

Youth Leadership Development in Chennai, India

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Context and Objectives

To fully equip the new generation to tackle the most pressing development issues, they must have formal leadership training. Wingenbach and Kahler (1997) found adolescents increase their abilities in the top skills leadership skills to be a great leader and employers seek, "by participating in a combination of youth leadership organizations in school and/or community activities" (p. 19).

Sethu Bhaskara Matriculation Higher Secondary School sees the value in investing in leadership training for their students. Leadership 101 was created to support their mission. The program provided formal leadership training to students in grades 9 through 12 through an interactive curriculum that strengthens the skills of participants and give them an opportunity to serve their community utilizing their acquired knowledge.

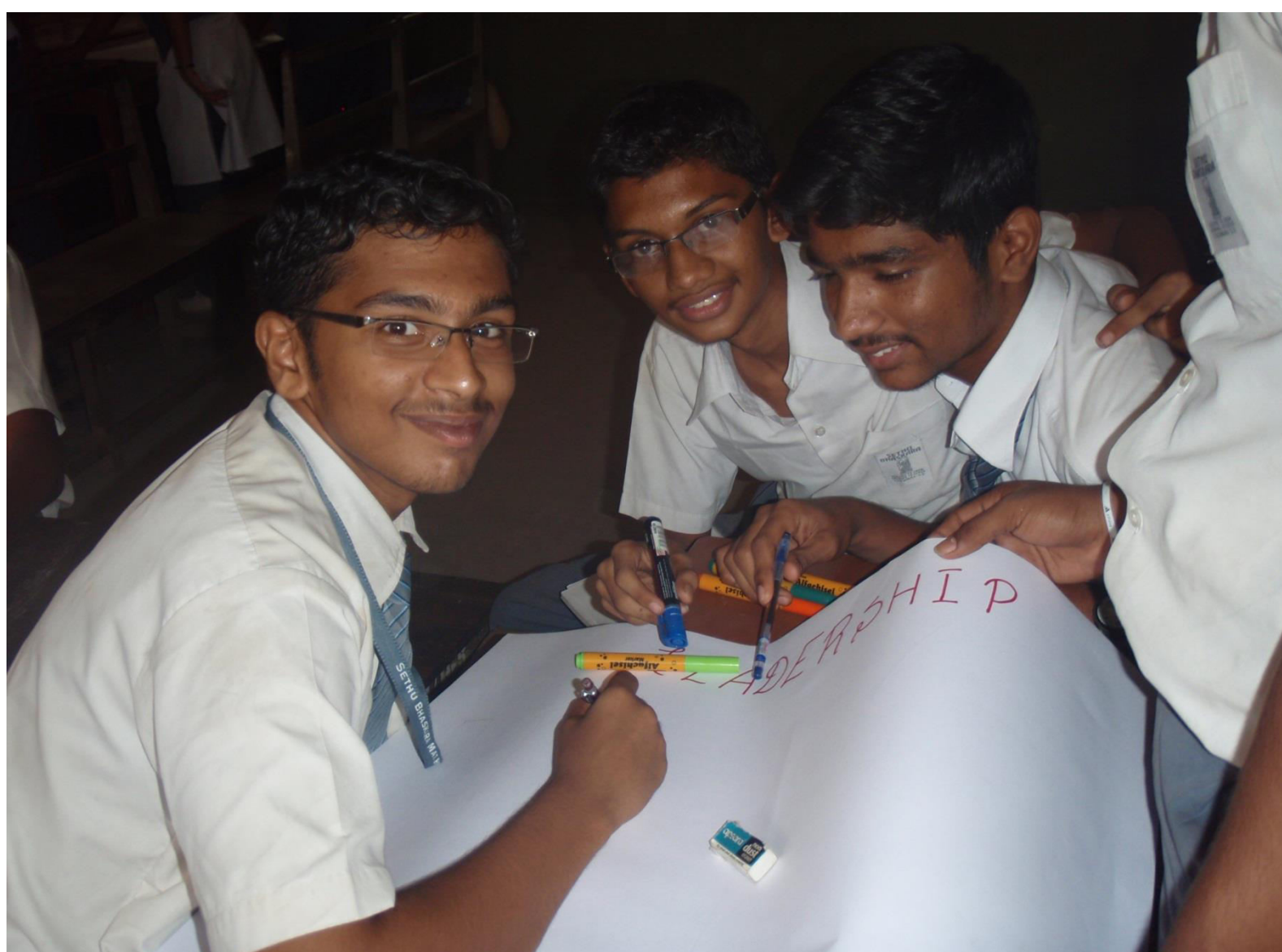
Leadership 101: Setting the Foundations for the Next Generation of World-Class Leaders

