

addition, four participants identified Art as their favorite high school course, while one identified History. When selecting least favorite courses, four participants chose Mathematics, while one participant identified Science.

All the participants of the study were part of the Packasso Project at the high school level, a school initiative instituted at Omaha South High Magnet School approximately seven years prior to this research. In 2008 the program was started by the researcher in order to reengage graffiti offenders in the educational process while redirecting their artistic abilities. When this study was conducted, the program still continued serving students at Omaha South High Magnet School under the supervision of a different program director. During the interviews, several study participants referenced this fact as part of their experience in the Packasso Project.

The participants contributed differing amounts of information to the three themes that comprise the narrative. All participants discussed all the themes at length, although some elaborated and provided more details than others. Therefore, all participant's voices and views are represented in this study.

### **Study Findings**

Three themes emerged from the data:

1. What are the participant's perceptions about graffiti art?
2. What are the participants' perceptions and experiences belonging to the Packasso Project?
3. What are the participants' perceptions about belonging to the Packasso Project and its effect on academic outcomes?

While the themes are reported as being discrete, there is considerable overlap among them. Furthermore, participants' responses to interview questions often addressed more than one theme, or there are responses that affect every theme, and are presented as a second part within each theme. The interview data are described where they appear to fit most logically.

### **Theme 1: What are the participant' perceptions about graffiti art?**

In their responses to interview questions, the participants identified a number of factors that move them to do graffiti and that frame their artistic experiences. Although the participants sometimes simplify the responses when explaining what drives them to do graffiti and how they lived those experiences, those factors fit under four main categories: (1) Innate need, (2) Graffiti as communication; (3) Need for recognition; (4) Emotional experiences. These four categories are the focus of the next sections of this narrative. While those factors are described in separate sections, there is considerable overlap among them. Furthermore, the participants' responses often addressed more than one category. In those cases, the interview data are described where they appear to fit more logically.

#### **Innate need**

Many of the study participants perceived that the act of painting and doing graffiti was beyond their control, and that it is so ingrained in whom they are that they cannot stop. WSER describes this need:

I've always had, how do you say it, a lot of hyperactivity...if you put a pen in my hand I think of tagging, even if it is on the desks, or anywhere, I don't know, I like it...

SEN shares this sentiment:

Cause I can't leave it alone...I want to be honest, I can't leave it alone, it is something that is gonna stick with me...I feel that when I'm 60 I will still bring a little pen along, and be like, eh, I'm still around [laughs]. But you know, every time since I started can't leave it alone.

And while the other participants also agree that the attraction for doing graffiti is greater than their will, they also acknowledge the impact their actions have in the community. BAME, for example, explains how he understands that graffiti is vandalism, but asserts that is also a lifestyle:

When we went to Houston, well, there was no need to bring markers, but we did it, we brought markers, and we went through downtown tagging walls, and everything...and it was something bad, but we couldn't help it...

CECY uses the same term describing her feelings about the act of doing graffiti: "you know, deep down you know that it's vandalism, that they destroyed somebody's property doing that." CREAM supports this idea, adding, "I knew that what I was doing was bad, but I couldn't stop, and I didn't [know] how to stop." Therefore, the participants have full understanding of the implications of doing graffiti, the effect it has on other people, yet they still continued to do it because they just could not stop or did not know how.

During the interview, while discussing the topic of graffiti as an illegal activity and vandalism, SEN showed concern about how the public sees graffiti and graffiti artists in a negative light, depersonalizing who they are and what graffiti does for them:

Graffiti...it's never really been looked at as anything positive for as long as I can remember, but you know, because being involved in it was a very good thing, basically, for us, and just for the name of what we do, you know, we are graffiti artists, but we are also just people, and at that point we were just students trying to get through our high schools years, and, you know, move on, so...I just have to say that, it was...really good...

A final example of the lack of control the participants had over themselves when it came to doing graffiti is addressed by BAME and CREAM when they discussed people they know who have received tickets or secured jail time for their graffiti offenses. However, although CREAM believes that being charged with a felony for doing graffiti is “kinda harsh” he says:

The new law changed my mind...[...] Why am I gonna go back to doing it like that, when if I get caught...and when it became a felony...nah, I am never gonna go back to doing that, risking a felony, and get a record for something I like to do, or something that I sometimes do for positive reasons...

### **Graffiti as communication**

The participants reported that their graffiti pieces serve as a communication tool, either as an outlet for their emotions, or as self-expression that seeks provoking artistic responses in the observers. When discussing the effect almost therapeutic of graffiti and art in general, CREAM explained how the process helped him:

To paint...sometimes is just that, the whole creative process, the whole, you know, being by yourself, figuring out how to put something in a piece

of paper into a wall, or a canvas with paint...you gotta have a lot of control, and things like that, the focus, like being by yourself focus...it helps me to clear everything out...Probably a lot of the anxiety...painting helps a lot...

He further elaborated also discussing how graffiti becomes a scape route for a lot of young people:

I knew it was a gateway to like some of them, for the negatives, and, going and doing something that is going to get you into a lot of trouble...so, you know, like me sometimes I am getting too bored, or I am thinking of negative...I'll just go out, and I'll start painting...maybe on a negative day I'm gonna go and paint something real nice, you know, I like it, I like it a lot!

Another participant, CECY, also echoed graffiti as an escape route: "So, ever since I was little I've always been doing it, and I guess it was my way of escaping from all my problems." Other participants also discussed the effect doing graffiti has on their emotions, like WSER when he mentioned how it "makes you feel good" or "when I am painting I relax, it's like a break for me", or BAME: "To do it you need to have certain feelings to paint a wall, I don't have the motivations, I don't have the motivation, only the pleasure of doing it." SEN reinforced that sense of bliss discussing her own experiences: "That's the main thing I like about painting, it's that it makes me happy, and people around me happy, so...[laughs]."

However, although the participants go into detail explaining how they use graffiti to feel better about themselves and share their feelings, they also seek to produce a

reaction in the public. WSER explained how “I love to do it and see that people enjoy it”, or, in SEN’s words,

[What] I really like about graffiti...it’s like it always leaves the other person wondering, like, who did that, you know, because you’ll never know...It is really cool, it’s what drives me to paint, just knowing that...just wanting to see the finished product, and that is going to be seen, and that might inspire or might tick somebody off, like this is just like, I don’t know...I like the reactions people get from like artworks and stuff like that, so that’s what drives me to do it, just to finish it, to see it, and for it to be seen.

### **Need for Recognition**

A constant in the conversation with the participants when talking about what drove them to do graffiti was the need for leaving their mark and being recognized for their artwork. BAME explains it in the following terms:

In that time I wanted people to know me, us, as a crew, so that is what we cared about most, leaving our language out there for others to see we had been there...[...] You wanted to be known, that you exist, so we had to do it.

Another participant, CECY, was proud of the recognition she had in social media for her graffiti, which made her feel really good about herself:

That was the first time I painted something that big, it was that time, and after we finished I signed it, and then we came back down and we left.

And then, the next day, there were pictures of it in social media, like in



Facebook, and Instagram, and I was like...I did that...It felt good, it felt good, it felt good that people were like, you know, admiring it...

CREAM shared how he “liked getting attention, the recognition part,” and how his desire to do tattoos stems from the need to leave his permanent mark not just in places, but also on people. SEN uses the same language when talking about the lastingness of her artwork: “Painting and painting, and painting non stop, like you know, leaving your mark behind, knowing that is there...”

CECY reinforced the other participants’ observations, recognizing that leaving her mark is what she enjoyed the most about doing graffiti:

Just like people, you know, you do something, and you are like, everybody can see it, everybody that walks through here, everybody that passes through here is gonna see it...Everybody that...everybody that does graffiti is going to know that is you, and that you did that. So I guess that was the best part, and it was just...it’s fun, it’s fun! And it was something I did, I liked doing, I like art, I like painting, and you know, to do it in a larger scale, and so more than a lot of people can see it...that was the best part...

### **Emotional Responses**

All participants in the study stressed the importance of the emotional responses they experienced while doing graffiti. They recognized that the adrenaline rush is hard to replace and is what drives people to keep painting illegally. BAME explained

That heartbeat when you are tagging the wall and you don't know what's going to happen...you like it, you're attracted to it...I don't know, it's the adrenaline...[...] It's the adrenaline rush that you have when you do it.

