Hanna-Mary Cook

Mr. Speice

Independent Study and Mentorship-3A

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**Final Product Set-Up and Summary**

Objective/purpose:

The objective of my Final Product was to learn more about the factors which affect parental engagement in youth baseball and softball games. The purpose of doing this was to determine the extent to which parental engagement is influential on child performance and mentality and to learn and practice qualitative and quantitative research methods which may be used by anthropologists.

Process:

The process began with research about parent engagement. This meant reading over the results/reports of similar studies to gain an understanding of the type of research that needed to be completed and the possible results of the study. Several reports were read, annotated, and summarized to be used as references when completing the study. Additionally, research was completed about methods of data collection in anthropology. Following the research, interview questions were developed, observations were scheduled, and spreadsheets were made for field notes. The largest part of the process was the observations. There were seven baseball and softball games attended to collect data. Field notes about qualitative subjects were recorded as well as quantitative parent comments. Informal interviews were also conducted with randomly selected parents to gain their perspective on engagement. After all of the data was collected, the analysis stage began, where a spreadsheet was made showing all of the important data. Then, the written report was compiled using the spreadsheet and field notes and charts were created to show the chart data in simpler terms.

Results:

Although it was intended that the study would begin free of expectations of the outcome, there was an assumption that the comments would lean towards the negative side. This may be due to the fact that most stories told about parent engagement include rash, dramatic actions rather than simple comments. The results of the study were much different than expected. 68% of the comments at baseball and softball games were perceived as positive, and only 20-27% were negative. Additionally, it was very difficult to perceive child reactions to parent comments, and it was realized that athletes were not reacting to most of the comments, leading to the thought that parent comments may not be as influential as they are commonly held to be. The Final Product was successful, as it allowed the expansion of my knowledge about anthropology, and revealed possible ideas about factors leading to parent engagement and the influence of parent engagement on young athletes.