

AN EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE AND EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION IN EXTENSION EDUCATION FOR AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN
VIRGINIA

by

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Human Development

(Adult Learning and Human Resource Development)

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April 27, 2005

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Keywords: Collaboration, Cooperative Extension, Extension Educational Programming,
Key Informant Interviews

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In Extension Education for At Risk Populations in Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

For several decades, a growing realization has evolved that a single entity often cannot address complex issues. Collaboration has been touted as an effective approach to addressing such issues and is generally defined as multiple parties jointly identifying problems, developing a shared vision for addressing those problems, and sharing resources and responsibilities for a determined solution.

In spite of the growing literature regarding collaboration, the predominant focus has been on advocacy, leaving a void in the literature concerning the processes and behaviors involved in establishing community collaboration. In essence, the importance of collaboration is widely recognized; how to collaborate is not as noted. Therefore, it is essential to examine the experience of community collaboration. The purpose of this study was to investigate a collaborative community experience in the context of extension education for children, youth, and families at risk in four localities in Virginia. The following research questions were addressed: a) What has been the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership councils (ELCs) involved with children, youth, and families at risk (CYFAR) projects; b) What has contributed to successful collaboration in Extension education with the CYFAR projects; and c) What have been the challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

The qualitative case study design utilized in-depth face-to-face interviews with seventeen community representatives in the selected localities involved in the experience. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcriptions were analyzed to determine themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking. Findings, which revealed that ELCs were primarily involved in situation analysis, illuminated the following perceived contributions to successful collaboration: having a process for involvement, addressing a need, commitment of those involved, leadership, and paid staff. Challenges to collaboration were identified as lack of time to commit, lack of understanding of collaboration, and pre-existing ways of thinking and acting.

The results have implications for Cooperative Extension understanding how ELC involvement can occur in programming and the collaborative nature of their educational process with the community. The findings will also contribute to human service providers' understanding of contributions and challenges to collaboration and to the emerging body of knowledge on collaboration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are lots of people that were a part of this process and deserve a special note of gratitude. It is fitting for me to first give a special thanks to Dr. Harold Stubblefield for not only his guidance as a member of the dissertation committee, but more importantly for lending his expertise from start to finish of my graduate experience. On the conceptualization of this research study, I owe a big thanks to Dr. Jimmie Fortune who directed me through an ideal to a research endeavor. I will forever be grateful to my Co-Advisors, Dr. Marcie Boucouvalas and Dr. Michael Lambur, both of whom were my collaborative partners in this research project. Tirelessly, they both helped me to refine and sharpen my thinking and kept me pressing on to completion. First for inspiring me professionally and secondly for providing me with direction on the dissertation project, I am also thankful to Dr. Steve Parson and Dr. Mike Sporakowski. Lastly I wish to acknowledge with tremendous appreciation the encouragement and belief in me that my family, friends, and fellow Extension colleagues have given me in my journey to come to completion of this research project.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The decade of the 1990s was a period in which widespread recognition was given to the impact environmental changes and internal limitations were having on the ability of organizations and businesses to operate effectively. Changes in environments on all fronts contributed to this recognition. These changes included increased global relationships and operations, restructuring of workforces and business relationships, increased demands of competition, changes in both public and private resource bases, mandates by funders, innovations in technological applications, demographic and political changes, and complex social problems among families and communities.

The recognition of limitations forced more effective means of creating solutions, products, and services to be sought. Existing resources were discovered to be inadequate, and a single organization could not always effectively provide the solutions, products, and services needed in the changing environments. This discovery brought to light the limitations of routine modes of thinking and acting, and it was realized that effectiveness could be enhanced if single entities worked with others and combined their resources. According to Huxham (1996), in the private sector, increased globalization of the marketplace has ensured that international partnerships be created to compete. In the public sector, the need for community development, advice, education, and the solving of complex social problems has necessitated that community organizations work together to co-ordinate and maximize services. Huxham further notes that governments around the world have provided directives and incentives for working with others for those depending on or seeking governmental resources in order to operate.

In discussions of working together to address changing environments, needs, and challenging issues, terms that were commonly advocated and used to identify or name emerging multi-party relationships included strategic alliances, joint ventures, public-private partnerships, community development, alliance, association, coalition,

collaboration, consortium, cooperative, confederation, league, and network (Huxham, 1996; Vaughn, 1994). The term that has dominated the general discourse on working together, however, has been collaboration. As we moved into the twenty-first century, Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994) stated that more of our work will be carried out by what they term horizontal processes, or what the Japanese refer to as consensus, the Indonesians call mushyawara, and Americans refer to as teamwork or collaboration.

Universal recommendations have been given to collaboration as a means to leverage resources, deal with scarcities, eliminate duplication, capture individual strengths, and to create a new capacity to perform work (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). These authors indicate that collaboration was advocated everywhere: the public sector, the private sector, non-profit sector, in programs mandated by funders, government agencies, service providers, work groups, and/or between providers and recipients. Melaville and Blank (1993) advocated collaboration as the approach to produce effective change for the complex issues evolving with families and communities. When looking at the changes occurring in our communities, Chrislip and Larson (1994) have seen the problems of our communities as too big for anyone to solve alone. According to these authors, as our society continued to become more diverse and public issues became more complex, it became necessary for us to shift away from our routine approaches to creating change and problem solving to collaborating with others in order to construct positive change.

Much of the renewed interest in collaboration in our communities, according to Taylor-Powell, Rossing, and Geran (1998), has been the result of a recognition and appreciation that complex issues are built with multiple factors and dwindling resources, therefore necessitating multiple involvement. Solving complex issues, according to these authors, requires multiple knowledge, skills, and interventions. Collaboration provides a process in which the resources of multiple parties can be tapped to address the complexity of problems and needs. Bringing together the resources of multiple parties through collaboration, according to Taylor-Powell, et al., creates a synergy of power and ownership in communities.

When reviewing how collaboration and the multiple terms used to describe joint efforts have been defined and discussed, one will find there are also numerous

descriptions or definitions of collaboration available in the literature. Himmelman (1991) defines collaboration as a partnership that shares responsibilities for both large and small tasks that must be accomplished. He sees shared responsibility as a fundamental principle in the value and practice of collaboration, and suggests that it is not collaborative for the large responsibilities of an effort to be carried out by a relative few. Mattessich and Monsey (1992) describe collaboration as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship between two or more organizations to achieve common goals that are carried out under mutual authority and accountability while sharing resources and rewards. Melaville and Blank (1993) see a collaborative as a group of community leaders who share a problem, agree to be in a partnership to address the problem, and undertake a series of inter-related activities to address their shared problems. The Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia (1999) describes collaboration as a group whose membership is composed of a diverse cross section of stakeholders from the community, including people who have traditionally been adversaries.

Collaborative work places people in new situations, with new players, and playing unfamiliar roles (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). Many who have attempted collaboration tend to have difficulty in knowing how to perform in a collaborative manner. While there is a growing body of literature related to the phenomenon, those attempting to collaborate have difficulty interpreting, relating, and applying the information to their needs. This difficulty has been noted in both the private and public sectors. From his practice as a consultant to businesses, Marshall (1995) noted that while the hierarchical approach, which has dominated the last century, is no longer relevant or practical, our workforce often lacks the knowledge and skills needed to work together in new ways. When considering the need to collaboratively solve the problems facing families, Melaville and Blank (1993) acknowledged that a limited understanding and ability seem to exist on how to act in a collaborative manner.

A number of reasons have been attributed to these difficulties or these difficulties have been attributed to a number of reasons. White and Wehlage (1995) described the available literature as being primarily of the advocacy genre. Astroth (1991) described the literature as being full of definitions and concluded that many were often ambiguous

and esoteric. When Vaughn (1994) looked at the definitions of collaboration she found terms were often used interchangeably and also noted that a variety of meanings were given to how terms were related. According to Vaughn, some writers viewed collaboration shifting over time from one term to another, which constitutes a different mode of relating at each time period. She cited Astroth (1993), for example, who placed collaboration on a continuum of several stages that moved from communication, through cooperation, coordination, and coalition, with collaboration at the end of the continuum. Additionally, with regard to the models used to describe the process of collaboration, one will note reference to a variety of concepts and theories to explain the phenomenon, such as citizen politics, group development, and organizational development. While similar, no one model of collaboration exists.

Taylor-Powell, Rossing, and Geran (1998) point out that difference in interpretation can lead to errors in understanding. Huxham (1996) saw the confusion and lack of understanding on how to collaborate coming from the lack of consensus on the terms and the variety of interpretations provided on the process or structure. This author concluded because collaboration has emerged as so important to our evolving society, and been so difficult for those seeking to practice it, it is essential that we understand as much as we can about its nature and develop processes that will help it work successfully.

It is important that we understand the inputs of an effort, if we wish to attribute the outcomes to the results of a collaborative nature (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). The American Heritage Dictionary (1982) gives a general definition of nature as the fundamental characteristics, proprieties, or processes of a phenomenon. Taylor-Powell, et al. describe inputs as the time and investments of paid and volunteer staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc, provided to produce a particular outcome. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inputs in a collaborative venture constitute its nature; therefore to understand the experience of collaboration, one should seek to understand the investments and resources provided to produce the endeavor. The present study represents a step in seeking to understand the nature of collaboration.

This study focused on the experiences of one human service agency, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and its attempts to collaborate with community representatives

in four counties and cities of Virginia. Designed as a qualitative case study, in depth face-to-face interviews were used to examine the nature and experience of collaboration that occurred in determining, implementing, and evaluating extension educational programs for children, youth, and families at risk in those communities. The qualitative interview allows us to enter into the perspectives of other people. We enter into qualitative interviewing with the assumption that others' perspectives are meaningful and explicit. When we capture the perspectives of persons associated with programs, we are able to tap into their knowledge and experiences concerning the programs operations, processes, and outcomes and new worlds become open to us with these journeys (Patton,2002).

The findings of this study will be useful to Virginia Cooperative Extension for understanding the collaborative nature of its educational approach with the community in programming for children, youth, and families at-risk. It will also contribute to the emerging body of knowledge on collaboration, thus offering an enhanced understanding to others seeking to implement collaborative efforts. An enhanced understanding on the dynamics of collaboration can contribute to needed insights on the nature of the lived experience.

Background of the Study

In 1991, a congressional appropriation was made to Cooperative Extension at the federal level through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support a national initiative known as the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Project. The initiative required that at least 20% of the population of the targeted communities for the project live in households with incomes below the federal poverty level. Additionally, the initiative required that a minimum of 50% of the participants of the projects implemented in the targeted communities come from families with one of the following characteristics: qualifies for public assistance, family income falls below the poverty threshold, family income is less than 75% of the state or county median income, one parent did not complete high school, or youth or family on record with community agencies such as juvenile justice, law enforcement, or social services for offenses such as child neglect, substance abuse, or child abuse.

The National Children, Youth, and Families at Risk website of USDA points out that poverty and violent crimes place families and youth at risk for meeting their basic needs for safety, shelter, food, and care. By not being able to meet their basic needs, their abilities to develop basic skills for reading, language, and computation are compromised. In the long term, they are at risk for not becoming responsible family members, not being able to participate in the workforce, or not being able to participate in the work of citizens in the larger world.

The 1998 annual report of CYFAR describes the initiative as funding which is provided to State Cooperative Extension systems to develop programs for at-risk audiences that is research-based, collaborative, and is committed to self-sufficiency at the end of the five years of federal funding. According to CYFAR, research indicates that those programs which are most effective in addressing the needs of these families and youth are those programs which promote partnerships and involve community volunteers in the identification of problems, planning actions, and implementing solutions. Effective programs are seen as those programs which are collaborative work of agencies, organizations, and citizens.

In 1996, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) received a \$750,000 CYFAR grant to implement programs for Children, Youth, and Families at-risk in communities where a high incident of at-risk audiences occurred. The decision was made by the project's design team, which included Extension program development specialists, that Extension educational programs designed to address the CYFAR initiative, would be implemented in four counties and cities in Virginia that had communities significantly impacted by poverty and crime and met the criteria stated above. The design team saw the Extension educational programming process of VCE as providing a framework in which a collaborative partnership could be achieved and appropriate programming for the CYFAR audience identified, implemented, and evaluated.

The educational programming process of VCE is an approach to non- formal education that includes three distinct stages: situation analysis, program design and implementation, and evaluation and reporting. An assumption of the VCE educational programming process is that it provides a framework in which the Extension educator can engage in a partnership with the community for collaborative decision-making and

action. It is assumed that throughout the programming process the Extension educator can collaboratively make decisions with the community, as well as identify and share in the tasks and responsibilities associated with the stages and steps of the process. A primary means by which VCE collaborates with the community throughout the programming process is through a representative group referred to as an Extension Leadership Council (ELC). The membership of an ELC includes Extension professionals, as well as individuals and representatives of community agencies and organizations.

The vision of the VCE ELC model is that the council is composed of a diverse group of Extension educators and community volunteers that assume responsibility not only for identifying needs of the planning area, but share a commitment to the determination, implementation, and evaluation of solutions. In the ELC model, volunteer staff may assume major, equal, or secondary responsibilities for the analysis of the planning area's situation, the design and implementation of the educational effort, the evaluation and reporting of results, and the renewal or termination of existing programs and activities within the resources and mission of VCE. VCE proponents of this model believed that involvement of the community in this manner not only actualizes the collaborative assumptions of the organization's programming model, but also facilitates the communities' involvement in the solving of their own problems. This enhances the problem solving skills of individuals within the community, which can in turn contribute to the development of community leadership and help to sustain community programs.

Extension education with VCE was not always carried out operationalizing the collaborative assumptions and partnership with the community. The changes emerging in the community and the dwindling resource base of VCE brought forth the necessity to work with others to effect positive change in Virginia's communities. In 1990, VCE, like many government agencies, found itself operating with reduced monetary resources. At that time, the issues of families and communities were emerging as complex and not able to be addressed by one entity and certainly not by the limited resource base from which VCE found itself having to operate. Thus, VCE found itself having to look at methods that would contribute to effective solutions for complex community issues and maximize multiple resources to address those issues.

At that time, the method used to involve the community in Extension programming was through community representation on “advisory councils.” Under close examination by Extension Program Development Specialists and Extension Administration, however, it was determined that this approach to community involvement was not consistently and adequately involving multiple parties throughout the programming process. Specifically, it was noted that throughout Virginia often no advisory group existed, and those that did exist, merely served to “rubber stamp” or “Ok” programming solely determined and implemented by extension agents. Additionally, it was found that the membership of the councils did not represent the diversity of the community and potential learners, attendance at meetings by members was not good, and their involvement was often limited to minimal input in determining needs. These findings led to the conclusion that the current advisory council system was not providing the input needed to address the issue of diminishing resources and to create the solutions for the complex issues and problems of the potential learners.