CECY discussed how doing graffiti felt like a new adventure every time she went somewhere, and that encouraged her to keep doing it: "I guess that was one of the big motivations, and then once I started doing it, you know, like the rush of it, it's just like...fun...you know, it feels good, and it was fun, you know, a new adventure."

CREAM talked about how "for some people is all about the rush, that's why I think for them sometimes is harder to change, and to not do it." Sen also agrees: "The best part is the rush...just the rush..."

Only one participant, CREAM, expressed: "It is not the rush, it is for their own pleasure" alluding to the fact that being able to see the art they create, even if nobody else sees it, is what is worth about its creation.

## **Theme 2: What are the participants' perceptions and experiences belonging to the Packasso Projects?**

This theme discusses how the participants consistently shared positive perceptions and experiences as members of the Packasso Project. Those experiences seem to be the result of Packasso Project providing an opportunity to its members to replace behaviors they were having on a daily basis and that were affecting their social relationships, their families, and school. This replacement takes place by fulfilling some of the needs the participants mentioned in Theme 1 in a manner that is appropriate and healthy for them. Some participants, like CREAM, described some of those behaviors and how they were reluctant to join Packasso:

When we first getting into it, in the beginning, we were all against being with you all [Packasso Project] and things like that, we were doing things illegally...since we were always together with what we were doing, you know, walking around, all that, and not being with the cops...[...] When we saw you guys, and you guys had like cops, and the chief police, we were all thinking, oh, this is just to catch us, to find information about us...

SEN shared her experience talking about the struggles she was going through when she was invited to the Packasso Project: “When you [the researcher] first introduced all of us to Packasso, I was in a very bad place...and looking back, and having to go through many things...[...] but at the end, everything came out absolutely amazing...” CECY reinforced SEN’s observations, explaining the difficulties she was having at home at the time, and, in her words, “just being there made me sick, so I would find any excuse to leave the house.” She elaborated further about what she used to do when leaving: “When I left I would go paint graffiti, I would go with friends, even if we didn’t paint or anything we would be on the street, we would just walk around, hanging out...” CECY’s descriptions clearly outlined patterns of behavior that are consistent with the troubled backgrounds other participants mentioned, and, just as them, although just was reluctant to join the Packasso Project, she acknowledges the positive impact it had on her:

In the beginning I was like, dang, thinking about it [joining the Packasso Project]...but you know, towards the end, I mean, towards when, soon when I got into it, I started doing it, I knew I made the right choice, and I

was happy. I really enjoyed everything, and, you know, I realized that everything I was doing before that just wasn't right...and yeah, I mean, I don't regret it at all, it was one of the best experiences that I had so far.

In contrast to these participants, WSER explained how his only issue was that he was new to the country and the effect that had on him:

I didn't speak the language that the other people spoke...after some time I felt like locked up, I needed to have communication with them, but somehow I couldn't for some reason... and that was a problem for me.

They all had relationships, and I was feeling left out...

But despite the issues the participants may have had at the time of joining and being in Packasso Project, they all shared positive experiences, which, as mentioned, connect with the categories outlined in Theme 1. First, despite the innate need to do graffiti the participants discussed, it seems that urgency was replaced by the sense of community that WSER described explaining "it was like a community, a circle in which everybody helped each other..." And taking it further "I think Packasso was like an opportunity to vent, not only with our friends, but when we had an issue we could always cry to [the researcher], I don't know, it was an opportunity to let things out..." BAME's account of the sense of community addressed many of the Theme 1 categories, and exemplifies the need of belonging and the need for recognition:

It made me feel I belonged to someone, to something, to a family, to a club, it made me feel important because they took my ideas into account, what I thought, and, I felt special, more than other people that did graffiti

and didn't want to join the program because of what their friends would say, so for me it really made me feel part of the group.

BAME's description of Packasso Project as a family indicates that he recognizes and appreciates the level of relationship within the group, and, furthermore, he believes that those relationships are more important than the innate need to do graffiti that had been described previously. BAME continued to explain what he valued in that community:

Obviously only one person it's really hard, not impossible, but difficult, so when you make those things as a team, you feel yourself motivated, as, the result is better...some people work better together, in a team. But I liked working in a team because that way I gave my opinion and received feedback...then, well, that's an example of something good.

CREAM took a different direction with this concept, and described that sense of community rather as "a sense of purpose," where they all push each other to be better while they work together: "I think because it helped me out, like stopped me from going down a little nasty road that I could have gone." That sense of improvement is not limited to artistic skills, which will be discussed later, but a self-betterment that is described by CREAM as "[Packasso] helps me be better..." and very eloquently by SEN:

Well, I just learned to be, honestly, a better person, and to just consider other people too, not only be stuck in your ideas, you know, let everybody in. They just, you know, I learned to be more open also, and I don't know how to say it very well right now, like, yeah, we did for each other

different things to improve ourselves also... I just feel we all had positive parts on it...

The second aspect the participants discussed about the Packasso Project was how they were provided the opportunity to learn and perfection their graffiti art at a level they had not enjoyed before, and how BAME narrates very candidly, with resources they were never able to afford:

I had never painted with such good materials, we always had the cheapest, and all that was what made me...well, to get more involved in the group, and also meet other people I had never met, other people that had not the same, but similar feelings towards painting letters and all that, because it was interesting for me...and yeah, it marked me a lot during the time I was in high school because it distracted me from other things...

CREAM mentioned how he was inspired by other artists and the work they do, and how that made him want to get better at his craft: "I always look at Drift [local graffiti artist], I always look his things in walls and stuff, and makes me wanna actually get better at it."

Based on their experiences in the Packasso Project, several participants indicated how doing graffiti in a legal manner allowed them to create graffiti pieces that were higher quality, even if it meant sacrificing the excitement of the illegal activity examined in Theme 1. BAME discussed this topic and the advantages and disadvantages of the legal activity:

Because when you do it legally you take your time, and, you have something visualized and has to look good, you have your sketch, and

there is no way it can go wrong...you don't take risks like getting shot, that the owner of the house hits you...so it's not the same adrenaline, because actually there is no adrenaline...but, you can take your time to do something well and detailed. However, doing it illegally, like I said, there are risks...but the intensity is stronger...

CREAM shared how all it took for him to stop doing graffiti illegally was just becoming part of the Packasso Project and having the opportunity to paint: "For me yeah, it was just that one time...and I was always like what were you thinking?...Why am I gonna go back to doing it like that [illegally]?" and his remarks also emphasized his preference of painting in a legal manner not just because of the quality of the piece, but also because of the permanency: "You know, instead of having tags on it [building] have something nice...it is going to be up for a longer period of time instead of getting tagged out, and having like patches..."

A constant topic in the conversations with the participants was the need for recognition. This topic was already addressed in Theme 1, but the participants continued to discuss how being recognized for their art while belonging to the Packasso Project reinforced their desire to be part of the group. CREAM's description of his aspiration to be recognized and known mirrors what other participants shared as well:

I didn't notice the recognition I would get [in Packasso]. For me that was one of the good parts about it, because I would just tell Ana [his girlfriend] sometimes, I would tell her, oh, so many people know me that I don't even know. Sometimes I'd meet people that literally, that saw a picture of me somehow, or saw me at a random place and say hi to me...things like

that...so that would get to me sometimes, yeah...I liked getting attention, the recognition part...

CECY explained how “being recognized the right way” made her enjoy her experience in the Packasso Project and encouraged her to continue to work because “it was nice to see people like appreciating it, and getting it...” She elaborated by telling an anecdote that illustrates this concept well:

I think the best time was when we were with [local leader]. He treated us like rock stars...I remember he would come and he would be like “Wow, you guys did good, you guys are so amazing!” and he would leave the room for an hour and come back and we had barely done anything, and he would be just amazed, and with food and lots of stories. He was always fun! I liked that, that was probably it, and since that was my first project, the first project I did with you guys, like right away I was just “wow.”