Background

Dr. Sethu Kumanan and Mr. Sethu Bhaskaran started Sethu Bhaskara in June 6, 1988. It is premier English Medium Education institution in Chennai. The school has more than 6,000 students enrolled and a staff of 300.

Chennai is India's fourth largest city and the capital of the Tamil Nadu. It is located in southern India. Tamil is the official language.

Rakesh, Ragul, and Vignesh "Picturing Leadership" on the first day of class



Participants work together to foster interactive learning. They took part in class activities, discussions, projects, energizers, and team builders.

One the first day of class, students were asked, in small groups, to define leadership with a picture.



Service Project

Students served at the Community Health Education Society (CHES), a home for children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. CHES, initiated by Dr. P. Manorama in 1994, was first to provide a home for that population and facilitate their rehabilitation back into society.

Participants utilized skills acquired from class to conduct and lead various activities tailored to each age group, and executed a plan to beautify the facility.

Curriculum and Methods

The Leadership 101 curriculum is designed to provide participants with:

- An understanding of leadership, society suffers because people do not know leadership. (Ricketts and Rudd, 2002)
- Opportunities for self-awareness and to increase decision-making, reasoning, and critical thinking skills (*The Report on Adolescent Development*, 1989)
- Tools to strengthen communication skills, the "all-purpose instrument of leadership" (Gardner, 1987)
- Ways to develop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills
- A deep understanding of service and social responsibility

FRAMEWORK

Students joined 1 of 4 Leadership sessions:

- 1- Bi-weekly M/W
- 2- Bi-weekly T/R
- 3- Weekly F
- 4- Weekly S

All students came together for the "Day of Service" and the certificate ceremony. Most are members of the Facebook group.



Methods:

- Lectures and Presentations
- Formal and Non-formal Interviews

Participants serving at the Community Health Education Society



Results

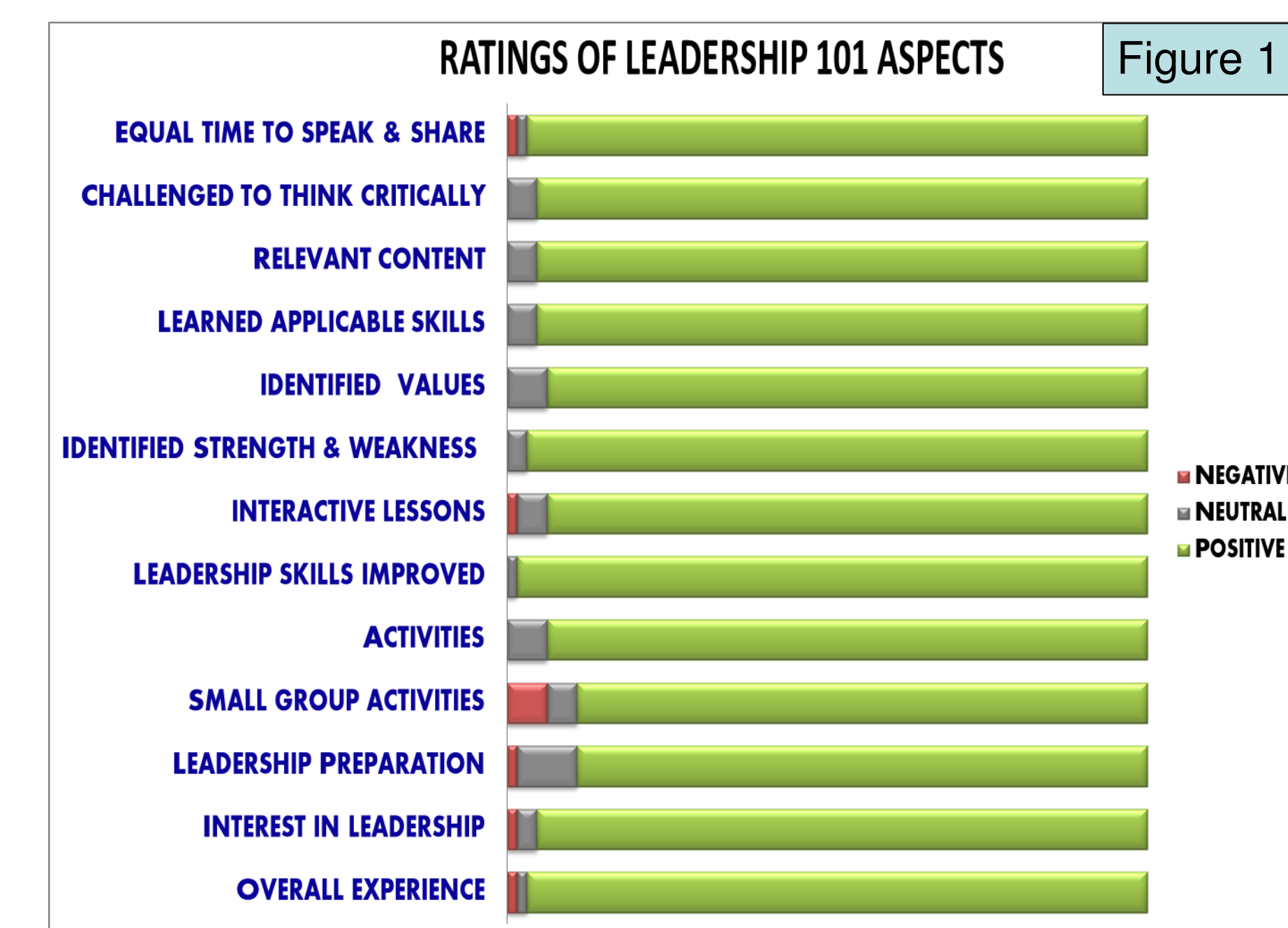
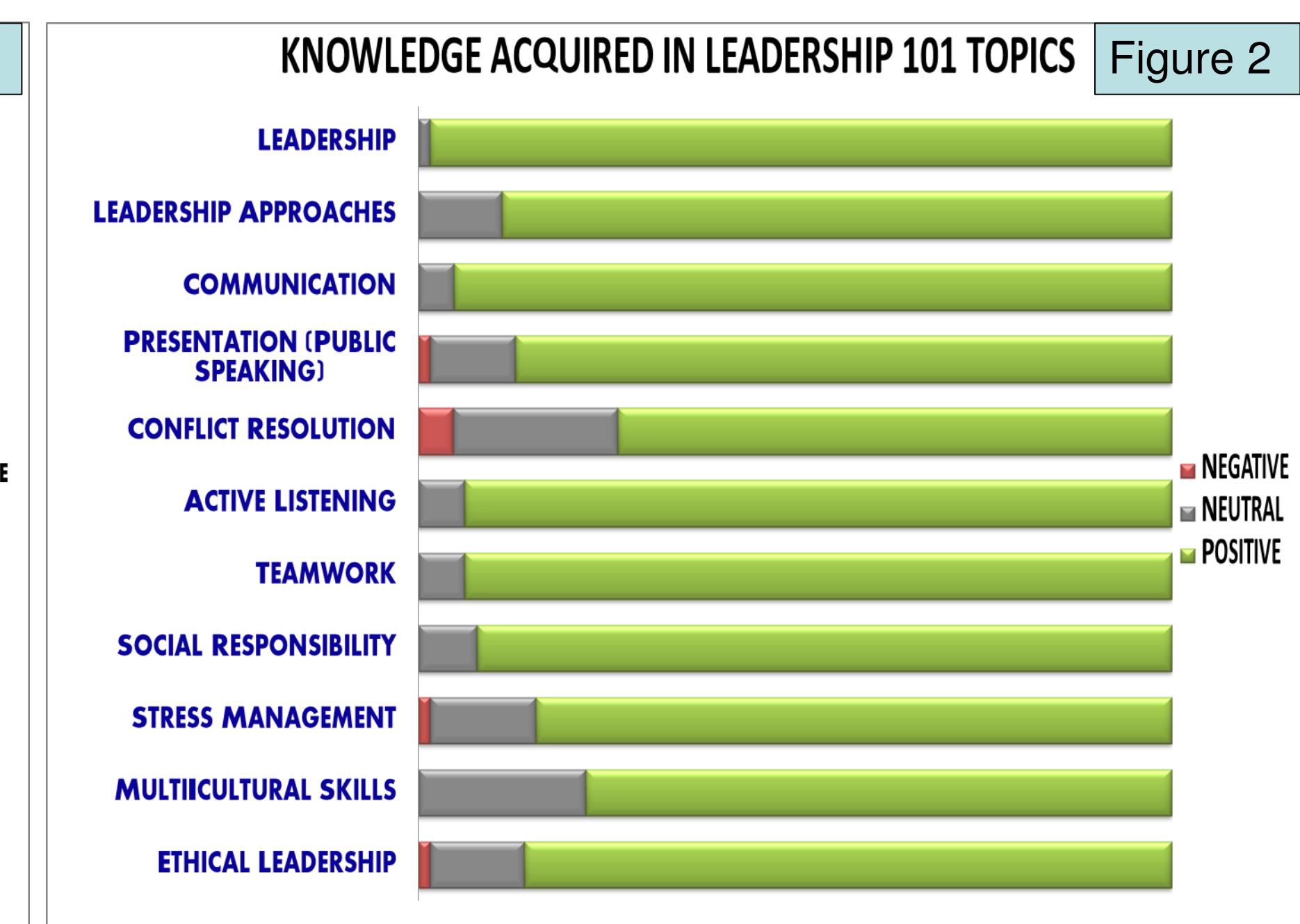


Figure 1. Shows how students rank their experience and the different aspects of Leadership 101.

Figure 2. Shows the proportion of students whose knowledge on the various topics covered increased



Conclusion

To engage young people in sustainable development, leadership training should be incorporated in schools' curriculum or offered after school. Leadership 101 participants are continuing on with leadership training, organizing community development projects, planning a second trip to CHES, utilizing their acquired skills in daily routines, and staying connected through our Facebook group.

Working in India is one of the best experiences of my life. I loved every second, the food, and people. I built relationships that will last a lifetime, and I am eager to go back!

Acknowledgements

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- My students and their families



References

1. Gardner, J. W. (1987). Leadership development: Leadership papers. Washington, D. C.: Independent Sector.
2. Ricketts, John C., and Rick D. Rudd. "Journal of Career and Technical Education." JCTE V19n1. Fall 2002. Web. <<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JCTE/v19n1/ricketts.htm>>.
3. Wingenbach, G. J. & Kahler, A. A. (1997). Self-perceived youth leadership life skills of Iowa FFA members. Journal of Agricultural Education, 38 (3), 18-27.