The prevailing environment in 1990 called for a model of community involvement with extension education that facilitated systematic collaboration throughout the educational programming process. The VCE programming process was seen by the organization’s program decision makers as a model that could convene multiple views and perspectives on issues, facilitate multiple-party decision making in determination of needs, offer a means to expand resources, and provide a framework for collaborative actions on determined solutions. Thus, it was determined that the current “advisory council” approach or practice of community participation would be abandoned and the programming process of VCE would provide a framework for a new representative community body to partner with extension professionals. The new representative community partnership would be referred to as Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs).

Given the sustainability and collaborative interest of the CYFAR grant, it was decided that the program direction of the CYFAR projects in each locality should be determined, designed, implemented, and evaluated by the ELC of the respective locality. Given the findings of VCE’s advisory approach to community involvement, however, little was known by VCE about how Extension programming would occur when a collaborative approach was attempted. Therefore VCE needed to examine

what does occur with attempts at collaborative involvement with Extension programming. To initiate the effort in each of the four localities, training was provided by Extension program specialists on the VCE programming process and the roles and functions of an ELC.

At the end of the five year grant period in 2001, it was decided that a review of the communities' involvement through the ELCs in each of the localities would be conducted. This review would determine the nature and experience of collaboration that had occurred in the extension educational efforts addressing the CYFAR targeted groups. This understanding could be useful, it was reasoned by the design team, not only in reporting to the grantor that the funds had been used to support the collaborative interest of the grant, but also could provide insights on how collaboration was achieved when the community, through ELC participation, was involved in the process of extension education. These insights would assist in the continuing development of the ELC partnership throughout the state, as well as in determining and implementing effective Extension education for at-risk audiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand the nature and experience of community collaboration with extension education for children, youth, and families at risk in four localities in Virginia. The inquiry addressed the following general research questions.

1. What has been the nature and experience of collaboration for ELCs involved with children, youth, and families at risk (CYFAR) projects
2. What has contributed to successful collaboration in Extension education with the CYFAR projects?
3. What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

Justification of the Study

Approximately three years after VCE moved from their advisory structure of community involvement in programming to the ELC approach, it was determined that collaborative behaviors were not progressing as had been expected. Lambur and

Board (1995) conducted an evaluation study for VCE on the early implementation efforts of the ELC model with VCE programming. In an organizational report, it was reported that the evaluation results revealed that collaborative programming was not occurring despite the organizational directive from VCE administration. Extension agents in VCE were confused as to why such a partnership was needed and volunteers did not see their roles being more than advising the staff on what to do. Extension agents also expressed a concern about shared decision-making and feared losing control. Additionally, Extension agents expressed concern about the time involved in such an arrangement.

Dimmock's (1993) discussion of collaboration provides us with some insights regarding the findings of the Lambur and Board study. Dimmock stated that while involvement sounds good, is good for the democratic order, and many would support its notions on paper, few change agents organize change efforts in which the representatives of the participants' system decide who does what and to whom. According to Dimmock, many change agents lack personalities, values, and competencies to allow people to be a part of their own change efforts. He also stated that over time the members of a system expect certain behaviors. Thus communities become conditioned to expect change efforts to be the responsibility of the change agent and they assume only a passive role.

The educational process of VCE is influenced and reflective of the principles and practices set forth by the programming models of many adult educators and theorists. The model proposed by adult educator and theorist, Edgar Boone (1985), strongly influenced the VCE educational programming process. The principles and practices implicit in the VCE programming process support the development of needed resources, providing a venue in which multiple parties can play a role, and collaboratively determine, design, and implement solutions to complex issues/needs. Boone's conceptual model for programming has three distinct sub-processes: a) planning; b) design and implementation; and c) evaluation and accountability. Boone sees this approach to programming as facilitating change through collaborative decision-making and action between the adult educator, targeted learners, and leaders of the learners' systems at each of the sub-processes. Boone's model is based upon

the assumptions that a collaborative approach to programming produces change in the learners, the leaders of the learner's system, and the adult education system.

Given, however, the advisory council history of community involvement with VCE, the findings of the Lambur and Board study, the admonitions of Dimmock (1993), and Huxham's (1996) conclusion that it is essential that we understand the nature of collaboration, it is important to explore the collaborative nature and experience of community involvement through ELCs in Extension education. This study can be useful to determine whether the ELC efforts with the CYFAR projects reflect the assumed collaborative principles and practices of Extension education.

Sadowske (1991) conducted a philosophical inquiry of the prevailing programming models in adult education to determine their adequacy in the prevailing social-cultural environment and explore alternative approaches. Because of the influence the 1985 Boone model has with Cooperative Extension Sadowske devoted significant attention to its analysis. Upon the conclusion of that analysis Sadowske called for further research on participation in the education process of Cooperative Extension and how participation in the programming process can be enhanced. Additionally, Sadowske stated that further consideration must be given to how we can collaborate more effectively and create the synergy of shared visions. Therefore, as proposed by Sadowske, this study addressed the need for further research on the programming process and specifically contributes to our understanding of how community participation occurs in the process. This study contributes to our understanding of the lived experience.

Perkins, Ferrari, Covey, and Keith (1994) have encouraged continued research which can provide us with insights on the successes and struggles of collaborative relationships. The 1998 program development and evaluation guidelines, from the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, entitled "Evaluating Collaboratives, Reaching the Potential," suggested that additional, special studies may be necessary to establish the reality of linkages and causal relationships within collaboratives and those characteristics of collaboration associated with better results. These guidelines further noted that as our experience and knowledge grows in working with collaborations of all

types we will develop a better understanding of what leads to certain outcomes under various conditions.

According to Mancini and Marek (1998), little is known about how programs aimed at youth, adults, and families are sustained, despite the significant resources that have been allocated for developing and maintaining community-based programming for these audiences. They indicate that what we do know is that many of these programs expire once the initial funding is exhausted. The authors conducted a sustainability study of the national youth at risk program in 94 community-based projects. They found that leadership was shared by 36 % of the sustained projects, 41 % of the leadership was provided by a single organization, for 17 % of the sustained projects collaborators are in an advisory/resource role, and for 5 % of the projects there is minimal or no collaboration.

The aforementioned thus provides a justification for this study. This study contributes to our understanding of the nature and experience of collaborative attempts and community involvement in Extension education for children, youth, and families at risk. Additionally, this study contributes to the development of an understanding that can be used by other Extension systems and programming focuses to examine the collaborative nature and experience of their educational efforts. Moreover, the results of this study add to the body of knowledge on the concepts and practices of collaboration.

Significance of the Study

Although this study is limited to the collaborative nature and experience of one human service agency, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the findings of this study are useful at three levels:

1. Virginia Cooperative Extension to better understand: a) the degree of collaboration that occurs in the VCE programming process, b) the successes and challenges associated with Extension Leadership Council involvement in the programming process, and c) those interventions and adjustments, which might be needed to further develop Extension Leadership Councils to enhance collaboration.

2. Cooperative Extension in general to gain insights into the collaborative activity that occurs in Extension education.
3. Human service providers to understand: a) those behaviors and elements that contribute to successful collaboration and sustainability of programs for children, youth, and families at risk, and b) the challenges to collaborative implementation of programs for children, youth, and families at risk.

In general this study has the potential to enhance the emerging understanding that is developing in the literature on the basic tenets and behaviors of collaboration, thus contribute to the development of a more enhanced understanding and insights on the nature of collaboration.

Limitations of the Study

This study employs a qualitative methodology. A general limitation with qualitative investigations is the inability to generalize the findings to other settings, populations, and treatment arrangements (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Persons involved with this study were selected because of their association with the sites involved with the grant funded CYFAR projects. Therefore this study was limited to the perspectives of persons associated with the CYFAR projects in four counties and cities impacted by conditions which are deemed to place families and youth at risk for meeting basic needs and becoming productive citizens. This limitation is acknowledged and no attempt will be made to draw inferences to a larger population.

Additionally, this research relied solely on data gathered from in-depth interviews. Patton (2002) points out that limitations associated with data generated from interviews may be distorted by personal bias, politics, and emotions. Patton also contends that interview data are subject to error in recall, the interviewees' reaction to the interviewer, and self serving purposes. These threats to reliability and validity, according to Yow (1994), can be dealt with by comparing accounts to other accounts provided, and probing for additional information during the interview. Per Yow, efforts were taken to compare accounts and probe for information. Therefore it is important to note, these possibilities are limitations to the in-depth interview approach of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study explored the nature and experience of community collaboration in Extension education for at-risk populations in Virginia. The findings of this study contribute to: a) Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) understanding the degree of collaboration that occurs in the VCE programming process and b) the emerging body of literature on collaboration, which in turn may contribute to an enhanced understanding for those seeking to implement collaborative efforts. Therefore, the literature reviewed for this study is built around the key concepts related to collaboration in the community and the collaborative principles and practices in Extension education.

Collaboration

Over the last decade, the increasing complexity of societal issues and problems has prompted us to look at the appropriateness of our routine and accustomed modes of thinking and acting to provide services to our communities and to solve community problems. This examination of our abilities has encouraged us to consider those methods, which would better accommodate the solving of complex issues, and produce the kind of change that our routine and accustomed modes are limited in providing. At the beginning of the last decade, Capra (1990) observed that our emerging societal issues needed a systematic approach to understanding them, as well as a systematic approach to resolving them. According to Capra, providing fragmented leadership to our emerging societal issues and problems erratically shifts problems and leaves them still unsolved. Capra touted that workable and substantial solutions to emerging societal issues and problems were the ones that would be systematic, ecological, and interrelated.

Chrislip and Larson (1994) stated that because our traditional approaches to problem solving with emerging complex issues and problems was not effective, necessity demanded that we learn to work together effectively. Over the last decade, necessity has given birth to the need for multiparty involvement in problem solving and the creation of positive change in the efforts of public and private sectors. Complex

community issues and problems have required community service providers to examine ways to improve their services, expand their resource base, minimize duplicates to improve efficiency, and collaborate with others as a means to achieve the aforementioned. Complex issues have been recognized as needing the power of multiple contributors. According to Vaughn (1994), collaboration involves organizations, agencies, and individuals.

Additionally, more frequently, funders providing resources to support the efforts of community service organizations have mandated that collaboration be used as the approach to determine and implement solutions focused on complex community needs. Collaboration has been acknowledged as the multiparty approach best suited to determine issues, formulate and implement solutions, expand resources, and sustain long term change. Many positive outcomes are noted in the literature relevant to collaboration. From a review of collaborative ventures, Vaughn (1994) found several improved outcomes as the result of collaborative efforts: increased accountability, greater advocacy, improved capacity, improved approaches to problems of families and communities, and improved program planning, design, implementation, delivery, and administration.

Collaboration has been advocated as an essential tool to enhance the services provided by community organizations attempting to address community needs. The literature on collaboration offers a significant amount of advocacy on collaboration as an effective approach for addressing complex issues. White and Wehlage (1995) view the greatest emphasis on collaboration in the literature as being primarily advocacy in nature and limited on discussions of the experiences. Studies have mostly consisted of case studies of these efforts (Singer, 1998; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray 1989, 1995). The literature also has been primarily prescriptive, offering rules and directions, yet potential suitors seem to have difficulty capturing a mental image of the actions prescribed as giving life to the collaborative phenomenon.

There is still much to be learned on what actually defines, nurtures, and cultivates successful collaborative endeavors and what barriers prevent collaboration from being achieved. Perkins, Ferrari, Covey and Keith (1994) encourage continued research that can provide us with insights on the successes and struggles of

collaborative relationships. The more we learn from our experiences, the better our understanding and therefore the more proficient our practices may become with this phenomenon. This study explored the nature and experience of community collaboration in extension education for at risk populations in Virginia. The results of this study will be situated in the base of literature on collaboration and will therefore contribute to the base of knowledge from which we are drawing our understanding. The following sections present a review of the literature that discusses definitions of collaboration, models of collaboration, the contributors to successful collaboration, and barriers to collaboration.

Collaboration Defined

In the literature on collaboration, one will find a litany of definitions and descriptions on the phenomenon. A review of how collaboration is defined reveals that it is generally defined as a process that brings multiple parties together around a shared vision, to make decisions, share resources, and to share in the various venues of the implementation of the solution. Perkins, Ferrari, Covey, and Keith (1994) point out that to collaborate requires a shift from individual thinking and working, to working holistically. Chrislip and Larson (1994) state that collaboration is more than communicating knowledge and information and cooperating and coordination to help each other achieve individual goals. Rather, it is the creation of a shared vision and joint strategies that go beyond the purview of any involved party. Winer and Ray (1996) state that collaboration is often the meaning assigned to a relationship anytime people work together to achieve a goal. What follows is a presentation of those definitions and descriptions, which are discussed in the literature when the multi-party work, referred to as collaboration is defined and described.

Roberts and Bradley (1991) looked at the French derivation, “collaborer” (“col” meaning “together” and “laborare” meaning “to work”) to gain a perspective of what it means to collaborate. Chrislip and Larson (1994) turn to the Latin roots of “com” and “laborare” meaning “to work together” to illuminate the same perspective. Vaughn (1994) and Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994) reviewed the phenomenon of collaboration and came to a similar conclusion of the elements present in the concept of

collaboration. Vaughn reviewed the definitions of collaboration in the literature and determined that commonly embedded in the array of definitions available were joint problem solving, connections, labor, and cooperation. The author concludes that collaboration is a process in which organizations, agencies, and individuals come together, define their relationship, jointly identify the problems, share their resources, and share in the responsibilities associated with implementing the solutions. Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner discovered that at the focus of collaboration were processes that enable participants to jointly plan, define their purpose, clarify issues, define the problems needing to be addressed, and in turn integrate the information, resources, and skills needed to address the identified purpose of the collaborative.

In examining the literature, numerous terms are used to reflect multiple party relationships. Himmelman (1992) defines collaboration as a complex process along a developmental continuum which includes networking, co-ordination, co-operation, and collaboration. Himmelman further defines collaboration as a process in which organizations exchange information, share resources, enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit, and share risks, responsibilities, and rewards. Others have defined collaboration as a formal relationship with a common mission, and structure for planning and action, while terms such as cooperation are seen as having an informal relationship and not possessing the characteristics of collaboration (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992).

Many researchers have found terms used interchangeably, which makes researching the topic ambiguous and challenging, and consequently contributes to the ambiguity and confusion associated with the understanding needed to carry out collaborative ventures. Vaughn (1994) found that a variety of concepts are frequently used to describe joint problem solving approaches, which behave in a similar manner. The terms most frequently used are: alliance, association, coalesce, coalition, collaboration, consortium, cooperate, confederation, league, networks, and partnership. Vaughn's review of the literature (Habana-Hafner, 1989; Schrage, 1990; Astroth, 1991; Keith, 1993; and Swan & Morgan, 1993) found collaboration being conceptualized as a dimension of other joint concepts, particularly, coalition and partnership, and the terms being related in that they each represent a stage or continuum of a joint endeavor.

Winer and Ray (1996) offer the following wide range of definitions, reflective of the literature (p. 23).