WSER’s perceptions connect with the other participants’ in describing the impact recognition had on him. He explicitly explained how he enjoyed both being recognized by being approached by people while painting, but also the fact that people wanted to buy his art:

It made me feel good because people I didn’t know bought my things that now they have in their houses, hanging from their walls, and maybe they don’t remember me, but if they see me on the street they are going to say “oh, you’re that one that painted it, I have one of your paintings...” And it doesn’t matter how many years have passed, because they spent the money, and they spent the money for something they still have...



BAME added to the recognition conversation by adding the concept of fame:

“Fame...so the other adolescents that do it would say: “Hey, I know who he is!...or “That looks great!”, or, like you say, “That’s cool!”...and I think that’s the reason why I started...”

Another aspect that the participants highlighted about their experience in the Packasso Project is how much they valued the relationships they developed and the impact they had on them. WSER explained “when I arrived I only knew my brother and my dad, and my brother’s girlfriend...and that [Packasso] caused that I made a lot of friends, and good relationships with teachers.” CECY also talks about friendship within the group: “I think that was the best part, just getting to know them all, make a lot of new friends and you know, we got really close towards the end of it.”

Only one participant, SEN, explicitly expressed challenges when it came to relationships with other members of the Packasso Project:

The difficulty came, you know, in being with other peers...you know, most of all, because I felt like I was one of the, you know, least experienced, because the guys...they had more experience and there was, like, you know, not really conflict, but, you know, complications because of the different styles and stuff, and also communication, but, really?

Besides that it was pretty good, we worked on projects, it was good...

However, she also explains that part of being in the Packasso was learning how to navigate those relationships: “We just had to talk it out...and had to ignore...you know, the anger we had towards each other at that point, and just move and do what we had to do...and that’s how we all got through the projects at the end...”

Several participants cited the impact the Packasso Project had in the relationship with their families and how their parents felt about them being part of Packasso. CECY shared:

My mom did, my mom did [know I did graffiti], and she found out, and when I did start doing Packasso she was very happy...she was happy to see me doing something productive, and, because I know she always told me you are doing this, you are doing that, I am scared for you, I am worried about you, so now that she saw me doing this, doing Packasso, you know, she knew I was safe! She knew I was doing something legal, and I was safe. So she was definitely happy!

Similar excitement was shared by SEN's family:

At first they were kind of, what is this thing, graffiti art? They really didn't understand, but as time went by and they saw it wasn't just about painting, and you know, doing other stuff, because we never did anything illegal...so after a while they wanted...they loved the idea that I was...the legal part of this project, because I was in many things, but it helped me school wise, and just life wise, you know. We had each other, especially guided us through many, many things, taught us many different things, so it was...my parents absolutely loved the idea that I was part of this...

The concept of the parents excited about the participants not being involved in illegal activity yet doing something they enjoy was a constant in the conversations, and was taken further both by WSER and CREAM, who explained how Packasso gave them a reason to share with their parents something they loved. WSER explained:

Um, they loved it, they used to say it was a good idea...to continue to do it legally, because in this country there are many laws that don't allow to do many things, among them graffiti, something that was not so strict...because they liked that I was doing something I liked and that I was still studying...As long as I was in school and doing something I loved they were happy, and they liked seeing my paintings or each time that we painted...I shared with them what we did...

CREAM explained how his parents felt about the Packasso Project:

I think they did like that it was helping me to actually wanna not go out on the street, and write on people's stuff, cause they noticed how much I was talking about it, and how excited I was all the time we were gonna do a new wall...and how I would explain to them, oh, we are doing this wall for this person, and, you know, this is what we are painting, and my dad would always try to give me pointers on how to do it...

CREAM also provided more details about how the Packasso Project had affected and changed the relationship with his father, which was basically very limited until he became part of the project:

We had more to talk about, because he felt that I would actually be active with good things, you know, and when I wasn't on Packasso I wasn't really talking to him, I would be at home, all high, but that's all I was doing, so I wouldn't talk to him about anything...but, once I started getting more into art we had more conversations and it's when I started getting into hair cuts too, talk more, I cut his hair...

Finally, the participants constantly referred to the learning experiences they had had as part of the Packasso Project as one of their main sources of satisfaction with the program. That learning spans from the personal experiences to specific concepts that they were able to apply to different areas. SEN explained this by saying that “[in Packasso] we learned that we can all improve ourselves because of the art.” WSER talked about an experience that marked him while being part of Packasso, when the participants worked with a group of volunteer firefighters in Bellevue, NE, who were mainly in their 80’s. WSER was marked by this experience because of the dedication to their community these volunteers displayed:

I think one of the most important ones was when we went to the fire station, and they were retired, and despite their age they were working, they wanted to continue working for their community, they liked what we did for them...and they were really happy [...] and they also made us feel happy...

CECY reflected on what she learned while being part of the Packasso Project and the effect it has had on her: “It has helped me a lot with my current job, with school and everything I am doing over there, with public speaking and everything...I always look back to that and all the stuff I learned there...” This professional aspect is shared by CREAM: “With Packasso I learned a lot also, like, having the clients, having to talk to them, and show them my work before I even give them the price, things like that...I learned from Packasso...”

Therefore, the participants consistently shared positive experiences and feelings about the

Packasso Project that mainly discussed the sense of community and belonging they experienced; the value of quality of the artwork they created; the need for recognition; the level of the relationships they developed with other people and their families; and finally, the learning experiences they had both at a personal and professional level.

**Theme 3: What are the participants' perceptions about belonging to the Packasso Project and its effect on academic outcomes?**

A common element among the participants in this study is that, to different degrees, they had all disengaged from the educational process. During the interviews the participants shared the reasons for this lack of engagement – some personal, some school-based – and how and to what extent they were able to overcome it. Therefore, this theme is discussed in two parts: (1) Reasons for disengagement, and (2) Re-engagement into the educational process. Each part is further divided into sections based on participant's perceptions of and experiences with the Packasso Project.

**Reasons for Disengagement**

This section describes different reasons for school disengagement that the participants shared during the interviews. Furthermore, it discusses what the participants perceived was needed for them to be successful at school.

When asked about school engagement, WSER described his prior experiences with school: “When I was in Mexico I didn't even study, I was two years out of middle school, I didn't even finish it, and I didn't receive a diploma that could say, oh, you finished it...” and he explained how he finally returned to school when arrived to the country: “The US is the country of opportunities, they gave me the chance of going back

to school being 17.” But his excitement about going back to school was limited by his age when he was not able to join the soccer team:

I liked soccer, but when I did the try outs unfortunately my age did not allow me to be on the team [Junior Varsity] although the coach wanted me...but because of my age they didn't accept me...I wasn't eligible for Varsity, and it was full, therefore I could only do JV, and then go to Varsity, so maybe I would not have continued going to school, or it wouldn't have worked.

WSER describes how this disappointment almost drove him out of school once again: “Perhaps I would have been expelled, or I would have dropped out because there was nothing that motivated me right at the beginning.” WSER's comments addressed the need of feeling a connection to the school and belonging to a group, which was satisfied once he joined the Packasso Project. That lack of desire to be at school is also described by other participants as one of the reasons for their disengagement from school.

Although the root problem is different for each of them, they all expressed how not wanting to be at school affected their academic performance. SEN addressed how her only desire was to paint, so she was unable to focus while she was at school:

This is what I feel was the biggest obstacle for me, is that, you know, at school I was always thinking about painting, and I didn't really care at one point, I was just oh, man, ugh, do I really need to be here? You know, I could be out there painting, and doing other creative things, and it was hard to balance at some points because I was looking also, you know, at the lifestyle that the usual graffiti artist lives, and it's not a very good one!

So, that you know, came in with school, and it kinda affected me a lot cause I couldn't focus, and I was just doing very bad, and I was in a bad spot, and it just got me, and school started going down because this is not what I want to do...and then the balance between the two started getting better...but there was this one point where I just saw I'm gonna drop out!...I didn't wanna be there, because I wanted to be out there, I didn't want to be at school....

CREAM's engagement in high school was mainly affected by his drug use, and he reported how he really had no memory of his first three years of high school, before joining the Packasso Project: "I remember not remembering from 9 to 11 [grade] what would go on in classes because when I was in the office, or in the art room...that's all I remember from high school, everything else is a blur..." He elaborated further how his days were like, even when adults tried to encourage his attendance to school:

This will sound bad, but she was after me [a counselor], and I don't think it was helping me out because since I was high in the morning I wasn't able to pay attention to anybody, but I don't know what they could have done, someone could have helped me out with my drug problem at first, that probably would have helped out...I think I did it right before I was going to school...If I would have, you know, take care of that problem first, then I would have been able to pay attention.

Despite CREAM's constant drug abuse and lack of achievement in school, he explained how there was no action on the school side that could have helped him with his problem, which perpetuated the issue even longer:

I think maybe trying to...if you guys knew I had the problem with the, the whole drug problem, I think if I would have gotten a little more help towards that...you know, I know, I don't know if the teachers are able to get involved in things like that, but I remember that some teachers don't listen to you, kids that are going through that in their personal lives, but if teachers do get more involved, I think...

CREAM illustrated how even when the school was aware of his issue and his family was notified, he still did not receive any help:

When I had to meet with my administrator and I had a problem with it, and my mom found out and everything, I thought they would make me get a test or something, so when they said no, I knew I had to do it on my own...I knew I had to stop by myself, otherwise I would have kept going down that hill.

CREAM explained how eventually he decided to stop using drugs when he saw the effect they were having on his girlfriend, and how he accomplished that by himself. However, CREAM's reflections bring to light the effect that can have on the students the lack of action by school staff when confronted with difficult situations.

Other participants shared how a sense of frustration took over them in certain situations at school, normally having to do with teachers and learning, causing them to disengage from the educational process. SEN illustrated this concept:

I wanted to drop out because I was just so frustrated...I was frustrated about things...sometimes...I mean...I just had days I remember I did not get anything, I would just sit there and I would not get anything, and I felt way more slow than the rest of my...you know, and I was like, I don't



understand!, and that's what started frustrating me, and I starting losing patience, with myself and everything around me, so I was man, this is getting hard, and then, there were all these things going on in my life, and I just don't want to be here, you know, things got out of hand, but...all that...al the things that I wanted to do just went by...wow...

The concept of frustration in school looks different for other participants. For BAME it came in the form of language barrier: "The major issue for me was the language...a Mexican person coming to another country, that doesn't speak the same language...it was a great barrier for me. Yeah, it was hard." For CECY, bad experiences with peers encouraged her poor attendance to school:

I had a lot of freshman in my class, and they were really immature, and they were really loud, and disrespectful. So the teacher spent a lot of her time disciplining them instead of teaching, so I finally felt like it was a waste of time to be there, so through my sophomore year it was when I had the most skipping.

She also explained how she was hesitant to talk to some teachers, or ask for extra help because of experiences with teachers like the one she described:

It was hard asking questions, because he kinda gave you that feeling of, oh, you're stupid, so I didn't really like to talk to him, to ask him questions, because I felt like, he gave me the look like you should already know.

SEN shared a similar experience where the teacher would not provide the help she needed, and she reflected on the effect those teacher behaviors had on her:

[The teacher] came over and explained it very briefly and just walked away, and for the whole time I would be like, excuse me, is this exactly how I do it...like, he would not take the time to do that...even when I asked him again, he kinda just, ehhhh...came over, kinda looked over it, and just like, didn't do it, didn't want to do it, so I was like, whatever, I just will figure it out myself...so for me, that is a big difference, you can't just avoid...it's the way they act with you, you know, and with teachers...because I don't blame them, there are days that are just hard, that you don't really want to be around...but really?

Talking about other teachers, CECY described how “although he was a nice person, he wasn't all that great at teaching” or “I could not get with him at any level, so I struggled a lot with his class.” When asked about if teachers helped her, CECY responded:

No, not really...I can't say that they did...uhh, I don't know if it was because I didn't have that close connection with them or if I was just one of the students, I really didn't talk much or anything...so I didn't stand out to them.

SEN echoed CECY's statements explaining what she needed while in school: Having someone to talk to, and having someone to help me and guide me through, like, this is what you have to do, you know, organize myself, especially that, that's exactly what I needed, just to organize myself...

With these statements both CECY and SEN are placing some responsibility for their lack of success on the teachers that either failed to make a connection with them so

they would feel comfortable asking questions, or because there was poor instruction happening in the classroom. Regardless, both participants highlighted the importance of building student-teacher relationship to promote an environment in the classroom where the students feel safe and comfortable asking questions.

One last element that is necessary to highlight was already alluded to by WSER when he talked about connecting with school through its programs. Both SEN and CREAM went into great length advocating for art programs in schools – both within the school day and after school- that, in SEN’s words, would allow to “just stick people together with the same goals, because that’s how, you know, one of the said goals, if you surround yourself with people that want to do the same things, you are going to get it done.” CREAM proposed more after school programs in Middle Schools, because that is when he started tagging: “I would have probably not tried to write letters on walls, because that’s how it started...but they didn’t have that many art programs that I could have gotten into...”

### **Re-engagement into the Educational Process**

As outlined in the first part of this theme, most of the participants had disengaged from the educational process for different reasons that ranged from disconnect with the school and adults, poor instructional practices, to lack of attention by administration to curb harmful behaviors such as drug use or poor attendance.

During the interviews the participants shared how after joining the Packasso Project changes at a personal level led to changes at school. Those school changes happened at different levels and, the participants explained, were mostly positive. As reported by the participants, the major effect that the Packasso Project had on their school

engagement came in the form of constant adult support. These adults were advocates both inside and outside of the school system that provided continuous positive reinforcement and guidance for the participants. SEN explains how it affected her:

Just having somebody there that you know, give me the answer now, it helped me a lot cause before I was involved in all this, and I was just by myself, and my parents you know, they were trying to help me but it was just not the same, because there was things that they didn't understand, and like, just so you know, having everybody else at school and outside of school helped, to give me advise, and some people that actually understood me, like you just, it was a really big....I knew there was somebody there! Who knew what I was going through, who knew how to help me schoolwise, and also advise-wise, life-wise, so, that was, it just pushed me, you know, and made me keep going just knowing that I had some type of support system, besides the one I have at home...that's exactly what I feel helped me....

CREAM shared how having those adults present in his life and monitoring him at school encouraged him to improve:

I think for me, it did help in a way, because I started not having anybody to have to worry about, you know, and I remember my parents would get so caught up with things like that, I would have teachers like you [the researcher] and [art teacher], and [counselor] that would knock some sense into my head and kinda wake me up a little bit...and I knew I was missing

way too much and I had to slow it down, and think a little bit more, think before I walked out of school again, and it just helped me like that...

CECY also explained how that close monitoring improved her attendance: "I stopped skipping school because I knew [the researcher] was going to get me!" But what really made all the difference for her was a meeting in which the administrator in charge of the Packasso Project met with CECY and her mom, and as CECY described it:

[The administrator], he had a conference with my mom and I remember what he said to my mom, he told her, you know, "if she doesn't stop skipping we are going to have to send her to court, we are gonna have to take measures, true measures here..." And I remember my mom sat there and she just cried...and that broke my heart...and so she begged me "please", you know, "I know that you're going through a hard time right now because of your dad and I but you need to get everything together"...so I guess all that, and then Packasso and everything, like, with you [the researcher], everything just added up, added up, and I started going to school and, when you get to know your teachers more they more cool, you actually there, they are nicer to you...that's a trick! Show up to class! So you just talking to them, they were willing to help me catch up, so they were: "Come back, do this, do that..." So I was able to catch up. And once I was caught up I didn't want to go back down, so I just started, you know, attending school on a regular basis, you know, trying to stay on track.

CECY's account summarizes the elements that made her successful and that some of the participants had already mentioned were necessary for them to be engaged at school. CECY talks about improved attendance, monitoring, and positive relationship with her teachers. CECY's account recounts almost an epiphany that completely changed her approach to school. SEN shared a similar experience and how it was related to the Packasso Project:

I just had a big eye opener, you know, I'm gonna be honest. I just had a day that I sat down, and I was looking at all my stuff, like, you know, art, and grades, and everything, and I just sat there and looked through all my stuff in school to the grade I was in at the moment, 11<sup>th</sup>, I was like, man, I've come so far, and I'm so close to graduating, why would I, like, just drop out now, you know, and once I started getting in Packasso, it started helping me a lot, I calmed down, to focus, to go back to school, and not leave everything because I don't want to do it, because it made me frustrated.