- Advisory Committee: provides suggestions and assistance at the request of an organization.
- Alliance: a union or connection of interests that have similar character, structure, or outlook; functions as a semiofficial organization of organizations.
- Coalition: a temporary alliance of factions, parties, and so on for some specific purpose; mobilizes individuals and groups to influence outcomes.
- Commission: a body authorized to perform certain duties or steps or to take on certain powers; generally appointed by an official body.
- Competition: the act of seeking to gain that for which another is also striving.
- Confederation: being united in an alliance or league; joining for a special purpose.
- Consolidation: combining of several into one; usually implies major structural changes that bring operations together.
- Consortium: association; same as alliance.
- Cooperation: the act of working together to produce an effect.
- Coordination: working to the same end with harmonious adjustment or functioning.
- Federation: the act of uniting by agreement of each member to subordinate its power to that of the central authority in common affairs.
- Joint Powers: the act by legally constituted organizations (such as governmental agencies or corporations) of assigning particular powers each has a mutually defined purpose; a written document, called a joint powers agreement, spells out the relationship between the groups.
- League: a compact for promoting common interests; an alliance.
- Merger: the legal combining of two or more organizations; the absorption of one interest by another.
- Network: individuals or organizations formed in a loose-knit group.

- Partnership: an association of two or more who contribute money or property to carry on a joint business and who share profits or losses; a term loosely used for individuals and groups working together.
- Task Force: a self-contained unit for a specific purpose, often at the request of an overseeing body, that is not ongoing.

Winer and Ray (1996) state that many efforts can be called collaboration, regardless of the name used; the level of intensity of the relationship as it relates to risk, time, and opportunity determines whether or not an effort is a collaboration. The authors state that many groups refer to themselves as collaborations, when the intensity of the relating may be only that of cooperation or the coordination of activities. On the other hand, many groups need to collaborate, but do not understand the level of intensity the effort needs. Winer and Ray see collaboration as the most intense way to work together in that it allows each of the involved organizations to maintain their separate identities, yet contribute their special function and power to the needed community service or product. This study explores the contributions of those involved with the collaboration in Extension education for at-risk audiences in Virginia. The results of this exploration may help in further describing collaborative behavior, which in turn will contribute to an enriched understanding.

Models of Collaboration

Along with the array of terms often used to define collaboration, one will find models for collaboration which have been borrowed from many disciplines and theories to explain, conceptualize, and frame collaborative actions. The result is that no one model or explanation is available to be consistently applied to the understanding and practice of collaboration, thus contributing to the confusion and lack of understanding for those faced with the need to collaborate and attempting to practice it.

Perkins, Ferrari, Covey, and Keith, (1994) also point out that communities are afflicted by complex problems which are not responsive to “cookbook” solutions, and suggest the need for a model that is integrative, interconnected, and focuses on the context in which development occurs. Accordingly, they call for research, which documents the successes and struggles of collaboration. Keith, McPherson, and Smith-

Screen (1992) state actions taken in communities are often taken with insufficient data, when looked at from a scientist's perspective and they urge a stronger research base. This research not only looked at the successes and struggles of community collaboration with the Extension programs focused on the needs of children, youth, and families in Virginia, but also situated those experiences in the models and definitions of collaboration in the literature. The following three models (namely: Gray, 1989, Florin, Mitchell & Stevenson, 1993; Winer & Ray, 1996) were used in this study to draw conclusions based upon the specific instances and occurrences shared. Consequently, the findings of this study can be integrated into the emerging understanding needed to carry out the practice of collaboration.

Gray (1989) created a model based upon an examination of collaboration from an organizational theory perspective and refers to that model as an inter-organizational process that develops through negotiated order. She points out that traditionally we have looked at how organizations individually respond to environmental changes versus examining how groups of organizations collectively respond. The author proposes a three-phase model, which is described as being reflective of the fundamental elements many scholars conceptually see as important to collaboration and proficient use of this model is in understanding the steps within each phase, and then in turn knowing how to successfully engineer each step. Gray's three-phase model is as follows: (p.57).

Phase 1: Problem Solving

- Common definition of problem
- Commitment to collaborate
- Identification of stakeholders
- Legitimacy of stakeholders
- Conveyer characteristics
- Identification of resources

Phase 2: Direction Setting

- Establishing ground rules
- Agenda setting
- Organizing subgroups
- Joint information sharing

- Exploring options
- Reaching agreement and closing the deal

Phase 3: Implementation

- Dealing with constituencies
- Building external support
- Structuring
- Monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance

The Extension Leadership Councils of Virginia Cooperative Extension are groups comprised of community representatives. Understanding their collaborative experiences may contribute to our understanding of how elements identified in Gray's model are engineered. The findings of this study should prove useful in helping to illuminate and place Gray's model in the context of specific occurrences.

Florin, Mitchell, and Stevenson (1993) developed a seven-stage process in which they outlined stages and their associated tasks. Based upon evaluation research of 35 community coalitions for alcohol and drug abuse, this process was based upon data derived from task force members, key informant interviews, and review of archival records, which resulted in the development of the following:

- Initial Mobilization: A critical mass of active participants must be recruited. Key community constituencies/sectors are to be engaged.
- Establish Organizational Structure: A structure needs to be established for the group that clarifies roles and procedures. Both task and maintenance functions of the group must be addressed.
- Build Capacity for Action: At the member level, orient members to concepts and provide opportunity for skill building. At the organizational level, establish inter-organizational linkages with other key community players.
- Planning for Action: Needs should be assessed from the perspective of the participants, priorities should be set, and goal and objectives should be stated. A variety of intervention strategies should be selected in accordance with program effectiveness literature.

- Implementation: A sequential work plan should be set that includes time lines, allocation of resources, and assignment of responsibilities. Implementation activities should involve key organizational players, networks, and broad citizen participation.
- Refinement: Evaluation data should be used for program refinement and to incorporate community reactions. Gaps in programming should be identified and strategies should be added that build a comprehensive and coordinated array of programming strategies across community sectors.
- Institutionalization: At the member level, a process should be identified that facilitates leader succession and recruitment of new members. At the organizational level, functions should be integrated into the ongoing mission of existing organizations.

The process outlined by Florin, et al. provides basic specificity on how collaboration occurred based upon the 35 community coalitions involved in their study. The findings of this study will be useful in further illuminating the actions outlined by Florin, et al.

Winer and Ray (1996) (in their handbook entitled *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey*) outline a four-stage process for collaboration. The process outlined by the authors is based upon the research conducted by Mattessich and Monsey (1992) for the Amherst-Wilder Foundation on factors important to collaboration in 18 collaborative organizations. Their study revealed 19 factors important to collaboration, which they translated into six categories: environment, membership, process/structure, communication, purpose, and resources. The following is a description of Winer and Ray's four stages.

Stage 1: Envision Results by Working Individual-to-Individual. This stage involves the selection of an initiator, and the identification, recruitment, and gathering of members. It is in this stage a convenor is identified, meetings are held, interests are disclosed, visions are established, and actions are determined to realize those visions.

Stage 2: Empower Ourselves by Working Individual-to-Organization. This stage of the effort is where commitments are established and progress is documented. At this stage structures and processes are determined in relation to how the work will be

carried out. It is here that roles are determined, decision-making protocols are created, staff and resources are identified, conflict management is determined, and communication plans are established. It is important during this stage to reward the collaborative behaviors of the members and other people associated with the effort.

Stage 3: Ensure Success by Working Organization-to Organization. At this stage the work has to be managed. The vision is reviewed to confirm if it is a relevant vision, action plans are set, accountability standards are established, joint efforts are determined, evaluation plans are developed and utilized, and necessary changes are made.

Stage 4: Endow Continuity by Working Collaboration to Community. This final stage of the process involves promoting and communicating the collaborative's work and leadership. Sustainability is addressed by bringing in other community resources, educating the community on the need for collaboration and bringing in diverse interests. It is here where system's change occurs and the community assumes ownership. As it will be with the previous models, those elements discovered in this study that contributed to the collaborative experience as shared by those interviewed, will be situated against this model in an attempt to further illuminate collaborative practices.

Contributors to Successful Collaboration

A review of the related literature on contributors to successful collaboration reveals the guidance and insight on how to successfully practice collaborative behavior has been a mix of descriptive and prescriptive, with the greater emphasis remaining on the latter. Investigations into collaborative experiences have discovered similar and different elements to collaborative successes. Melaville and Blank (1991) identify five factors that influence a successful collaboration as it relates to services for children: the climate in which the effort begins, the processes used to build trust and handle conflict, the people involved, the policies that support the collaboration, and the resources available for the collaboration.

According to research conducted by Singer (1998), people are a critical element in the success and failure of the collaborative process. Gray (1989) stresses the importance of being proficient in understanding and engineering each step of her model,

which focuses on the roles and tasks that must be assumed by the people involved in a collaborative effort. With regard to leadership in civic collaboration, Chrislip and Larson (1994) found leadership as essential to collaborative endeavors. These authors found that the role of the leader is to convene, energize, facilitate, and to sustain the process. In their analysis of fifty-two collaborative initiatives with strong process leadership they found that collaborative leaders inspire a commitment to action, lead as peer problem solvers, build broad based involvement, and sustain hope and participation.

Singer's (1998) examination of leadership in collaboration uncovered considerations that should be attended to for leaders involved in collaborative efforts. Singer conducted a phenomenological study to discover inter-organizational leaders' perspectives and experiences on community collaboration and collaborative leadership as they lead their own organization and participated in collaboration. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 leaders in a mid-sized county in California who were involved primarily with grant-based projects, The projects focused on services for families and children and were mandated through California legislation to develop comprehensive and collaborative delivery systems for children and youth. Respondents of the study were involved with the coordinating council in one county. Singer synthesized individual experiences into a collective perspective of interagency collaboration and leadership. Singer's research conclusions were as follows:

- Bringing people together from multiple perspectives to do common work is challenging. Simply signing on to do grant work without establishing trust and authentic relationships presents challenges in achieving collaborative goals of funders.
- Collaboration can heighten the power differentials among participants. Funders should recognize the impact of power influences and make attempts to distribute the power through the allocation of resources.
- Leaders in collaborative efforts need to shift their organizational responsibilities in order that they may assume collaborative leadership responsibilities with the collaborative efforts. Such a shift may require shared leadership with internal responsibilities and training in collaborative leadership. Leadership is a central element of successful collaboratives.

Leadership in a traditional setting is different than leadership of a collaborative effort and some leaders may not be able to make the transition. Continuation with collaborative efforts will require training and education of leaders in how to lead collaboratively.

This collection, while it does offer a perspective on what to expect in order to move toward success with collaboration, revealed little on how to actualize successful collaboration.

Butterfield (1996) conducted a case study with 24 rural community childcare collaborators to determine the extent to which collaboration, as identified by the Mattesich and Monsey 19 factors, were seen as important and evident in the collaborative behaviors of those involved. Butterfield also probed to determine incentives to collaboration as experienced by the participants of the study. Of the nineteen factors examined, bosses or political leaders support of the mission, the community being well-represented in the membership, the members' feeling ownership in the process and outcomes, partners understanding their roles, rights, and responsibilities, group members interacting often, and having an adequate financial base were rated among the items considered to be important. While the study was a validation of importance of the factors identified by Mattesich and Monsey, the outcomes of the study remained that of advocacy and prescription and did not add to an illumination of how collaboration actually occurs.

With regard to the process of collaborating, Chrislip and Larson (1994) from their review of community collaboration, refer to six exemplary cases of successful community initiatives. Their review also offers a mix of prescriptive information and descriptive information on what is needed for certain tasks and successes to be achieved; however, it does not give a complete mental image of how their observations on success became actualized. Chrislip and Larson conclude that the following must be present or built into the process for successful collaboration to occur:

- Good timing and clear need. A sense of urgency should be felt by stakeholders to act on a need at the beginning of the project.

- Strong stakeholder group. Stakeholder groups should represent many people or organizations, be well organized, and can speak and act credibly on behalf of the people they represent.
- Broad-based involvement. Participants should come from several sectors of the community.
- Credibility and openness of process. Participants should see the process as credible, fair, open, one in which meaningful, not rubber stamp work is done, and not dominated by one stakeholder group. In addition, explicit or implicit ground rules or norms are established.
- Commitment and/or involvement of high level, visible leaders. High level visible leaders such as mayors, city council members, and executive directors/officers should be represented and/or involved with the effort.
- Support or acquiescence of established authorities or powers. The recommendations of the group should have the acceptance of the established powers or authorities.
- Overcome mistrust and skepticism. Over time, the skepticism and mistrust felt in the initial stages of the projects will decrease.
- Strong leadership of the process. Strong leadership of the process should exist, as opposed to strong advocacy of a point. Strong leadership of the process is evident in the acknowledgement of small successes along the way, helping stakeholders to negotiate difficult points, and the enforcement of group norms and ground rules.
- Interim successes. Momentum and commitment to the effort is built and sustained by acknowledging and celebrating successes along the way.
- A shift to broader concerns. As the effort evolves, a recognition and focus will occur on the broader more complex community issues versus the narrow, parochial interests.

When reviewing the contributors of successful collaboration, Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994) are prescriptive in their guidance. However, they move towards a greater description of the roles, tasks, and responsibilities needing to be assumed for

successful collaboration than most presentations of elements of success. They suggest the following guidelines to achieve successful collaboration.

- Formulate a clear perspective of goals and common human values. Participatory decision-making should be used to consolidate the mission and to determine primary goals and objectives.
- Research the facts and data relevant to the mission. Following the determination of the goals and the identification of the targeted issues, activities should be researched that will address the issues; delivery systems should be examined, and methods for evaluation and feedback should be designed.
- Identify key players. Key players should be identified that have the authority to make decisions and commit resources. Additionally, persons who have the subject expertise within the group should be identified and their roles agreed upon.
- Discuss and delineate the benefits and risks for individual and agency participants. Risks which limit services should be identified. Additionally, each agency should believe it has something to offer and gain from the collaborative effort.
- Understand and accept limits. The limits and traditional areas of responsibility should be understood, honored, and factored into the collaboration. Achieving this understanding and acceptance is achieved by each agency setting its limits and parameters for responsibility and cooperation.
- Build synergism. Team behavior and harmony is achieved through guidance, coaching, coordination and fostering creativity, interdependence, commitment and accountability to the team. Attention should also be given to the creation of trust and the reduction of conflict.
- Reduce barriers to progress. Progress is achieved and maintained by setting attainable objectives within the determined goals and by revisiting the mission each time a change is placed in consideration. A focus on the group's action plan is maintained through evaluation and feedback. Additionally progress is

enhanced when measures are established that protect the status of the group's partners and fuse individual power into collaborative power.

Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994) further describe how their suggested guidelines contributed to the success of the collaborative efforts of a 16 member Interagency Task Force appointed by the governor to establish resource and service centers to address the needs of economically disadvantaged children and their families in Kentucky. Clear goals and objectives of the group resulted from the common mission. The group's working principles were derived from research on the facts and data related to the mission. Key players were identified according to the guiding principles. The group was comprised of persons appointed by their agency head, thus each representative had the power and authority to commit resources of their respective agency. All members came to the collaboration aware of their own expertise, and knowing how it could contribute to the charge of the group. A climate of supportiveness and mutual respect reduced barriers that existed. The group concentrated on achieving immediate objectives and constantly monitored and adjusted its progress and mission. The constant feedback resulted in the group maintaining its focus.

Barriers to Successful Collaboration

Moving from traditional, long-standing ways of thinking and acting to a different approach, such as collaboration, with an ambiguous understanding of what to expect and to do, barriers will present themselves. Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh (1993) illuminate this challenge by stating that systems have a life of their own and often will resist change. The literature provides us with insights on what occurs when this shift happens.

Dimmock (1993) states there is a great difference between theory and practice. According to Dimmock we talk about collaboration more than we use it. Dimmock points out that involvement sounds good, is good for the democratic order, and many would support its notions on paper. However, few change agents organize change efforts in collaboration with others and are often reluctant to share power with others. According to Dimmock, many change agents lack personalities, values, and competencies to

include people in a change effort. Dimmock states that collaboration often fails and, beyond the limitations of the change agent, sees the following barriers to collaboration.

1. Empowering others to take ownership for their own interventions is challenging.
2. Collaborating involves exposing one's strengths as well as one's weaknesses.
3. Collaborative efforts have a tendency to flounder, wander, go off track

Sink (1996) identified five obstacles, which frequently confront community-based collaboratives: a) involvement of government officials can be problematic b) the sequential or incremental approach of collaboratives is not suited to emergency situations, c) an empowerment or betterment journey is difficult and requires social learning, building of respect and trust, and involves risk, d) personal agendas and individual idiosyncrasies are challenges to facilitation of collaboration, and e) bridging representation from different social and work sectors can be challenging.

Collaborative involvement requires time and attention. Margerum (1999) concluded from Innes, Gruber, Neuman and Thompson (1994), and Selin and Chavez (1995), that collaboration is a complex process that is consuming of time and other resources and is often fraught with conflict. In the study conducted by Butterfield (1996), utilizing the 19 factors found by Mattesich and Monsey, 24 childcare collaborators surveyed indicated that the time needed to collaborate and interference with employment responsibilities were barriers to collaboration.

Members of a system over time expect certain behaviors, according to Dimmock (1993). The community and other potential collaborators hold to certain norms, which accordingly will govern their behavior. Dimmock believes efforts to change individuals without changing the culture and norms of the social system can be challenging and therefore proposes education and development focused on helping the entire social system to collaborate effectively. This study's findings can be useful in helping to understand the practice of collaboration, thus providing insight on education and training needed to develop that proficiency.

Collaborative Principles and Practices in Extension Education

The Cooperative Extension Service is a 91 year old community education organization funded and administrated at the federal level through the United States Department of Agriculture. Cooperative Extension was established with the signing of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. Seevers, Graham, Gamon, Conklin (1997) point out that Cooperative Extension is regarded as the world's largest adult and youth non-formal educational organization. Professional and semi-professional educators are responsible for planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and being accountable for educational programs focused on identified needs of the localities where the resources of Cooperative Extension are available. A philosophical assumption of the practice of Cooperative Extension is that professional staffs collaborate with leaders of the community, other resource providers, and learners to determine and implement educational programs. The following sections will provide a discussion on the programming models of Cooperative Extension, which provide a framework for the practice, a rationale for collaboration in the programming efforts of extension education, practices in extension education, and the needs in the programming practice of Cooperative Extension.

Programming Models of Cooperative Extension

The basic mission of Cooperative Extension is to address the needs and problems of agriculture, natural resources, families, individuals, youth, and communities through an educational process that disseminates research-based, unbiased education, in practical ways that addresses the problems impacting the well being of agriculture, natural resources, families, individuals, youth, and communities. The models that provide the framework for the educational process used by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Cooperative Extension in general are greatly influenced by the philosophical viewpoints, which have defined adult education.

Reviews and analysis of many of the programming models of adult education have determined that collaboration is an essential element in the establishment and application of adult education efforts. Ko conducted a grounded theory study in 1998 to discover the basic constructs of adult education's programming models. A content

analysis was conducted of the literature to compare applicable incidents, integrate categories of data, and delimit a theory and to write a theory. From this review and analysis, Ko developed a “Success” model of program development. In this model, Ko included a category defined as a structure network. This category was derived from frequent reference across program models to such a network. Ko arrived at this definition from an observation that people were frequently involved in the programming process of adult education as experts, communicators, influencers, linkages, and architects of involvement structures. Climate setting became another emphasis of Ko’s model. This definition was derived from reference to mutual respect, trust, supportiveness, and collaborative-ness.

The Extension educational programming model, used by a significant number of state Cooperative Extension systems throughout the nation, as well as Virginia Cooperative Extension, (VCE), has been influenced by the educational programming process conceptualized by Boone (1985). Boone examined the nine different programming models conceptualized by adult education theorists and scholars and determined that collaboration was an indigenous element of his selected review. Included in the selected programming models of Boone’s examination were the models conceptualized by: Lippitt, Watson, and Westley, 1958; Beal, Blount, Powers, and Johnson, 1966; Knowles, 1970; Freire, 1970; Boone Dolan, and Shearon, 1971; Tyler, 1971; Houle, 1972; Kidd, 1973; and Boyle, 1981.

Many of the models examined by Boone, reflected basic sub processes in which educational programming was developed. Those basic processes included a) problem/need definition, b) setting of objectives, goals, and means, c) some formal or informal learning activity, and d) an implicit or explicit evaluation. Boone further saw programming as a collaborative process. Programming according to Boone is defined as follows:

A comprehensive, systematic, and proactive process encompassing the total planned, collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educator in the roles of change agent and programmer, representatives of the learners, and the learners themselves in a purposive manner and designed to

facilitate desirable changes in the behavior of learners and the environment or system in which they live. (p.41)

The principles, practices, concepts, and constructs of these adult education programming models and theories of other closely allied disciplines became the foundation upon which Boone built his model. Boone's conceptual model outlines a process that includes the following sub-processes: Planning, Design, Implementation, Evaluation, and Accountability.

The programming process of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) is defined around the three sub processes of Situation Analysis, Design and Implementation, and Evaluation and Reporting. Consistent with Boone, the VCE model assumes that the sub-processes, which make up the total effort, provide a framework in which the extension educator can facilitate the involvement of the learners' system through a representative community partnership, referred to as Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs). An assumption, of the VCE programming process, is that within each stage of the process are steps, which contribute to the extension educator collaborating with members of the ELCs of their locality to determine, implement, evaluate, and report extension education in Virginia. It is assumed that throughout the educational programming process of VCE, collaborative decision-making and actions are being achieved with extension agents and members of their ELCs.

Therefore, this study's exploration of the nature and experience of collaboration with the ELC partnership with Extension education for at-risk learners is based upon this assumption and its actualization. The results of this study will be useful in furthering the understanding of how collaboration is actualized in the practice of Extension education.

A Rationale for Collaboration in the Programming Efforts of Extension Education

The literature related to the programming efforts of adult and Extension education offers compelling reasons why it is important to collaborate with others. Perkins, Ferrari, Covey and Keith (1994) state that although professionals may know what the needs of a targeted audience are, it is important to engage the community to cultivate ownership and to bring about change. Ament (1987) cites Beder (1984) suggesting that collaboratives are an important way for adult educators and their

partners to gather useful information for needs assessments, evaluations, curriculum development, understanding participants, and securing facilities, the latest equipment, staff, and revenue. Ament further sees collaboration being advantageous to adult education providers such as Cooperative Extension in that it helps to expand the base of resources needed to address societal needs. According to Ament, it is through collaboration that adult education institutions can pool their resources, avoid duplication and competition, and expand strategies

A general sentiment in the literature is that the role of adult and Extension education is to lead and promote positive change by facilitating the involvement of others. In doing so, resources are expanded, decision-making is improved, the change process is promoted and enhanced, effective problem solving is achieved, and problem solving and leadership skills are developed in those involved. Boyle (1981) another influencer of extension's educational programming models, subscribing to the thinking of the sociologist, Margaret Meade, believes that people who are affected by a change effort, should consent to the efforts undertaken and should be fully involved in the facilitation of that change. Boyle (1981), in examining educational practices of extension, uncovered benefits gained by the professional, the organization, the program, and the learner as it relates to collaboration. He discovered that involvement played a central role, namely; involvement of clientele results in more relevant decision making in programming directions, involving others helps with the legitimizing and the dissemination of the program, and involvement is also the first step in the change process for the learner.

In addition, Boyle sees this approach to social change paralleling the Institutional Building model, which he believes is appropriate for adult education organizations. Per this model, the change agent is able to expand the capacity of the organization by mobilizing and developing the human resources of the organization by involving those served by the organization in the implementation of its programs. This approach is seen as a structured and functional approach to involvement and social change, the major function being the provision of a means for a collective involvement and effectiveness. In the Institutional Building Model, the change agent provides the leadership for the facilitation of the change process. Basic to this responsibility is: a) defining the

problems, values, objectives, and operating style of the organization, b) translating problems and needs into actions, c) developing human and physical resources, and d) combining resources into structures of authority, communications, and effective actions which allow the organization to carry out its programs. According to Boyle, involving people in programs, contributes to more accurate decisions about relevant needs and programming opportunities, and speeds the change process through diffusion and legitimization of programs. Boyle also indicates that involving people in the learning experience helps to develop their leadership in change process.

This study's exploration of the nature and experience of collaboration can be useful in enhancing our understanding of the impacts of the change process.

Practices in Extension Education

Regardless of the collaborative behavior assumed in the programming process of extension education and the importance stressed, evidence indicates that many adult and extension educators resist and deviate from a collaborative practice of involving the community throughout the programming process. As the literature has evolved related to community involvement in Extension education, little is revealed about involvement of others occurring in a significant manner. The literature indicates the conceptual assumptions of the programming process are not being carried forth in the practice of Extension education.

As early as 1981, Boyle found the literature revealing a wide range of disagreement on the involvement of people in the educational process. Boyle cites Brower's (1964) analysis of the philosophical struggles of adult education. From this analysis, it was revealed that everyone does not agree with the involvement of clientele as the only way to conduct adult education programming. In Boyle's review of Brower, evidence was uncovered regarding alternative views held by educators on how to develop programs. According to Boyle, Brower's work outlined four alternative approaches to program development: a) the academic approach that promotes professional authority, b) the grass roots approach which is based upon the learner as the primary decision maker, c) the education-for-reality approach that mutually involves

the educator and the learner, and d) the propaganda approach that involves a third party which excludes the learner and the educator.

Oliver (1977) found nine “programming pitfalls” in the Extension Committee on Policy Program Development Task Force’s examination of the program planning practices of Extension educators. It was found that Extension educators did not follow the theoretical program development processes. The practices which deviated included: a) using persons in planning groups that were not representative of the intended audience, b) working alone on programs, rather than cooperating with other professionals and organizations that might make contributions, c) implementing programs without any planning involved, d) not addressing all the steps in the programming process, e) not prioritizing needs when establishing programming direction, f) conducting programs that do not relate to local need, g) allowing professional interest to influence programming rather than the needs of the people, h) considering planning as an administrative rather than a programming function, and) not evaluating programs.

Budak (1997) used the Boone model as a framework for a descriptive-correlational study to determine the attitudes and practices of Extension professionals at The Ohio State University. A mail survey was administered to 291 extension professionals. To describe Extension program professionals’ implementation of program development processes a summated Likert-type scale was used with values ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). None of the processes was rated above (4.51). The mean score for all respondents was 3.46 (frequently). Respondents rated collaborating with targeted public leaders and learners to assess educational needs 3.53 (frequently). In the implementation of the program the only indication of involving others was the respondents’ rating of developing a plan to secure resources, which received a 3.83 (very often) rating. No indication was given of involving others in the evaluation of programs. Budak found district extension staff used program development processes more frequently than state and county extension staff and recommended further study to determine the program processes used in successful and unsuccessful programs.

Beder (1989) contended that the role of adult education is to build groups that identify common problems and arrive at joint solutions. Boyle (1981) states that an

advisory committee or a study committee is a very common way for adult education organizations to involve people in the program development process and mobilize human resources that allow programs to be implemented effectively. As compelling as the rationale for group involvement in adult education has been, evidence does not suggest that extension educators' practices reflect group involvement. Studies have indicated that agents tend to take the lead in determining program direction and do not depend on advisory involvement, input, or leadership (Casey, 1989; Wissemann, 1991; Mills, et al. 1995).

Lambur and Board (1995) conducted an evaluation study of Virginia Cooperative Extension's efforts to collaboratively determine, implement, evaluate, and report extension education with a representative group of the community referred to as Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs). Face to face interviews were conducted with 39 extension professionals and community volunteers throughout the state. The results of the study revealed that a collaborative programming approach was not occurring despite an explicit mandate by the organization to do so. There seemed to be a lack of understanding by extension staff on the purpose of the Leadership Council and specifically what roles and responsibilities its members could fulfill. The study also revealed that community members of the councils did not understand what roles they could assume other than simply advising the extension educator on what they should do. They believed it was the job of extension agent to carry out the work. Extension Agents on the other hand, had concerns of losing control in decision making, felt they should know the needs of their clientele, and did not see the need to have a number of persons involved in helping them determine their programming direction. Participants of the study also expressed concern over the time involved in collaborating and questioned whether the conceptual assumptions to collaborate could be achieved in reality.

Barnett, Johnson, and Verma (1999) found that published work on advisory committees tends to deal with suggestions, based upon the experiences of extension staff, on how to properly organize and manage committees. The expectation, according to the authors, is that if suggestions are adhered to the committees will represent the community interest and operate in an effective manner. The research to verify these

connections however is non-existent. They cite a 1986 census study of Extension staff in Louisiana, which determined that advisory committees were mostly used for program planning, were slightly involved in program implementation, and were not involved in evaluation. The study indicated weaknesses in member orientation and inadequate member participation. Committees chaired by lay leaders were seen as more effective than those chaired by extension agents. Barnett, et al. further reported the results of focus group interviews conducted for Louisiana Cooperative Extension with 40 extension agents and advisory committee members involved with cotton advisory committees. The purpose of the focus group discussions was to determine how well advisory groups were functioning and involved in cotton programming. The results of the study indicated that both agents and members did not understand the purpose of the advisory group. The main purpose of the group was to advise agents; however, agents did not view the advisory input as significant and felt they had the right to make the final decision. Both groups thought advisory committees should assist with implementation; however, agents thought advisory committee members had no role with evaluation.

The results of this study are useful to understanding how collaboration is achieved in extension education. Specifically, the results of this study will be useful to understanding how collaboration is achieved with Extension Leadership Councils, the community partnership Virginia Cooperative Extension seeks to establish collaboration in programming efforts.