WSER shared a similar experience to CECY's, where personal connections with adults and positive reinforcement combined with high expectations really motivated him:

[Teacher], who always was a good teacher to me, well, she was always willing to help me, with the tests, and well, I never cheated, I always finished right at the time, or earlier! And she always asked: "Why are you so good?" And yeah, I tried really hard in her class, because she didn't spoil me, but she did make me feel like I was improving...[the researcher], the time she was there while I was there, she always gave me the best

advice, my mom wasn't here, but she was a bit like my mom, she reprimanded me, she talked to me about what she was seeing, what was wrong...and well, people that you had never met, in a short time they become your friends, someone you can trust...so the teachers are not as bad as they want us to believe...well, there are several teachers I could mention, and they supported me a lot...

A different reason for engagement was mentioned by BAME. He talked about how he was more engaged in those classes where he felt more connected to the other students, or in other words, where he felt they all shared a common purpose:

My favorite classes were ESL and history. ESL always because I felt...connected to the people that attended those classes, they were in the same situation I was, well, they had to learn English like me, so I felt like I was more engaged in those classes...my teachers...they were all good teachers...They always treated me well...

Finally, looking back the participants shared overall what effect had on them being part of the Packasso Project. SEN described the experience as an opportunity to change the course of her life:

Honestly, yeah, [being in the Packasso Project] makes a big difference. Because, you know, like me, for example...I was just very unsure about things going on, my life, my own ways, and that is always a bad idea for a 16 year old, so like being in a program like that at school, to me is like it just gives you a little more insight in what you really need to do...and what you are doing, you know, it opens your eyes, it opens your mind, it

gives you perspective. It's not just your thoughts...it's like, not really, I'm not going to say what you should be thinking, but along the lines of where the right thing is.

CREAM described how the Packasso Project format can work for a lot of students, helping them use their skills in a positive manner, and although he acknowledges that it might not help everybody, he highlights that it is a step in the right direction:

I think to me Packasso was a program that actually works...that...it works for some kids, and some kids that I noticed that worked for, me knowing them personally I know it's a follower type of thing, so like with Packasso you know who was doing it to follow and who was doing it because they really wanted to. So, I think you know, they have good skills, and are very good about it...and out of a few that don't need to be on it...you can't save all the kids, you can't stop all of them tagging, but if you get one that doesn't want to be part of the illegal part of it, that wants to be legal, that's where I think Packasso really works, it helps us, those kids...you know, they actually want to try to get out of it but don't know how to...

CECY also talked about how the Packasso Project can change lives. She said: "I think it is that you [the researcher] really, you saved us, you know, Packasso, I really can't say much for the other people, but for me definitely saved me. And I don't know, I feel that anybody who knew me back then could say the same, definitely changed me for the better." And she added for emphasis: "I want to say thank you, thank you for



everything...I don't know if you [the researcher] knew what, what a great influence you were to me, and what a great influence Packasso was in my life..."

WSER followed the same ideas as the other participants in talking about the effect the Packasso Project had on its members:

Well, I think Packasso was a great opportunity while I was there, and for my friends, [...] Packasso helped us on one hand, but maybe also other people...so it was not just painting and that's it, congratulations and thank you, it was about helping people, it was like a community, a circle in which everybody helped each other...it is something I miss...being in Packasso...

BAME is the only participant in this research study that did not find a direct effect of his participation in the Packasso Project and his performance at school: "I think it didn't have any impact because despite the fact that they were in the same place they were different things to me, so I don't connect one thing to the other." However, BAME added about being part of the Packasso Project: "I feel very happy, it was an honor having been part of the program, and that thanks to you [the researcher] I met some of my friends, and, as an artist [it helped me] have better quality, knowledge of colors, and tools to create an art piece"

Based on their experiences in the Packasso Project, many of the study participants perceived that being part of the group had had a positive effect on their school engagement by establishing relationships with adults that advocated for them, which resulted in more positive relationships with school staff and families, improved attendance, a more positive attitude, and stopping illegal graffiti.

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

This study explored past Packasso Project participants' perceptions about their belonging to the group, graffiti art, and the relationship between membership to the Packasso Project and academic outcomes. A multiple case study design was used as the approach to capture an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study (McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008). Accordingly, five past Packasso Project participants shared their experiences as part of the Packasso Project and its effect on their perception of graffiti art and academic outcomes. This chapter provides a brief overview of the study and a discussion of the findings as relates to the literature. In addition, implications for policy and practice, recommendations for future research are presented.

#### **Overview of the Study**

While literature about graffiti offenders mainly focuses on social perspectives (Gibbons, 2004; Halsey & Young, 2006; Hookstra, 2009; Sliwa & Cairns, 2007) and motivations to do graffiti (Beech & Gairns, 2001; Campos, 2009; Taylor et al., 2011), few scholars have examined the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of graffiti offenders related to graffiti, school engagement, and school programs aimed to help these students. With this in mind, the primary focus of this study was to explore the following questions: 1) How do past Packasso Project participants perceive their experience of belonging to the group?; 2) How do past participants perceive the relationship between membership to the Packasso Project and academic outcomes?; and 3) How does being part of the Packasso Project change the students' perception of graffiti art?

In order to gain insight to the experiences as perceived by the former Packasso Project members and to garner an understanding of their experiences as part of the Packasso Project, 5 former members of the Packasso Project participated in qualitative interviews. Participants included three males and two females of varying ages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain more in depth thoughts related to the experience of graffiti offenders in the Packasso Project and its effect in school engagement. Accordingly, each participant provided a viewpoint for understanding the thoughts and distinctive challenges faced by graffiti offenders at school.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Taylor and Marais (2009) believed that initiatives to redirect artistic talents in a more positive way do not discourage youth from engaging in illegal graffiti. While participants had varying levels of engagement in illegal activities and had been doing illegal graffiti for different periods of time when they joined the Packasso Project, they all acknowledged the advantage of doing graffiti in a legal manner. Moreover, except one participant, SEN, they all shared how they have abandoned the illegal activity in favor of other types of art that they continue to create as a venue to share their emotions. The positive experience in the Packasso Project made most of the participants abandon the illegal activity, which connects with a body of literature that suggests long-term benefits for communities that invest in programs that rehabilitate offenders (Artz, 2013; Koon-Hwee Kan, 2001; Taylor, 2012).

Nelson (2012) argued that when the Nebraska Legislature passed LB63, which labeled a second graffiti offense as a Class IV felony, graffiti offenders became more determined to leave their mark on the city making Omaha, NE, a lively center for graffiti

art. While Perez (2011) seems to agree with this assessment, the majority of the participants were dissatisfied with the possible outcome of being caught by the police and served as a deterrent for their actions. The legislation, combined with their membership to the Packasso Project served as the pathway towards legal activity.

There is a body of literature (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Gutierrez, 2002; Rogoff & Angelillo, 2002) that argues that the skills and abilities of graffiti artists are not valued by society, and that their background and sociopolitical stories are dismissed automatically by the masses. While the participants acknowledged that when their art was done in an illegal manner it was normally covered or removed, they also discussed the amount of attention creating graffiti art provided them. The participants shared how people would stop just to watch them paint or how they were constantly praised by the work they did, or how their work would quickly appear in social media as a form of recognition. Bourdieu (1986) discussed how the cultural capital – in this case the contributions by graffiti artists – is not always appreciated socially, but in this situation the participants shared a feeling of being appreciated and recognized, not the feeling of being dismissed socially or artistically.

Through the participants' perceived experiences, three major themes emerged from the interviews and thus provided insight to the beliefs and perceptions of the participants. The emerged themes were: 1) Need for recognition; 2) Value of relationships; and 3) School engagement.

### **Need for Recognition**

Need for recognition plays an integral role in the motivations graffiti artists have to continue their illegal activity, and, as described in the literature, need for recognition

and fame are vital elements of the aim behind graffiti writing (Beech & Cairns, 2001; Taylor et al., 2011). This study provides current data that proves graffiti artists can be, and indeed are, driven by this need for recognition both by their peers and the public.

Taylor (2010) argues that graffiti artists are addicted to the risk, which was discussed by the participants when talking about their emotional responses to painting, but that need is superseded by the need for recognition that can only be achieved by the engagement in graffiti vandalism. Still according to Taylor, that need for recognition eventually morphs into an adult obsession for public respect, that often comes in the form of their work being published in the popular media (i.e., T.V., newspapers) or social media (Facebook, Instagram). The participants discussed that concept of recognition and explained how that potential fame drove them to take risks while painting, sometimes displaying unsafe behaviors in order to achieve their goal.

Lachman (1988) suggests that graffiti artists believe that prolificity is indeed the path to fame, which encourages them to create a high number of tags. However, he also argues that a limited number of graffiti artists, muralists, value the quality over the quantity of the pieces. Campos (2013) supports the idea that the recognition of the graffiti artist comes from the merit and the quality of the work, and what is going to determine his place among other artists. The concept of quality was a recurring conversation among the participants in the study, who constantly discussed the quality of the pieces over the quantity. Their reflections indicated that they place more value on the quality and the skill, which ultimately drove some of them to participate in the Packasso Project in order to create higher quality pieces.

Although the participants in this study have assumed normal roles in society as adults – all of them either have a full time job or attend college – they revealed that such responsibilities have not satisfied their addition to graffiti and the recognition that comes with it. To the contrary, one participant explained: “I can’t leave it alone...I want to be honest, I can’t leave it alone [...] I feel that when I’m 60 I will still bring a little pen along, and be like, eh, I’m still around!” This statement connects with the idea that Taylor (2010) presents that the connection to graffiti does not go away, it simply changes into something else, often a different form of art that is more socially accepted and that the participants still described as their emotional outlet in their every day life.

### **Value of Relationships**

Agnew (2003) theorized that troubled youth tends to bond together in small, supportive groups as a way of coping with social and academic demands. Beech and Cairns (2001) support this claim under the premise that graffiti offenders bond in groups, or crews, as a way of self-marginalization. However, Salazar (2010) claims that graffiti artists develop a special bond with the streets, because those streets symbolize their presence as social agents. All the participants in the study discussed the value of the sense of community and belonging to the group, which can be explained by the fact that graffiti artists form small groups where each member is well known by the rest, how they think, how they paint, how they act. Graffiti crews bond together based on a common goal, painting, and when that goal is replaced by a new, positive one, the relationships persist, and the crew model, the mentality, can be what leads the group to success.

Several studies have demonstrated that students can benefit academically and psychologically from a close relationship with a mentor (Grossman & Tierney, 1998;

Slicker & Palmer, 1993), although the effect on the student's outcomes may be contingent on the nature of the mentoring relationship. The Packasso Project purposefully mentored its members based on the notion that relationships with nonfamiliar adults, such as teachers or guidance counselors, facilitate the most change in youth. All the participants in this study identified one or more nonfamiliar adult as a mentor in their life once they joined the Packasso Project, and they all discussed the effect those relationships had both at a personal and educational level.

As indicated, those relationships started as the participants joined the Packasso Project, therefore, it can be determined that purposeful mentoring relationships, as the ones the participants developed as part of the program, may have significant and positive effects in self concept, family relationships, decision making, and school belonging. The findings of this study suggest that when students develop positive relationships with adults that support them at different levels, the relationship with other students also improves.

It is important to highlight that all the participants in the study discussed that after they joined the Packasso Project and their behaviors started to change – both academically and outside of school – the relationship with their families drastically improved. Those changes occurred for different reasons, sometimes because their parents were happy that they were doing better at school, or, in some situations, because it gave the participants the chance to share something that was important in their lives with their parents.

Therefore, it is important to report that based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants, it can be noted that the quality of the relationships between the

participants and nonfamiliar adults through the Packasso Project may have served as a mechanism of change, promoting positive association between the participants and their peers, families, and school.

### **School Engagement**

Social cognitive theory suggests that interventions in a student's educational environment could influence their academic path (Holt, Bry, & Johnson, 2008). Those modifications can be made in the form of school personnel or adults related to school that provide an environment characterized by structure, guidance, monitoring, and feedback. The participants in this study mentioned these elements as factors that contributed to their success in school, promoting an environment where they felt safe, secure, and welcomed. Furthermore, all the participants shared specific examples where those elements had helped them at specific difficult moments.

The changes for these participants came in the form of a change in school programming, the creation of the Packasso Project, a school based program that, as described by Churchich-Riggs (2012) was aimed to redirect students by showing them the skills they really had and how they could practice and use them with the support of society. The participants reported that the relationship quality with teachers and adults at school was the result of a change in their own view of school and sometimes even life. Those reports of relationship quality largely exhibited positive associations with changes in the sense of school belonging and school engagement. The higher level of engagement resulted in higher grades and success in school, that eventually resulted in a high school diploma for all the participants.



The findings of this study suggest that when graffiti offenders at risk for academic failure spend sufficient time with a mentor and in an environment that cultivates their skills in a positive manner, allowing them to express themselves in their chosen media, may cause them to feel more connected to several aspects of school environment, most notably teachers. These findings are encouraging given that other researchers have observed relationships between higher levels of school belonging and better grades, lower crime, less substance use, and fewer risky behaviors (Hawkins et al., 2001).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings of this study have numerous implications related to policy and practice for high schools and the city of Omaha, NE, where the Packasso Project is located. Moreover, school districts can utilize these implications to facilitate discussions regarding graffiti artists and their school engagement. Driven by the findings of this study, the implications for policy and practice will revisit the three major themes of need for recognition, value of relationships, and school engagement.

### **Need for Recognition**

The findings from this study are in accord with the literature on the need for recognition in graffiti artists (Beech & Cairns, 2001; Campos, 2013; Lachman, 1988; Taylor et al., 2011). Likewise, providing opportunities for graffiti artist to be recognized is essential to reduce graffiti vandalism and contribute to the re-engagement into the educational process of these students. Accordingly, the implementation of specific programs addressing that need for recognition will directly impact any initiatives to curve the persistence of graffiti offenses.

It is essential the implementation of programs that start as early as elementary school to prevent youth from joining graffiti crews. Even if the students are not doing graffiti yet, preventing that first step into vandalism and having a taste of street recognition is vital to avoid illegal activity. These programs, as the Packasso Project, need to provide the opportunity to enhance their talents while allowing the students to create art that conforms to societal norms and that is publicly recognized. In addition, these programs do not have to be housed only in schools, but also in community and youth centers.

Another recommendation to replace the need for recognition that graffiti artists receive as a result of their illegal activity is the promotion of events, both at school and city levels, where graffiti artists can showcase their skills and display their art in a manner that they are publicly recognized by the masses in a way that they would never be if they did it illegally. Those events can be in the form of graffiti competitions, or *throwdowns*, or graffiti exhibits.

Finally, the last recommendation is the promotion of positive interventions with graffiti offenders rather than punitive ones, like the current legislation in Nebraska that penalizes second offense as a Class IV felony. As explained by the participants, the penalty is a deterrent for some offenders, but as the literature showed, this legislation also promoted a natural-selection process where only the most skilled graffiti offenders remain vandalizing properties with their graffiti (Perez, 2011). Therefore, to further its effectiveness, the legislation should include rehabilitating measures that would indeed change the behaviors of the graffiti offenders permanently.

## **Value of Relationships**

Concurrent with the literature, the participants in this study identified the relationships with nonfamiliar adults as the anchor for their school success. Relationships with their mentors contributed to their personal improvement, which culminated in an increased school engagement. Based on this finding, schools should promote mentorship programs – which can be both school and non-school based – with adults from different backgrounds that have the ability to connect with graffiti artist and develop relationships with them, in order to have an effect both personal and academic.

Faculty members and other school staff should work on developing cultural proficiency through school or district provided training. The goal of this initiative would be to provide adults in schools with the understanding of the value of the social capital (Bordieu, 1986) graffiti artist bring to school, and value their skills and lifestyle for what they are, different forms of art, not just from the point of view of vandalism. Social capital includes the resources that reside in relationships and that help promote positive outcomes, therefore that respect and appreciation for the social capital graffiti artist bring to school is a critical factor in the success of those students. School professionals, including administrators, teachers, and other staff, need to learn more about the graffiti culture, specifically about practices and interventions that are effective for the educational achievement of graffiti artists.