Needs in the Programming Practices of Cooperative Extension

According to Lippitt and Van Til (1981), many educators have not discovered effective means of involving the learner in establishing learning goals and having a two-way commitment in the learning experience. Others have noted that educators often do not know how to involve others. Bennett (1993) suggested that the adult education models for programming often used by extension are limited in directing extension educators on what their roles are in an inter-organizational arena. Extension educators have technical know-how in subject matter, but in many instances lack the knowledge and skills to facilitate community building, and ownership in the programming process.

Their employment in Cooperative Extension has been based upon their education and training in specific technical areas related to agriculture and natural resources, youth development and education, or family and consumer sciences. More often than not, these academic preparations are lacking in the knowledge and skill building needed to facilitate the involvement of people in an educational programming process.

Collaboration requires one to have knowledge and skills in communication, group process, shared decision-making, consensus building, etc. The technical, subject matter based training of extension professionals, however, have not emphasized and focused on the development of skills in these areas. Thus Bennett proposes a reliance on independent models, which are more explicit with regard to the role of Cooperative Extension in the process of collaboration. Additionally, Bennett stresses the important for extension's partners to fully understand the program development process and the roles they will assume as well.

Given the current interest and advocacy for collaboration as a means to address critical issues of our time, it is imperative that extension and other adult educators have knowledge and skills in how to work with others to create change. Therefore it is important that the models which guide their practice be suitable. Sadowske (1991) conducted a philosophical inquiry of the prevailing models in adult education to consider adequacy in the emerging social-cultural environment and to explore alternative perspectives. Specific attention was devoted to an analysis of Boone's 1985 program development model, which has influenced Cooperative Extension. Upon a review of Brookfield (1988), Apple & Taxel (1987) , Apps (1985), Tom (1984), Apps (1979), Sadowske saw the Boone model being highly reflective of the work of Ralph Tyler (1950/1971). Sadowske notes that the core of the Tyler model is one of paternalism, whereby the adult educator relies upon their own expertise and acts alone to develop educational objectives and to create instructional procedures.

Sadowske also examined Boone's model for vagueness, ambiguity, and clarity. Questions were raised regarding Boone's notions of collaborative identification, assessment, and analysis by a collection of community partners. Sadowske saw this representation of programming as an important departure from the canned programming approach, which has so often been used by extension educators. Canned

programming involves implementing programming curriculum that has been determined by an outside resource, such as a company or an extension specialist, located on a university campus. It often does not involve consultation with learners and other community representatives. In an examination of the prevailing practice, Sadowske raised questions as to whether the process conceptualized by Boone is actually followed in practice and, if there were deviations in practice, what were the reasons. Further questions were raised as to whether positive results can be obtained without following this process. Sadowske points out that the influence of social norms has been taken for granted by Boone. A question is raised as to whether individuals and groups should be socialized before they can address the public's welfare.

In reflecting on her intellectual exploration of the program planning models and practices in adult education, Sadowske undertook a normative analysis to reach conclusions about her investigation. Sadowske concluded that the historical touting of advisory committees as collaborative partners in program planning is no more than a co-opting of traditional audiences to take the organization's position. Sadowske acknowledges that with the emerging environment, there is a continued need with future program planning endeavors to maintain relationships with advisory systems. Sadowske hoped her study would mobilize a movement towards a new paradigm in program planning in adult education. She considered her work a movement toward a theory in process, rather than a completed work. Sadowske concluded that if we accept the fact of future program planning in adult education being about people creating their own futures, we would need to adhere to new terminology and expectations. Sadowske sees the prevailing practice assumed by the adult educator's role, that of technician/scientist, as dysfunctional in the emerging environment. If people are to be actors in their own problem solving, then it becomes necessary for the adult educator to serve as a mentor, catalyst, a guide, a supporter, and a facilitator.

Given the observations and concerns of the aforementioned authors and researchers, it becomes important that we gain insight into the nature and experience of collaboration and how that nature and experience becomes effectively manifested. This study is a step in that direction. Boone (1985) himself stated that continued growth of the field of adult education depends upon practitioners generating more refined inquiry

into its operation, theory formulation, and further development in principles and practices. This research provides insight on the roles and action that have accommodated collaborative involvement in the extension educational programming process.

Summary of the Review of Related Literature

In the revised and updated version of the *Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1980), Malcolm Knowles speaks to the changing and challenging role of adult education. Knowles saw the new adult education environment being one in which the traditional adult educator had to assume new roles, which required different skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values. According to Knowles, the evolving environment required that the adult educator become a helper, a guide, encourager, and consultant, who assisted in the building of environments conducive to human growth and development.

The complexity of the issues of the last decade has perpetuated the observations Knowles had on the practice of the adult educator in the production of positive change. As change agents, adult educators are often involved in determining and implementing education to meet the needs of communities. As stated by Knowles, they are often cast in the role of creating an environment that facilitates human development. The problems and issues of the last decade have necessitated that a developmental environment include the resources and expertise of multiple parties. Community service providers are discovering that a single perspective to identifying and implementing solutions is inadequate. Collaboration has become the method of necessity in these times.

Collaboration is generally defined as sharing the responsibilities of both decisions and tasks. Many who have attempted collaboration tend to have difficulty understanding how to perform in a collaborative manner. No one model of collaboration exists. The research has come from a variety of perspectives, and the literature primarily tends to be of an advocacy nature. Little evaluation research is available to help us understand what happens when we attempt to collaborate (White & Wehlage, 1995). Limited research is available to determine the meaning that participants would ascribe to collaborations. The result has been a struggle through

ambiguity of those attempting collaboration with no universal understanding being available to guide the practice.

The programming process used by the adult education organization of Cooperative Extension is premised upon providing a framework/process for the extension educator, as an adult education professional, to collaborate with others in the identifying of community needs, determining and implementing solutions, and evaluating and reporting results. Yet studies indicate Extension educators tend to determine their programming direction on their own and community involvement is often limited. To the author's knowledge, no research exists which specifically illuminates collaboration with multiple parties throughout all phases of the programming process of Cooperative Extension.

Sadowske (1991) in an analysis of the Boone (1985) model, which has significantly influenced the programming process of Cooperative Extension throughout the nation, questioned the adequacy of that model in the emerging environment. Sadowske sees the model as limited in directing the adult educator on how to assume a collaborative role. Adult educators in Cooperative Extension come to the profession with technical training in subject matter and have little professional training on how to be a mentor, catalyst, a guide, supporter, or a facilitator.

If change necessary for the prevailing environment requires change efforts that involve multiple parties, the prevailing practice assumed by the adult educator of technician/scientist is a limited role in the emerging environment. If people are to be actors in their own problem solving, then it becomes necessary for the adult educator to serve as a mentor, catalyst, a guide, a supporter, a facilitator, in addition to being an expert in a particular subject matter area. We will need to adhere to new technology and expectations.

Huxham (1996) encourages research that will help us to understand as much as we can regarding the nature of collaboration and the processes that will help it work successfully. This study attempts to gain an understanding of the collaborative experiences of volunteer community leaders and professionals in Virginia Cooperative Extension working in collaboration to provide extension education focused on the issues of children, youth, and families at risk. The results of this exploration will contribute to

the growing body of research on collaboration, thus contributing to an emerging understanding of how collaboration is achieved in general and Extension education.

Cooperative Extension and Collaboration: A Review of Current Literature

The direction taken for this study was based upon a review of literature up to 1999. Appendix A presents a review of literature on collaboration in Cooperative Extension from 2000 to the present.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Introduction to the Study's Design and Methodology

This investigator sought to understand the nature and experience of community collaboration with Extension education for at risk populations in Virginia. The following research questions facilitated the exploration for that understanding: a) What has been the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs) involved with Children, Youth, and Family at Risk (CYFAR) projects, b) What has contributed to successful collaboration in extension education with CYFAR projects, and c) What have been the challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

A qualitative approach was utilized to address this study's focus. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), it is through qualitative field research that we can explore the processes and meanings of events. Qualitative investigations are not premised on predefined constructs, definitions, and hypotheses, but instead define themes throughout the research process (McCracken, 1988). Respondents can attribute their own meaning to a subject, unlike a hypothetico-deductive approach in which the researcher poses the meaning in the quest to determine if a preconceived hypothesis is operating (Merriam, 1988; Yow, 1994). Qualitative data are descriptive of situations, people, events, attitudes, beliefs, and thought (Patton 1980).

Qualitatively framed investigations allow the researcher to explore a phenomenon and gather in-depth understanding and rich data. Yow (1994) points out that qualitative research allows the researcher to learn about a way of life or experience by asking the people who have lived it to tell what they thought of it. Patton (2002) sees qualitative research as taking a researcher into an experience so that we will know what it is like to have been there. In short, it tells a story.

More specifically, the qualitative technique of in-depth, face-to-face interviews was used in this study. Marshall and Rossman describe the in-depth interview as a "conversation with a purpose." Patton (2002) contends that the qualitative interview allows us to enter into the perspectives of other people. According to Patton, we enter

into qualitative interviewing with the assumption that other's perspectives are meaningful and explicit. When we capture the perspectives of persons associated with programs, we are able to tap into their knowledge and experiences concerning the programs operations, processes, and outcomes and new worlds become open to us with these journeys. The in-depth interview method provides the researcher the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the collaborative experiences of community representatives on selected Extension Leadership Councils involved in Extension education for at risk populations in Virginia.

Understanding the collaborative experiences as described by the Extension Leadership Councils involved with Extension education for the children, youth, and families at-risk programs will be useful as we seek to understand more about how collaboration occurs, or in other words, how it actually comes to life. Using this method to gather information contributes to an increased understanding of the process and provides an account of the nature and experience of collaboration of the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk projects of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Data Collection

Development and Pilot Testing of the Interview Guide

To explore the nature and experiences of collaboration in this study, an interview guide was developed. Patton (1980) defines an interview guide as a list of questions that the interviewer explores with the interviewee in the course of an in depth qualitative interview. According to Patton, the interview guide provides topical areas in which the interviewer/researcher can explore, probe, and ask questions, that creates a conversation to illuminate and clarify the particular subject of the study. Patton points out that an interview guide allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge, yet provides a systematic framework in which relevant and common topics can be explored and each person interviewed can basically be asked the same questions. This in turn, reduces bias, which comes from having different interviews with different people.

The interview guide serves as the plan for the interviews. The interview guide, according to Patton, also allows the researcher to make decisions about what topics

might be explored in-depth, develop questions, and sequence the questions. While questions are pre-determined in the interview guide, the qualitative nature of the in-depth interview does provide the flexibility to explore unanticipated topics. Yet the interview guide serves as a reminder to the researcher to bring the discussion back to the objectives planned for the study.

Yow (1994) suggests that the questions included in the interview guide reflect the interest of the key stakeholders and the descriptions provided in the literature of the phenomenon under investigation. To address this, a focus group was conducted with key professional stakeholders to gather input to use in drafting the interview guide for this study. Kruger (1994) points out that focus groups are a routine method used by program developers and decision-makers to gather insights about a program from a variety of program participants.

A focus group discussion was conducted with faculty serving as Extension Specialists in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education (AEE) located on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. This study's researcher invited all five of the department's Extension faculty to participate in the focus group discussion. All elected to participate in the discussion. The mission of Extension education in the department is to provide leadership for enabling all Extension faculty and staff, throughout the organization, to put into practice the concepts and principles of the VCE Extension Educational Programming process. The Extension faculty members of AEE serve as consultants to Extension field and campus faculty, staff, administrators, and volunteers striving to utilize the programming process as a framework for extension education. The VCE Programming Process guidelines, available to be used by Extension educators were developed by the AEE extension faculty. These guidelines are used by AEE Extension Specialists in the training and coaching on the practice of Extension education for the Extension Agents and Specialists, Extension Leadership Council members, and other program volunteers. Faculty members with AEE were also aware of the USDA grant requirements for the CYFAR program.

The focus group interview guide used for the discussion with the AEE extension faculty is contained in Appendix B. The focus group interview guide included the following general questions.

- If you were conducting this study, what experiences would you explore?
- What topics would you cover?
- What would you like to learn from this study?

In addition to the focus group with the AEE extension faculty, the researcher pursued the literature in collaboration and a list was compiled which reflected common collaboration topics. The list of topics related to collaboration was given to the focus group participants to review, to stimulate their thinking, and to determine what significance these items might have for them. That list of topics is outlined in Appendix C.

Notes were taken to capture the responses in the focus group discussion. Table 1 presents the AEE extension faculty's general input on collaboration to be explored in this study. Table 2 outlines the suggested topics from the collaboration literature identified by the AEE extension faculty. Based upon the responses provided during the focus group interview, the first draft of an interview guide to be used for this study was developed (see Appendix D).

Table 1

Key Questions Identified for the Study From the Professional Stakeholder Focus Group

Questions of Interest Explored for This Study

How would the respondents define/describe collaboration?

What are concrete examples of the experiences described and/or shared by the respondents?

Where did the respondents' see their definition of collaboration occurring?

What programming process responsibilities did Extension Leadership Council Members Assume?

How would the respondents describe the roles they each assumed?

What went well with the programming efforts for CYFAR?

What contributed to the successes of the CYFAR programming?

What were the challenges/barriers to the programming efforts for CYFAR?

What contributed to the challenges/barriers of the CYFAR programming?

What other partners and volunteers were brought into the programming efforts of CYFAR?

Who provided the primary leadership for the CYFAR programming efforts, Extension Leadership Council members, Extension Agents, or others?

After the grant money has been removed, what do the respondents' see happening to the CYFAR programming and what do they see as the reason for that to occur?

Note: Extension Faculty in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education were asked in a focus group, what they would like to know if they were conducting the study to explore the nature and experience of collaboration with the community in extension education for at- risk audiences.

Table 2

Key Elements on Collaboration Identified for the Study From the Professional Stakeholder Focus Group

Elements of Collaboration Explored for this Study

Leadership

Commitment

Ownership

Communication

Shared Vision

Identification of Resources

Sharing of Resources

Clear Roles

Shared Responsibilities

Note: Extension Faculty in Agricultural and Extension Education reviewed a list of common topics from the literature on collaboration and determined an interest in the above to be explored for this study.

When inquiring about the nature of reality, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the ontological question examines what should we know about the assumed “real world,” what can be known about that world, how does it work, and, how really are things. Guba and Lincoln further note that the only questions admissible towards that end, are those questions that relate to “real” existence and “real” action. Patton (2002) indicates that the object of the qualitative interview is to get people to talk about their experiences, their feelings, their opinions and knowledge, and that open-ended questions facilitate that kind of discussion. According to Silverman (1993), open-ended questions are effective in a qualitative investigation because they allow the researcher to gather an authentic understanding of people’s experience. Open-ended questions

according to Patton (1980), allow the interviewees to respond in their own terms, from their own repertoire of possibilities. The open-ended question, according to Patton (2002), does not facilitate a dichotomous reaction, but rather permits interviewees to use whatever words they chose to express meaning to their experience.

To examine the nature and experience of collaboration framed by this study's general research questions, a pilot interview guide was developed that contained open-ended questions addressing the topics of interest to be explored (See Appendix D). A pilot interview was conducted with the Director of the CYFAR Project in Virginia. At the conclusion of the interview a discussion was conducted with the Director on the ease with which the questions were understood, the conversational flow of the interview, and the interviewer's techniques that enhanced or impeded the interview process. Feedback was also sought on how the persons targeted to be interviewed would be able to relate, understand, and respond to the questions. Based upon this feedback and discussion, adjustments were made in the interview questions. The final interview guide developed from the pilot feedback and used with the remaining interviews for this study is contained in Appendix E.

Kruger (1988) suggests that upon the evaluation of the pilot interview guide, should no major adjustments be made, the data generated from the pilot session may be used in later analysis. It was determined by the researcher that the interview guide used in the pilot interview was not a major departure from the fundamental interest of this study and did mirror the general research questions. Therefore the data generated from the pilot discussion were included with the later analysis of the study's data.

Selection of the Sample

Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that the qualitative interviewees need to have an overall knowledge about the research interests' culture, policies, past history, and future plans. According to Patton, (2002), qualitative investigations typically focus on small sample cases that are selected to provide rich information for in-depth study, as opposed to empirical approaches in which generalizations can be derived. Patton points out that from qualitative cases, much can be learned about the focus of the research interest. Therefore it is important to select a sample that can yield the kind of

in-depth information, insights, and understanding needed by the researcher. A purposefully selected sample, according to Patton, can provide the illumination needed that the research questions seek.

The Director of the CYFAR Project was asked to provide a list of names of community representatives involved with the CYFAR projects at each site. This was to include members of the Extension Leadership Councils and/or any designated subcommittees if appropriate, who were determined by the overall Leadership Council to work with the projects and also evolved as the projects progressed. A list of names was provided for each of the four localities involved in the study. For all persons listed, their address, telephone number, and email address, if applicable, were requested (see Appendix F).

Upon receipt of the lists, the researcher consulted with the Director of the CYFAR project to determine persons in each locality that could provide the best knowledge on the projects' operations. Those persons identified for interview included members of the overall Extension Leadership Councils, Extension Agents, and persons involved with the implementation of the projects that served on a subcommittee designated to work with the implementation stage of the project, however were not necessarily a member of the overall Extension Leadership Council. In addition to the CYFAR Director, 16 other persons were selected to interview for this study. The interviewees included: two African American males, three White males, three African American females, and nine White females. Twelve of which had received the initial training on the roles and function of an ELC and the VCE programming process and five had not been involved with the initial training. Table 3 provides an outline of the roles and affiliations of those interviewed in the four locations of the CYFAR focus.

The persons identified for this study were contacted by telephone by the researcher. The study and its purpose were explained, a request was made to interview them, and a date and place for the interview was established. The script for the telephone contact is contained in Appendix G.

Following the telephone contact, a letter was emailed or sent surface mail to interviewees to confirm details related to the interview. Appendix H contains an example of the letter mailed or emailed to the persons who agreed to participate in the study.

Included in this correspondence was the Virginia Tech Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects.

The Interview Process

The interview guide developed for this study was used for each interview. Each interviewee was asked the 10 questions and appropriate probes. To assure accuracy regarding what was said, the interviews were audio-tape-recorded. Capturing the interview data with a tape-recording allowed the researcher to be more attentive to the interviewee, thus contributing to the conversational tone of the interview and encouraging candid sharing by the interviewees.

At the beginning of the interview, interviewees were told they would be tape-recorded, merely to ensure that the conversation and their comments were accurately and fully captured. They were assured that their name would not be associated with the information used in the final reporting. Interviewees were also told if they desired at any time during the discussion not to be tape recorded, the interviewer would not tape that part of the interview. No one interviewed for this study requested that the tape recorder be shut off. Therefore all interviews for this study were captured on audio tape.

Table 3

Persons Interviewed for the Study: N=17

Location	Person Interviewed	Affiliation
Location 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extension Agent ● Community Volunteer ● Community Volunteer ● Parks and Recreation Employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Sub Committee ● Member of Overall and Chair Person of Project's Subcommittee ● Member of Overall ELC ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Subcommittee
Location 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extension Agent ● Community Volunteer ● Elementary School Principal ● Parks and Recreation Employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Sub Committee ● Chairperson of Overall ELC and Project Subcommittee ● Member of Project's Subcommittee ● Member of Project's Subcommittee
Location 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extension Agent ● Community Volunteer ● Community Volunteer ● Elementary School Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Sub Committee ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Subcommittee ● Member of Overall ELC ● Member of Project's Subcommittee
Location 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Director of CYFAR Program ● Extension Agent ● Community Volunteer ● Community Volunteer ● Owner Apartment Complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides Programmatic and Administrative Oversight to all Four Locations ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Sub Committee ● Chairperson of Overall ELC ● Member of Overall ELC and Project's Subcommittee ● Member of Project's Subcommittee

In a qualitative inquiry, the researcher's own experience is part of the data (Patton, 2002). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) indicate field notes not only are a source of data on the interviews and the interviewees, but also offer an opportunity for interviewers to capture any of their own subjectivity and make any needed adjustments. Patton (1980) also suggests at the end of each interview that the researcher write notes immediately about the interview itself. Patton suggests written notes be made about the interviewee's reaction to the interview, observations about the role of the interviewer with the interviews, and any other additional information that contribute to interpretation and making sense of the interview. The researcher for this study served as a member of the State Design Team for CYFAR, as an Extension Specialist, Program and Leadership Development with the responsibility of providing leadership to the Extension Leadership Council concept with Virginia Cooperative Extension, and served as the principle investigator for the 1995 evaluation study conducted with Extension Leadership Councils with Virginia Cooperative Extension. To limit the bias the researcher might bring to the experience based upon prior knowledge and responsibilities with Virginia Cooperative Extension, field notes were constructed at the end of each interview, which captured the researcher's own reactions. These observations were used as part of the meaning making that took place with the analysis of the data and to make any conscious adjustments as to how the interviews were being conducted, whichever was appropriate.

Analysis of Data

The researcher, upon the analysis of qualitative data, has two primary sources to draw from: a) the questions conceptualized in the design of the study before the fieldwork, and b) the insights and interpretations that emerge during data collection (Patton, 2002). According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), the collection and analysis of qualitative data go hand in hand. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) describe the analysis of qualitative data as working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable parts, synthesizing it, identifying patterns, finding out what is important and what is to be learned, and making decisions on what to tell others. Patton (1980) points out that the interpretation of qualitative data involves making sense of what is said, looking for

patterns, putting what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said.

Patton (2002) sees no agreed upon or precise processes for the analysis of qualitative data indicating there are no clear-cut rules about how to proceed. The qualitative analyst, according to Patton, must return to the data over and over again to determine if the interpretations, constructs, explanations, and categories reflect the nature of the phenomena and truly make sense. According to Patton, one simply tries to do one's best in making sense. Therefore for this study all of the aforementioned were considered to guide the analysis of this study. Specifically, the following procedures were used:

1. Throughout each interview, the researcher utilized active listening skills with particular attention to summarization. Summarization not only was used as a means to insure the interviewee that they were being heard, but was also used as a means to assist with the analysis process upon the reading of the interview transcripts.
2. Field notes were made during the following each interview. Field notes were useful in that they facilitated field analysis and helped the researcher reflect on what was being found, as well as, how interviews were being conducted (Bodgan & Biklen, 1982; Kruger, 1988, Patton, 2002). Field notes were used by this researcher to briefly capture participants' responses. Field notes for this study were also used as a means to capture important incidents and reoccurrence or patterns of those incidents while data was being collected. For example, in addition to the brief notes of the participants' responses, the following are examples of notable incidents and reoccurrences noted in this study's field notes: "*Cooperative Extension is seen as a credible community resource by those involved; people do not understand what collaboration means, it is a popular buzz word, paid staff were important to making the projects happen.*" These notes were used in the final analysis and reading of the interview transcripts to assist in the meaning making of the interview results.

3. Each interview was transcribed by a skilled transcriber. The transcripts for each interview were given an identifiable coding which identified the person from whom the data were collected. Each page of that person's transcript was numbered with the assigned number of that interviewee, a dash, and the appropriate chronological number of that page. For example, page 15 of the number 10 person's transcript was numbered as 10-15. This coding was used with any utilized quotes to identify the location of that quote in the transcriptions.
4. Analysis of qualitative data typically begins with an inductive analysis to discover patterns and themes, which contribute to a codebook for analysis of the content (Patton, 2002). Straus and Corbin (1998) as cited by Patton (2002), refer to this approach as "open coding". Each transcript was read by the researcher.
 - a. During this first reading, patterns and themes that emerged and were captured in the reflective documenting in the field notes was kept in mind and the meaning that was brought forward as the transcript of the interview discussion was read was noted. Patton (1980) suggests that categories used to label the data come from terms that the researcher might develop to describe the terms inductively generated by the people themselves, thus coding was assigned to the data that emerged from the reading of the transcripts and the field notes. Patton sees this inductive approach to data analysis being different from the deductive approach in which a preconceived framework governs the analysis. Patton points out that this analysis of the interview content to give meaning to a volume of qualitative data is referred to as content analysis.
 - b. During this meaning making, descriptive key words and phrases were coded or noted in the margins of the transcripts. To also assist with the tracking of the content meaning assigned to the interviews, a listing of the coding determined for the discussion of each interviewee's response to each question was compiled by question. An example of that compilation can be seen in Appendix I.

- c. Verbatim quotes that the researcher saw as illuminating a response were highlighted during this reading. The identified quote was copied and pasted from the transcription and placed along with the content coding listed for that interviewee's question response. The quotes selected as representative can also be noted in the first reading compilation example presented in Appendix I.
5. A second reading was conducted to analyze the text to ensure if the text specifically reflected the code assigned in the first reading. The compilation of key words and phrases was referred to during this reading. If an adjustment needed to be made in the key word or phrase based upon this reading a renaming made at this time if needed on the Appendix I compilation. Highlighted quotes were also attended to in this reading to ensure an appropriate selection was made.
 - a. A third reading of the transcripts was conducted. At this reading, analysis was directed towards identifying themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking throughout the collection of transcripts/interview discussions on each question. Coding determined from the analysis during this reading is presented Appendix J. As this list was determined the definitions and terms discussed in the literature on collaboration and the programming process of Cooperative Extension were considered in the development of the coding at this step of analysis. With the refined listing, attention was also given to the selection of quotes in Appendix I that were identified as illuminating.
6. The organization that resulted from the third reading was used to develop a descriptive narrative to summarize the pervasive responses provided for each question. In the development of the descriptive summary, the focus of the research effort was kept in mind, the nature and experience of community collaboration. To preserve individual anonymity no individual responses were distinguished in the descriptive summary. Due to the small number of persons interviewed at each individual locality, a descriptive summary derived from the pervasive responses for all questions from all sites was selected to preserve

the anonymity of participants versus providing a summary analysis of each individual site. To illuminate the summaries developed, direct quotes were used and noted with the location code assigned in the initial preparations of the transcripts.

7. The summary analysis of each question was reviewed to determine how the three research questions were addressed. Upon this review, note was made of those responses to individual questions and across all questions any themes patterns, common ways of thinking and acting that provided illumination or insight to the study's research questions. From this review a descriptive summary was developed for each research question.
8. The summarized analysis for each interview question, the analysis of the findings related to the three research questions, the prevailing literature on collaboration, and the programming process of Virginia Cooperative Extension were considered in the development of the conclusions and recommendations for this study.
9. Patton (1980) suggests that after organization and description of the data are complete, it may be necessary to examine any linkages with causes, consequences, and relationships. According to Patton, there is no reason to deny decision makers and information users, insights regarding causes and relationships. Patton states that the researcher has lived with the data, reflected at length about the patterns and themes, and therefore, is in as good a position as anyone to formulate hypotheses. In the development of all analysis for this study's, this researcher's insights and/or hypotheses were drawn from not only having lived with the data, but also from professional knowledge and experience, as well as literature reviewed. Any insights and/or hypotheses the researcher had that resulted from conducting and analyzing this study has been utilized to develop all discussions related to this study's findings.

Summary of the Research Design and Method

This study sought to understand the collaborative experiences of Extension Leadership Councils involved with the Children, Youth, and Families at-Risk Projects implemented in Virginia by Virginia Cooperative Extension, to situate that experience in the prevailing literature of collaboration, and to contribute to an emerging understanding of collaboration. This study used the in depth face to face interview approach to qualitative research. The face-to-face interviews were used to determine the collaborative nature and experiences of community representatives, who serve as members of Extension Leadership Councils, in extension education for at-risk populations in four localities in Virginia.

The Director of the Children, Youth and Families at Risk Program in Virginia was consulted to identify persons from each site who were interviewed for this study. Along with the Director, 16 people were interviewed.

A 10 question interview guide that reflected the general research questions for this study was used to guide the interview discussions. The interview guide was developed based upon input from Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialists in Extension Educational Programming and the literature on collaboration. The researcher served as the interviewer for all interviews conducted. Audio taped recordings were conducted with each interview. The transcripts of each interview's tape recording served as the primary data source for this study.

The findings for this study examined the patterns, themes, common experiences, case experiences, relationships, as well as insights from the researcher based upon the interview experience and the review of the interview discussions. Categories that emerged from the data, and reflected the definitions of collaboration in the literature and the extension programming process were used to code the text and to make sense of the experiences of the participants. After all categories were assigned and the related text determined, a descriptive, narrative summary of the interview questions and themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking and acting related to the research were developed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the emerging understanding of collaboration by using a qualitative research approach to understand the nature and experience of community collaboration with extension education for children, youth, and families at risk in four localities in Virginia. The findings of this study were generated through face-to-face interviews with 17 key informants knowledgeable of the nature and experience of community collaboration in extension education at targeted locations. Ten questions and related probes were used to guide the interviews and to gain insight into three research questions: a) What is the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs) involved with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) projects; b) What has contributed to successful collaboration in extension education with the CYFAR projects; and c) What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

The analysis of this study's findings has been developed in two ways: a) a descriptive summary of the interview questions; and b) the themes, patterns and common ways of thinking and acting that relate to the research questions. The remainder of this chapter is a presentation of those two categories of analysis.

A Descriptive Summary of the Interview Questions

The participants of this study responded overall in a generally positive manner to all questions asked. The following discussion presents a descriptive summary of all responses given for each of the interview questions and their related probes. The descriptive summaries provided represent the pervasive responses that occurred across the interviews. Direct quotes from the participants are provided to illuminate and represent the descriptions of the findings. The quote selected is followed by the number code assigned to interviewee from whom the quote was made followed by a dash and the page number of that interviewee's transcript.