Parental and teacher support are more important than peer support in creating positive school outcomes among students at risk (Richman, Rosenfeld & Bowen, 1998), and that support can be translated as the degree to which teachers and parents listen to, encourage, and respect students. Both teachers and parents should develop a strengths-

based perspective in their practice and relationship with graffiti artists to become aware of the stereotypes that may inhibit these students' academic success while working to increase family-school connections. Policies and practices designed to increase collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents, and the graffiti artist can help maintain a network of social support and partnership that will lead to higher school engagement and success.

### **School Engagement**

The literature provides a concrete framework for understanding that troubled youth, specifically graffiti artists, require extensive support to promote school engagement (Holt et al., 2008). In order for high-risks graffiti artists to be successful, it appears that schools must utilize clear structures and monitoring within the school day as means to keep these students attending and focused, and ultimately successful in high school. Sinh, Chang, and Dika (2010) defend that self-concept, school belonging, and school engagement have positive correlations with each other. Moreover, higher levels of engagement lead to higher achievement. Therefore is recommended that administration ensure that staff members are consistently providing guidance and support for these students, and constantly monitor their attendance, behavior issues, or substance use. These measures, in combination with specific programing that appeals to the students, can have a significant effect in their school engagement.

Steinberg et al. (1997) suggested that firm and consistent monitoring and rule enforcement, as well as parental closeness, acceptance, and communication, promote academic engagement. Specifically, parental relationships increase emotional and cognitive engagement at school (Steinberg & Avenevoli, 1998). Therefore, it is

advisable that schools foster supportive relationships with parents and encourage their active role in their student's education to contribute to their school engagement.

Several participants discussed how they were most engaged at school in the classes in which they felt they would learn something useful. According to Hirschfield and Gasper (2011) emotional engagement reduces inappropriate behaviors at school and helps forge strong emotional connections with school adults, especially teachers, and other engaged peers. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that schools consider changes in programming – both during the school day and after school programs – and additions to the curriculum in all areas that recognize graffiti art and hip hop culture for its artistic value, recognizing it as a valid part of our society and its value within the pop culture.

### **Future Research**

This research focused on how graffiti artists and former members of the Packasso Project perceived their belonging to the program, graffiti art, and the relationship between membership to the Packasso Project and academic outcomes. Considering the limitations and findings of the study, there are implications for future research that may be considered by scholars. Accordingly, gaining further insight into these implications would contribute to the literature regarding graffiti artists and school engagement. Furthermore, the implications for future research would provide school administrators with a framework to explore school engagement tools appropriate for graffiti artist. While this study identified emerging themes of graffiti artist experiences and perceptions, there remain a number of opportunities for future research.

First, this study yielded the results of the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of Hispanic graffiti artist. It would be enlightening to replicate this study, but comparing graffiti artists from other ethnicities' beliefs and perceptions. This would provide insight to the beliefs and perceptions of students of different ethnicities.

Second, this study gathered participant's educational level, however, this information was solely used for demographic purposes. It would be informative to determine if patterns or trends emerge related to participants' level of education and their participation in the Packasso Project. This correlation may provide valuable information related to student persistence.

Last, a study focused in the perceptions and experiences of graffiti artist that did not participate in the Packasso Project or that left the program would be appealing. More specifically, the study could be conducted to solicit their experiences and perceptions to determine if there are any similarities to students that were part of the Packasso Project. In addition, if there are similarities, a study could be conducted to determine what impacted their decision to persist as part of the program.

### **Conclusion**

Traditionally, graffiti artist students have a lower level of school engagement than non graffiti artist students. In addition, graffiti artist school engagement presents a serious, long-term challenge for high school teachers and administrators who continue to deal with the dilemma of improving high school performance for these students. As a result, findings from this study revealed data on graffiti artist experiences as part of the Packasso Project. This study suggests that graffiti artists need intense mentoring and guidance to be successful. Moreover, through outlined experiences this study provides

insight to teachers and administrators who are trying to understand the factors that affect graffiti artist school engagement. Lastly, this study provides information that will hopefully encourage schools to scrutinize how their buildings support these students and implement effective strategies and school programming to improve graffiti artist school engagement and academic success.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board



NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)  
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

March 12, 2015

Fairouz Bishara Rantisi, MFA  
Education  
UNO - VIA COURIER

**IRB # 134-15-EX**

**TITLE OF PROPOSAL:** Graffiti Mentoring Program: A case study

The Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) has reviewed your application for *Exempt Educational, Behavioral, and Social Science Research* on the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable HRPP Policies. It is also understood that the ORA will be immediately notified of any proposed changes for your research project.

Please be advised that this research has a maximum **approval period of 5 years** from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the five year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

Signed on: 2015-03-12 10:22:00.000

Gail Kotulak, BS, CIP  
IRB Administrator III  
Office of Regulatory Affairs

Appendix B  
Informed Consent Form

## APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study that will attempt to understand the experiences of Packasso Project members and how they describe their school engagement. You can decide not to participate. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not you would like to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate in this study because you have been part of the Packasso Project at Omaha South Magnet School.

**Project:** The Packasso Project: A Case Study

**Purpose of the Project:** This study will investigate the experiences of Packasso Project members and their school engagement.

**Procedures:** You will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. The interview will take approximately one hour to one hour and a half of your time. The interview will be audio-recorded and will take place at your home or another agreed location. During this interview you will be asked a series of questions. These questions are designed to allow you to share your experiences as a Packasso Project member. Additionally, you will be asked to fill out a demographic sheet that will include demographic information and questions about your graffiti experience. You may also be asked to provide artifacts that describe your Packasso Project experience. These artifacts will be photographed or xeroxed and any identifiable information will be deleted. The original artifact will be returned to you.

**Risks and/or Discomforts:** There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

**Benefits:** The information acquired from this study may help gain a better understanding about the experiences of graffiti artist and their school engagement.

**Confidentiality:** During the interview you will be asked to provide a pseudonym to insure that your identity is kept confidential. The audio-recording will be assigned the pseudonym that you pick during the interview. The demographic sheet will not identify you. The demographic sheet will only have the pseudonym that you picked during the interview. The photographed artifacts or xeroxed documents you provide will be kept with the rest of the demographic sheets. Audio files will only be used to transcribe the interview. Once the interview is transcribed, the audio files, interview transcripts, and the xeroxed copies of the documents you provide will be kept for 5 years in a locked cabinet and only the researcher will have access to them. You will not be asked to write your name on the anonymous demographic sheets. Once all demographic sheets are entered in a database, they will be destroyed. The information obtained during this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be prepared as aggregated data.

**Compensation:** You will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this study.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or during the study. Or you may call Fairouz Bishara at any time, (402) 980-1884 or email fbishara@gmail.com. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska at Omaha Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 559-6119.

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decide not to enroll in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Consent:** If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed, provide artifacts or documents, and fill out a demographic sheet. You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

---

---

Signature of Participant

Date

I hereby give consent to audio record my interview.

---

---

Initials of Participant

Date

In my judgment I am voluntary and knowingly giving informed consent and possess the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

---

Signature of Researcher

Fairouz Bishara-Rantisi

Roskens Hall, 312B

68182 Omaha, NE

Appendix C  
Interview Protocol



## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of the study
3. Informed consent
4. Structure of the interview – Audio recording, notes.
5. Check for questions
6. Test audio equipment
7. Make the participant feel comfortable

**Questions about the Packasso Project experience**

1. Think about your experience in the Packasso Project
  1. What was this experience like for you?
  2. Can you recall a time when you felt you were having difficulty being part of the Packasso Project?
    1. Tell me about it
    2. What made it so difficult?
  3. Do any of your friends belong to the Packasso Project?
    1. Describe your relationship with them
  4. How do you think your parent(s) felt about you being in the Packasso Project
    1. Why do you think the/she/they felt that way?
2. How did you feel being part of the Packasso Project?
  1. Why do you think you felt that way?
  2. Positive (Provide an example)
  3. Negative (Provide an example)

**Question about school engagement**

3. Think about a class or classes that you felt engaged in during high school
  1. Describe what that looks and feels like to you
  2. Tell me about ways in which you feel school could have been more engaging to you

**Question about feeling about graffiti**

4. Think about graffiti
  1. What drives you to paint?
    1. What is the best part about doing graffiti
    2. What do your pieces tell about yourself
  2. Share a story about how you created your best piece of graffiti

**Question about illegal graffiti**

5. Are you still doing graffiti?
  1. Why/why not?
  2. What are your motivations?

**Suggestion or advice of other graffiti**

6. What would be your suggestions or advice for other graffiti offenders about school?

**Concluding question**

7. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experience in the Packasso Project?