Question 1: When you think of the term collaboration, how would you define or explain what is meant by that term?

Participants generally defined collaboration as the process of individuals, groups, agencies, and organizations working together to achieve a common goal. All participants indicated that shared decision making was essential to the identification of a common goal and the continued working together in the planning and implementation associated with addressing the goal. In addition to shared decision making, all participants commented on the sharing of the tasks and needs related to planning and implementation. Collaboration according to all participants also included sharing resources of time, expertise, personnel, money, influence, space, etc.

Study participants indicated that the sharing of responsibilities and tasks may not always be equal, because responsibilities and tasks are not always equal. It was also indicated that as the process of planning and implementation progresses, the level of involvement of partners will vary and new partners may enter the collaborative venture given the needs and tasks associated with the stage the effort is in. The following quotes provide an illumination of the meanings defined by the participants:

I would say it means representatives from different groups working together on a shared goal. Each group is contributing something that goes along with their specialty area. Whatever area of specialization that they have that relates to the goal, they are contributing something related to that. (5-1)

When I hear the word collaboration it means different groups coming together and working together for a common goal. Working together to define that goal and working together in the execution of that goal. (10-1)

It's not just about decision making, it is also the time in which they invest in the process. The process I am thinking about is not just the process in deciding what to do, but it's also in the implementation of the program. Collaboration is not just sitting down at the table with a group of people and making decisions on what is needed in the community and saying this is how we are going to address that

need, it's a step further than that. It is investing time in the implementation of the successes and not success of the program. (2-3)

It is not necessarily equal. What I may be doing may be the implementation; 80% of the work. Somebody else may be doing the PR or outreach, it may not be equal. The key is people need to do what they say they are going to do. I think it is good to say upfront that parts of this will be 80% and parts of this will be 10% of the job. People are always looking for equal and that is a misconception. (11-1)

Question 2: How did you see what you described being reflected in the programming efforts for the CYFAR program here?

When participants described what they believed to be their meaning of collaboration reflected in the CYFAR program, they frequently described multiple parties representing a diversity of the community, coming together and jointly looking at the community to determine needs, agreeing upon a common goal to address those needs, determining solutions, and multiple parties being involved in implementing a solution. The involved parties described included Cooperative Extension, Public School Systems, Parks and Recreation, Parent Teacher Organizations, and local businesses. Members of the Extension Leadership Councils were described as representative of the different sectors of the community.

Meetings of these multiple parties were convened and organized to jointly make decisions, to establish common goals, determine solutions, monitor solutions, update on actions, and to make needed adjustments and additions to the implementation of efforts. As solutions were planned and implemented, the participants described multiple parties making contributions and assuming different roles. The multiple parties noted were paid and volunteer staff. Contributions described from the multiple parties included, time, expertise, money, space, curriculum, influence, advocacy, access to other resources, such as other staff, parents, other volunteers, University/Land-grant resources, and general support. The following quote is reflective of the descriptions often provided.

When we started out the ELC took a lot of time determining what the requirements were of the grant and identifying where the community needs were. We followed the model exactly in that we tried to find as many studies as we could that reflected the needs of the underserved communities. We selected the communities and invited people from the community to describe their needs. Once we heard the needs, we had the police, someone from the schools, someone from the churches, and different community organizations identify the problems in their areas. The ELC set up actual criteria by which we would select the communities we would work with. We worked with different organizations in the community to specifically design and conduct programs and projects to meet those needs. (10-1)

Question 3: How were you involved with the programming efforts for CYFAR?

The 17 participants assumed a range of roles in the collaborative effort. They reported themselves as conveners and facilitators of the groups, leaders and coaches to the collaborative efforts, leaders and administrators to the entities they represented, administrators of the grant's requirements and resources, researchers and providers of information, connectors and brokers to resources, providers of staff and space, securers and providers of additional funds, supervisors of grant paid staff, providers of expertise for program activities, trainers of staff, advocates for the project, and general supporter and encouragers. The quotes below reflect examples of these roles.

I feel like a lot of my time was connecting people to the appropriate resources. I sort of linked the program to resources that were often outside the collaborative partnership. (1-6)

We were the conveners of the meetings. After the meetings, one of our employees would prepare the minutes and circulate them to the various participants. We would post the calendar of events on the bulletin board and we send out a newsletter which talks about the program activities of all the organizations involved. We are the central agent in helping all these groups

come together. We literally invite the people, we maintain the continuity. We now fund the project staff. (3-5)

When participants were probed on what contributed to their fulfillment of their roles, they frequently indicated the following: seeing the needs of the community being met, self-interest and mutual needs being addressed, understanding the community and programming process, having a vision of the possibilities, being committed to what had to be done, being respected and credible in the group and the community, having resources to work with, and good communications being provided to the partners of the collaborative. Many participants cited Cooperative Extension as being a catalyst and a facilitator of the group, a complementary partner to the interest of the other collaborators, and an enabler to their efforts/interest. The following quotes are an illustration of those views.

We believe that doing all these things are good business. While they may sound and feel good from a charitable or community spirit perspective, the bottom line that makes us very committed to these activities is that we believe these things are good for our business interest. While I guess you can attribute as much to a do good ethic, we also believe it's in our self interest. (3-6)

I felt the model we received on the CYFAR program and the way it was spelled out was very similar to the way we conduct programs in business. To me it is a collaborative model that you can start many programs of its kind. I felt following the model and getting the ELC folks to do their part and getting people from the community contributed to my ability to fulfill my role.(10-3)

My ability to fulfill my role had a lot to do with the respect the people had for the department I worked for. I think part of it had to do with some respect people had for me and that if I said I was going to do something, I'm going to do it. (11-3)

We have been struggling to create something like this for years. I would say that Cooperative Extension was an important catalyst in this process. (3-7)

I had a good partner in Cooperative Extension. We were complementary of each other and if it wasn't for (Name of the Extension Agent), we wouldn't have had the horsepower to keep it going. If it wasn't for someone who could help keep the focus and set the course, had the resources to bring. Extension carries the ball.
(16-4)

Participants were probed to determine what hindered their fulfillment of their roles. The most pervasive response was not having adequate time to devote to the fulfillment of their responsibilities. Other demands and responsibilities were pervasively noted as a hindrance to being able to give the time needed for their contributions to the collaborative effort.

4. How did you see members of the community and/or the Extension Leadership Council involved with the programming effort?

The ELC along with the extension staff were in all instances cited as the initiating partner for the CYFAR projects in all communities. They examined the requirements of the grant and initiated the programming efforts with the grant criteria as a framework. In all locations, participants of the study consistently indicated the ELC was key to the implementation of the situation analysis process. In this phase of the process they were instrumental in looking at the community to determine the greatest needs and those needs in which the grant resources and mission would be an appropriate fit. The ELC not only looked at the quantitative descriptions of prospective communities, but they also invited key community leaders to their meetings to gather greater understanding of the communities of interest. Additionally, the ELCs conducted site visits to continue to gather an understanding of the needs and the potential program audiences they would target for programs in those communities. Throughout these efforts decision making was a joint venture of the ELCs. The ELCs in all locations were involved in establishing the program direction. The following quote is reflective of the ELCs' role.

When we started out the ELC took a lot of time determining what the requirements were of the grant and identifying where the community needs were. We followed the model exactly in that we tried to find as many studies as we

could that reflected the needs of the underserved communities. We selected the communities and invited people from the community to describe their needs. Once we heard the needs, we had the police, someone from the schools, someone from the churches, and different community organizations identify the problems in their areas. The ELC set up actual criteria by which we would select the communities we would work with. We worked with different organizations in the community to specifically design programs and projects to meet those needs. (10-1)

Once the program direction was determined, the ELC in all locations established a sub-committee to continue with the implementation phase. The sub-committee was composed in all instances of a representative of the overall ELC, however, primarily at this phase, the involved partners were persons assuming roles and providing resources for implementation. The sub-committees were involved in decision making related to implementation, assumed responsibilities in implementation, monitored the implementation effort, and pursued and acted upon whatever their monitoring efforts revealed.

Persons involved with the subcommittee who came to the effort after the implementation phase had begun, consistently indicated they were not familiar with the efforts of the local ELC in the CYFAR project. When questioned about the ELCs' role in the project, those persons interviewed that came at the implementation phase did not seem to know what an ELC was or what their role had been with the effort. The ELCs' connection at the implementation phase was in most instances achieved by the Extension staff and/or a designated volunteer member which would report back to the overall ELC.

The overall ELC continued to provide support when the program direction was set and implemented. Comment was often made that ELC members used their influence to gain access to needed resources and to legitimize the determined efforts to potential collaborators needed for implementation. It was also reported that ELC members would sometimes not only lend their support and influence, but would at times provide money to support implementation needs. The following quote describes the role ELCs' tended to assume beyond the situation analysis phase.

They opened the door for a meeting with the superintendent. That gave an opportunity to make sure everybody had some idea what this program was. They made sure people in key positions in the community that could have some impact on the effort were aware. That was part of using their influence. (6-8)

When participants of the study were probed on what they thought contributed to the ELC and/or the subcommittee fulfilling its role, Extension Agents interviewed consistently indicated they made conscious efforts to facilitate involvement of others by including them in the decision making throughout the programming process. Most of the other persons interviewed indicated paid staff played a significant role in helping the ELC and other community persons involved fulfill their roles. It was frequently indicated that paid staff played a critical role in the facilitation, coaching, and encouragement of ELC members and other members of the subcommittees. It was also indicated that the credibility of Cooperative Extension in the community played an essential role in influencing community persons and/or ELC members participation in the effort. The following quote provides insight into the aforementioned.

One of the things we did was help them take on the role of decision maker by taking them through an assessment of the community, in which we asked them to make decisions as to where we were going to target our efforts. We brought to them individuals in the community who were knowledgeable of the community needs. We laid this information out to them and allowed them to make decisions as to where we needed to go. Once we decided where to go and once we saw the needs of the community of the at risk population within that community, we allowed them to decide whether we were going to be working with youth, families, the community as a whole or children. (2-7)

Study participants indicated that the personality of Extension and other staff was an essential part of engaging others in the process and program efforts. These personalities were described as enthusiastic, dedicated, and encouraging. They helped others to understand the needs and to see the importance of their involvement. These persons were commonly described as ones who understood programming and also

knew how to involve others or how to achieve collaboration. These observations are illuminated in the following quotes:

The enthusiasm and dedication of (Name of the Extension Project Director/Extension Agent) She understood the community, had a sense of the need and from that understanding has a vision and enthusiasm for addressing that need. (4-10)

I think (Name of the Extension Project Director/Extension Agent) has the personality and manner for building consensus. He facilitated the building of the collaboration, helped to facilitate the building of relationships, helped to mediate differences, and facilitate the movement and continuing progression of the relationships and working together. (13-8)

When participants were probed to determine what hindered the involvement of the ELC and other community collaborators, multiple agendas, tensions and conflicts, and not understanding and taking the time to build consensus were cited as hindrances. ELC members who were not paid staff designated to work with the project indicated that they as volunteer members of the ELC did not have the time or generally the inclination to commit to what was needed to carry out the responsibilities of programming collaboratively. The following responses provide an illustration of what interviewees reported:

You need a paid staff actively looking and commitment to helping. Not just sit around and say you are the committee, you are supposed to do it. (17-5)

I think once you get an ELC that is functioning, to expect them to get involved in the identifying the needs and looking for group collaborations, that is time consuming and you need someone paid to do that. Getting grants is time consuming. You need someone on staff from Extension to do that. It is very time consuming identifying the community, looking for a source of funding, applying for it, getting organized. If you expect an ELC to do it, it's beyond their scope and availability. (10-3)

5. How were Extension Staff involved in the programming efforts?

Throughout all interviews the Extension staff role was consistently described. Extension staff members were described as being central and a constant to the process. Reflective of many of the general comments, one participant indicated they were the catalyst that made things happen and another spoke of them as the grant host and providers of the parameters and the guidelines. Participants of this study describe Extension Staff as the primary conveners, facilitators, mobilizers, and nurturers of the collaboration and its process. Extension staff were consistently mentioned as being part of the decision making process and were described often as leaders and participants of the entire collaborative effort.

Throughout the discussions, Extension staff were cited as assuming key roles as builders of meeting agendas, providers of information, communicators and advocates of the collaborative efforts, inspirers of a shared vision, coordinators of the implementation plans, and subject matter experts/educators. Others roles assumed by Extension staff included administrators of the grant funds and securers and developers of additional resources, such as additional funds, the recruitment and orientation of other collaborative partners and volunteers, and the hiring training, and supervision of other paid project staff. Study participants also indicated Extension staff assumed the primary role in the evaluation and reporting of project outcomes. The following quotes are examples of the descriptions provided by study participants.

Once the ELC identified the targeted audience and the issues to address, the role of me as facilitator became identifying those folks that were within the immediate community doing services in that community or those who were just close enough to the community that we would be viable partners. (2-9)

Because of the expertise of 4-H and Family and Consumer Science, they became part of the planning and implementation and eventually the providers of the direct service to the community in addressing the issues that were identified by the groups. (2-10)

They were sort of the core of the process. It flowed through them and they gave us the information we needed to know. They gave us the parameters, guidelines, and support. They were competent in what we needed to know (11-4)

The Extension Agent kept me involved and informed. From what I saw, if they did not do their homework and give it to us, we were just sitting around doing nothing. They were the number one leader in helping us to find what we could do. Without someone prodding this group of people, we did not progress. I had another job and didn't have the time to go to the internet. (17-5)

Question 6: What do you think went well with this effort?

Participants pointed to many things that went well with the projects. Among those items noted were becoming acquainted with community resources, increased credibility, development of new skills and knowledge, and meeting the needs of the community.

Participants indicated they felt the collaborative approach taken had allowed the involved partners to become acquainted with one another. Through this acquaintance they discovered other community resources and gained an understanding of what those resources could offer the community. Frequently it was indicated that as the partners became acquainted with one another and the CYFAR program efforts progressed, new relationships and program partnerships were established. Additionally, new funding emerged as these new partnerships and programming directions were established. The following quotes are reflective of this thinking.

I had two principals tell me that for a new principal coming into a system, this collaboration helped them to learn community resources. Usually they said, when they come into a school system, they have to learn who is out there, but by being connected with these collaborations it was very advantageous for them (1-14).

The agencies involved in the program received a lot of visibility and new partners were brought into the program. Other sectors of the community started to recognize the value of the programs and thus sought to have the same efforts implemented. The program was expanded into another school because that

school said why do they have it and we don't. Having seen all that and thinking it was valuable the city has now picked up the funding (6-9)

Pervasively throughout most discussions, it was also indicated that the credibility of Cooperative Extension in the community was elevated as a result of the programming efforts. Participants commented on how Extension came to be regarded as leaders in addressing the needs of at risk populations and how you could count on them to do what they were expected to do. The following quotes are examples of an increase in Cooperative Extension's credibility.