**Concluding statement**

1. Thank the participant
2. Ask if they would like a copy of the research
3. Record any observations, feeling, thoughts, and/or reactions about the interview

Appendix D  
Demographic Information

## APPENDINX D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

For classification purposes only:

1. What is your gender?  Female  Male  Transgender
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What language do you prefer?  English  Spanish  Both
4. What is your race/ethnicity?
  - Asian or Pacific Islander  Black/African American
  - Hispanic/Latino  American Indian/Native American
  - White/Caucasian  Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
  - Some high school, no diploma  High school graduate
  - GED  Trade/technical/vocational training
  - Some college, no degree  Associate degree
  - Bachelor's degree  Master's degree
6. Favorite high school course \_\_\_\_\_
7. Least favorite high school course \_\_\_\_\_
8. For how long have you been doing graffiti?
  - Less than 1 year  1 to 3 years
  - 4 to 5 years  5 years or more
9. Have you ever had any contact with a police officer?  Yes  No
  1. If yes -  In the last 12 months
    - More than 1 year but less than 2 years ago
    - More than 2 years ago

Appendix E  
Field Notes Form

## APPENDIX E: FIELD NOTES FORM

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes :		
Time	Event	Impressions

<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Impressions</b>

APPENDIX F  
SUMMARY CONTACT SHEET



## APPENDIX F: SUMMARY CONTACT SHEET

Participant	Interview Date
1. What are the main ideas or themes that struck you during this interview?	
2. What new information did you gain during this interview compared to previous interviews in this study?	
3. Was there anything surprising to you personally? Or that made you think differently about this research question?	
4. What messages did you take from the interview?	

4. How would you describe the general attitude towards the Packasso Project and school engagement?

5. What else was important about this interview?

6. Were there any problems with the topic?

Notes:

Appendix G  
Demographic Information

## APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>BAME</b>	<b>CECY</b>	<b>CREAM</b>	<b>SEN</b>	<b>WSER</b>
<b>Age</b>	22	20	21	22	21
<b>Language Preferred</b>	English/Spanish	English	English	English	English/Spanish
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
<b>Level of School</b>	Some college/No degree	Some college/No degree	High School Graduate	High School Graduate	High School Graduate
<b>Fav HS Course</b>	History	Art	Art	Art	Art
<b>Least Fav HS Course</b>	Mathematics	Science	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
<b>Time doing Graff</b>	5 years or more	1 to 3 years	5 years or more	5 years or more	5 years or more
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male

Appendix H

Codes

## APPENDIX H: CODES

<b>AAE</b>	Art as expression
	<b>RDA</b> Reasons for doing art
<b>EXP</b>	Experiences in Packasso
	<b>CPC</b> Challenges being part of Packasso
	<b>EPS</b> Effect of Packasso on School
	<b>LEP</b> Learning Experiences in Packasso
	<b>NEX</b> Negative experience in Packasso
	<b>PEX</b> Positive experience in Packasso
<b>GRE</b>	Graffiti Experiences
	<b>MDG</b> Motivations for doing Graffiti
	<b>MSG</b> Motivations to stop doing graffiti
	<b>NGE</b> Negative Graffiti Experiences
	<b>PGE</b> Positive Graffiti Experiences
	<b>RGW</b> Relationships in Graffiti World
	<b>RBG</b> Risky Behaviors in Graffiti world
<b>MFP</b>	Member's feelings about Packasso
	<b>NMF</b> Negative Member feelings about Packasso
	<b>PMF</b> Positive Member's feelings about Packasso
<b>NFS</b>	Needs for Success
<b>PAR</b>	Parents
	<b>PFG</b> Parents feelings about graffiti
	<b>PFP</b> Parent's feelings about Packasso
	<b>PRL</b> Parent Relationship
	<b>PSI</b> Parental School Involvement
<b>RLS</b>	Relationships in Packasso
	<b>ASC</b> Adult School Connections
	<b>ORL</b> Other Relationships
	<b>RPC</b> Relationships in Packasso
<b>SCE</b>	School Engagement
	<b>NES</b> Negative Experiences at School
	<b>PES</b> Positive Experiences at School
	<b>RDE</b> Reason for Disengagement
	<b>SAC</b> School Activities
<b>SCP</b>	Self Concept
	<b>NSC</b> Negative Self Concept
	<b>PSC</b> Positive Self Concept

Appendix I  
Code Application by Participant

## APPENDIX I: CODE APPLICATION BY PARTICIPANT

<b>CODE</b>	<b>BAME</b>	<b>CECY</b>	<b>CREAM</b>	<b>SEN</b>	<b>WSER</b>	<b>Total</b>
AAE		12	27	16		55
RDA	6	5	27	16	7	61
EXP		21	27	23		71
NEX	2	5		5	1	13
EPS	4	8	7	9	13	41
LEP	9	4	19	8	14	54
CPC	2	4	3	9	3	21
PEX	15	30	17	15	15	92
GRE		18	36	19		73
MDG	15	21	18	15	7	76
MSG	9	7	11	1	1	29
NGE	3	24	1	5	1	34
PGE	10	16	6	12	6	50
RGW	14	10	18	7	3	52
RBG	12	13	14	4	2	45
MFP		8	19	15		42
NMF	1		2	2		5
PMF	6	14	17	14	10	61
NFS	20	8	3	1	8	40
PAR		9	5	2		16
PFG		1	1	1	1	4
PFP		1	3	1	1	6
PRL		18	4	1	2	25
PSI		7	2	1	2	12
RLS		23	23	22		68
ASC	3	23	5	8	16	55
ORL	9	12	13	8	14	56
RPC	8	8	10	12	12	50
SCE		33	31	24		88
NES	1	9	10	7	5	32
PES	11	24	12	10	18	75
RDE	1	8	13	9	3	34
SAC	14	12	15	11	16	68
SCP		9	35	19		63
NSC	2	9	3	4	1	19
PSC	13	15	32	18	20	98
<b>Total</b>	190	449	489	354	202	<b>1684</b>



Appendix J  
Code Presence by Participant

## APPENDIX J: CODE PRESENCE BY PARTICIPANT

	<b>BAME</b>	<b>CECY</b>	<b>CREAM</b>	<b>SEN</b>	<b>WSER</b>
AAE		X	X	X	
RDA	X	X	X	X	X
EXP		X	X	X	
NEX	X	X		X	X
EPS	X	X	X	X	X
LEP	X	X	X	X	X
CPC	X	X	X	X	X
PEX	X	X	X	X	X
GRE		X	X	X	
MDG	X	X	X	X	X
MSG	X	X	X	X	X
NGE	X	X	X	X	X
PGE	X	X	X	X	X
RGW	X	X	X	X	X
RBG	X	X	X	X	X
MFP		X	X	X	
NMF	X		X	X	
PMF	X	X	X	X	X
NFS	X	X	X	X	X
PAR		X	X	X	
PFG		X	X	X	X
PFP		X	X	X	X
PRL		X	X	X	X
PSI		X	X	X	X
RLS		X	X	X	
ASC	X	X	X	X	X
ORL	X	X	X	X	X
RPC	X	X	X	X	X
SCE		X	X	X	
NES	X	X	X	X	X
PES	X	X	X	X	X
RDE	X	X	X	X	X
SAC	X	X	X	X	X
SCP		X	X	X	
NSC	X	X	X	X	X
PSC	X	X	X	X	X