I think people began to recognize Extension as experts in working with hard to reach populations. We developed a reputation for being able to initiate change with at risk audiences within the community. The trust we built between agencies based upon that reputation went well. The identity of Extension was created. (2-13)

For Extension it was a real plus. I think it got into places it would not have otherwise. It had relationships with people it would not have had before. I think Extension is in a better position. The former Deputy Manager kept mentioning the power of the program and she was not someone who thought of Extension before (9-9).

Participants also believed that people were able to develop new skills and new ways of thinking. Many commented on seeing persons involved with the programming effort develop leadership skills and learn what it means to problem-solve and collaborate. It was also noted that a volunteer ethic seemed to emerge as a result of the project. The following quote is an example of the behaviors observed.

Many people developed volunteer leader skills and they became volunteers. They had some leadership training and they volunteered in different capacities from what they were ordinarily involved in. I think it helped them to see their potential in a better light. (18-3)

Participants of the study consistently indicated that they felt the programs addressing the targeted at risk audiences had met a true need. Participants of this study believed that addressing a true need and seeing how the community was benefiting energized the involved partners and encouraged commitment to continuous success. Participants also indicated that the collaborative nature of the programs allowed multiple needs to be met that otherwise would have proven difficult for one party to address. It was expressed in many ways that the collaborative partners saw the impacts the projects were having on program recipients. The following illustrates that thinking.

We were meeting a need in the community. We were reaching out to some underserved populations that we really needed to reach out to. Not on purpose, but our program had tended to reach out to the middle class (4-13).

When the participants were probed on what they saw contributing to the projects going well, throughout most discussions, the personality of a key person was commented on. Participants felt that the collaboration was achieved because a key person had the type of personality that made partners feel important and needed in the effort. These personalities were reported as transmitting an enthusiasm for the program, helping partners to see the program potential and possibility, cultivating and nurturing relationships, and encouraging people to participate. These persons were also described as facilitators, good communicators, and good motivators of people. Frequently they were touted as leaders and persons that had credibility in the community. The following quotes illuminate how participants viewed these key persons and their personalities.

It has a lot to do with staff personality and qualifications. The reason why I know is because there had been times when we hired staff that did not have good skills in networking and really good skills in relationship building and were not visible in the community, the project suffered. Not just our staff, but also other staff that were supposed to be a part of the collaboration. (2-4)

I can't say enough about (Name of Key Person). Their personality is such that they really made the project work. There were definitely enablers. They are

“people” people. They work well with all kinds of people, professionals, members of the ELC, people in the community, whether they were in leadership roles or constituents. They are good people, good communicators, relationship builders, and enthusiastic. They were the catalyst behind this project (4-14).

(Name of Key Person) was a source of energy and real commitment to make this work. Because of her personality and her belief in the important of this, she motivated people in the community to collaborate to provide the necessary programs in the community. The right leadership energized community members to participate and meet the needs of the community (10-6).

The commitment of the persons involved was also seen by the participants as important to helping things to go well and seeing the collaboration work. Persons interviewed indicated that success was achieved because persons involved were committed to seeing success occur. It was believed that these persons' commitment to a successful outcome resulted in their going beyond what originally brought them to the effort and they gave constant attention to seeking solutions. These persons persevered despite what came, they stuck with the process, and they learned from the process and applied that learning to the continued efforts. It was cited that having a critical mass of commitment was also important to successful outcomes. The following quotes speak to the commitment described.

We have people involved who are doing not just well, but doing more than is required and that makes a difference. If you get people like that together, you create a critical mass and they can do even more. I am encouraged and energized by them. Makes me want to do more (3-12).

(Name of Key Person) has been terrific in terms of his commitment and genuine concern and willingness to try to make things work. We were struggling and it wasn't clear how it was going to come together. He did not quit. He stuck with the process. He kept trying different approaches and learning from mistakes. You need that kind of person, not just their organizational presence, but you need certain personality qualities (3-12).

I believe that committed masses can do more than a committed individual (11-2).

Participants believed that having the resources to operate the program plans was also a critical part of helping things to go well. Paid staff members were cited as an essential part of making the effort run well. Participants commonly saw the funds being available to hire paid staff as a useful element of the program's wellness.

Question 7: What were the challenges and barriers to the implementation of the collaborative effort?

Frequently it was commented by study participants that having time to invest in the fulfillment of collaborative responsibilities was a challenge. Many of the participants indicated that they were concerned about the demands on their time to fulfill needs of the collaboration and to continue to meet other responsibilities they also had. For the goals of the collaboration to be fulfilled, participants thought that time had to be devoted to the effort and they were concerned about not having the amount of time that seemed to be required for their participation. Most participants also commented about how many did not seem to understand the time needed to fulfill collaborative responsibilities. Participants indicated that when adequate time was not devoted to fulfilling needed responsibilities and cultivating the appropriate relationships, the goals and needs of the collaboration were difficult to achieve. The following quotes reflect the challenges and barriers time seemed to pose.

People don't understand what collaboration is. They don't understand the time commitment needed to take on shared responsibility for a program. (2-14)

In places where staff never invested the time in the process, it never became part of the office and so it was that much harder to get the collaboration to work. (2-12)

Often study participants indicated they felt a lack of understanding existed among many partners on what it meant to work in a collaborative manner. Many commented that the lack of understanding seemed to focus around partners coming to the effort not knowing what it meant to collaborate with others, how much time needed to be devoted

to a collaborative effort, and what role they might assume with the effort. It was the perception of some of the interviewees that some partners came to the efforts seeing the responsibilities of the collaborative work as being the responsibility of someone else and did not see the need for their involvement. This lack of understanding resulted in responsibilities being assumed only by a few and many seeming to serve only as spectators to the effort. The following quotes are reflective of the observations shared by many of the study's participants.

I don't think people came to the table understanding what true collaboration is. They either saw themselves as the principal one to carry out the tasks or they saw somebody else, or some other organization as being the one solely responsible for carrying out the tasks and they saw themselves as being there only as an advisor. (2-4)

I think a lot of partnerships we work in, people don't understand what collaboration is. They don't understand the time commitment and the need to share responsibilities for the success of the program. (2-14)

People need to understand what collaboration is. You can say it until you are blue in the face, but until you take people through it, they really don't understand what it is. It is something that has to be lived in order to understand it. (2-15)

Additionally, it was frequently commented on by many of the study participants that established ways of thinking and acting were also a barrier to programs being implemented in a collaborative manner. The barriers identified most frequently were programs that were highly reliant on paid staff with limited involvement of volunteers and the availability of the resources needed to address the needs of the targeted audience. This situation resulted in programs that included the expertise of only a few and programs that were only available at certain times. The following quotes are examples of these barriers.

The schools cease their operations when the kids are dismissed. The frustrating thing for us was not denying that the school system had the best interest of the

kids in mind, but their inflexibility was getting in the way of providing something that could enrich the children, that could provide a positive after school experience. (9-10)

They didn't mind you coming in to do some special programs and they didn't mind the additional resources, but when it came to the point of making fundamental changes in the way we do business, the barrier went up. (15-6)

It is very difficult to get people to participate if it is not something they are not use to doing all along, like getting a volunteer who has never volunteered. When you don't have a history of being involved in the community it is difficult to get people to participate. People will maintain their old way of thinking and acting by not attending meetings if they are accustomed to not doing so. (18-6)

8. Who would you say provided key leadership to the collaborative effort?

In all four localities, Cooperative Extension and the public schools were cited as key in providing leadership. Other key leadership was provided by Parks and Recreation and an owner of an apartment complex. Often participants pointed out that leadership was shared or shifted. This sharing or shifting was indicated as being prompted by the where the project had progressed to or the task at hand.

When probed about what these key leaders did, it was often commented that they invested time in the effort, provided needed resources, empowered others to act by inspiring a vision of the program possibility and cultivating and facilitating ownership. This was done by helping others to see the importance of their involvement, involving them in decision-making, sharing leadership, assigning tasks, and recognizing their involvement. The following quotes are reflective of the observations shared.

Leaders have to share leadership in order for others to assume responsibility. They do not just say I want you to be on a committee and come to a meeting every night. The leader assigns tasks to people so they in a sense develop a relationship with the program, invest time, develop an emotional attachment, and value the program. (2-12)

Extension took the lead, but they made each one of those agencies and individuals who were a part of the collaboration feel they had an integral part in this project. Extension enabled them to be involved. They often provided resources to help others work. They had ideals and resources, but they facilitated other ideals and resources to come into this project. They recognized and rewarded the involvement of others. They were facilitative. (4-18)

9. What if any, other partnerships and or volunteers did you see developed and involved with the CYFAR programming efforts?

Participants of the study reported that as the collaboration effort progressed, other partnerships evolved when other needs were brought to light and others recognized they could gain access to the targeted group to achieve their interest. Among those reported as coming to the effort were the faith-based community, the police, and the Concerned Black Men organization.

According to participants of the study, partners involved with the collaborative effort increased their abilities as a result of their involvement. They learned how to problem-solve, what it meant to work in a collaborative manner, and created new partnerships to sustain the effort. Also, partners were reported as taking the collaborative process they observed through the CYFAR programs and applying it to address their own needs and interest. The following quotes illuminate these observations.

What I saw was us teaching these entities what true collaboration was all about. When we started to wind down and they knew we were winding down, they started to partner with other groups to keep the program going. I also saw groups evolve that were not part of the initial partnership and that was ok because that was not our niche. (2-22)

In a collaborative project, it is always an open door. You bring in additional collaborators or partners as you move along. As the project gets exposure there might be others groups or organizations that hear about it and want to come to the table. (6-2)

10. What do you see happening to the program now that the funding has gone?

With all programs it was reported that others were assuming leadership to keep the program going and available to the community. Cooperative Extension would become a resource to those programs. It was also reported that some effort would also become a part of the renewed program direction of Cooperative Extension.

The Themes, Patterns, and Common Ways of Thinking and Acting Related to the Research Questions

The ten questions and related probes were used to guide the interviews and to gain insight into three research questions. The following presents a descriptive analysis of the findings related to the research questions for this study: a) What is the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCS) involved with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) projects; b) What has contributed to successful collaboration in Extension education with the CYFAR projects; and c) What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

Research Question 1: What is the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCS) involved with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) projects?

Table 4 presents an outline of the themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking and acting related to ELC involvement with the CYFAR projects. The following is a descriptive analysis of those items outlined in Table 4.

The situation analysis phase of Virginia Cooperative Extension's programming process tended to be where the primary involvement occurred of the ELCs' with the CYFAR projects. In all projects, the ELCs were reported to have shared leadership with Extension staff in decision making and implementation of tasks associated with the

Table 4

*The Themes, Patterns, and Common Ways of Thinking and Acting Related to:
The Nature and Experience of Collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils Involved
with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Projects*

Primarily Involved with Situation Analysis

Partnered with Extension Staff to Establish Program Direction

Initiated the Development of Project Sub-Committees

Monitored Implementation Progress

Assisted with Resource Procurement

Involvement Facilitated by Extension Staff

Involvement Hindered Due to Lack of Time to Commit

planning steps of this phase of the programming process. They reviewed the grant's criteria to gain insight to the project's requirements and examined the community demographics to determine related issues and other potential program targets. To further their understanding of the issues emerging from their review of the demographics, they served as the conveners of respective community/agency representatives to gather their perspective of the needs related to the identified issues. Site visits were made by representatives of the ELC to potential communities to further gain understanding of the potential program targets. From this analysis of the local situations, the ELCs were key players in helping extension staff determine program direction.

Once the program direction was established, the ELC played a key role in initiating the development of a sub-committee that would be more closely involved with the project programs. The sub-committees were initiated by the ELC and organized by extension staff to be involved with the design and implementation of the program for the identified community. All ELCs remained connected to the sub-committees via the paid

Extension staff and/or a designated volunteer member of the Council. The remainder of these committee's membership tended to be comprised of persons involved with the direct delivery of the determined program response.

Through the volunteer representative and/or the Extension staff person, the ELC was able to stay abreast and monitor the progress and needs of the program implementation efforts. This monitoring effort allowed the ELC to share in the decision-making with extension staff on the needs of the programs. This monitoring in many cases was reported to have revealed resource needs. Consequently, it was noted throughout the interview discussions that ELC members would lend their influence and assistance in securing other partners' buy-in, expertise, facilities, monetary resources, human resources, and other needed support.

Extension staff members were often cited as playing a key role in facilitating the involvement of the ELC in decision making and other actions related to the programming effort. To gain the involvement of ELC members, paid extension staff often worked on facilitating, coaching, encouraging, and stressing the importance of ELC involvement. Extension staff indicated in all instances they made conscious and extra efforts to engage ELC members in the resulting programming efforts they became involved with.

Time to commit to the needed efforts was noted throughout the interviews as the major hindrance to ELC member involvement. ELC members commented often that there were many tasks that they believed best to be handled by Extension staff due to the time needed to adequately address.

Research Question 2: What has contributed to successful collaboration in Extension education for at risk populations?

Table 5 presents an outline of the themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking and acting related to collaboration success. The following is a descriptive analysis of those items outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

*The Themes, Patterns, and Common Ways of Thinking and Acting Related to:
Contributions to Successful Collaboration in Extension Education for At Risk
Populations*

Having a Process for Involvement

Addressing Needs

Leadership by Key Persons

Extension Staff Facilitating Involvement

Commitment by Those Involved

Establishing an Understanding of Collaborative Partners and How to Collaborate

Having Paid Staff

Interviewees indicated the Extension programming model was an essential element of helping collaborative efforts to occur. Comments regarding the programming process indicated that it helped collaborators understand the community and to identify true needs, helped identify roles for collaborators to assume, and facilitated decision-making. The process was described by some as a model for problem solving and collaboration.

Throughout many discussions it was noted that addressing the true needs of the community was regarded as a motivation for people to work together in a collaborative manner. Seeing the true community needs and multiple needs being addressed was regarded as contributing to collaboration success. Participants in the study believed that addressing true community needs and seeing the community benefit had an energizing effect on the partners and their commitment to continued success. Participants often spoke about their successful fulfillment of their roles being strongly connected to their seeing true needs of the community being addressed.

The leadership of key persons was also seen as contributing to collaboration success. Key leaders were described as empowering others to act by inspiring in them

a vision for the program possibility and helping others to see the importance of their involvement. These persons were credited with understanding the programming process and utilizing it to involve others. These leaders were seen as facilitating others' involvement in decision making, leadership, and assigning tasks, being good communicators, and recognizing the contributions of others. Often study participants described these key individuals as having the personality that encouraged others through their own enthusiasm for the program and by helping others to feel important and needed. These persons were described as being able to work well with all kinds of people and build the relationships needed for collaborative success.

Extension staff was described as being instrumental in helping collaboration of others to successfully occur. They were regarded as catalysts of involvement and the constants to ensure that collaboration occurred. Participants described Extension staff as being conveners of others, grant stewards and administrators, facilitators of the processes for involvement and programming, builders of meeting agendas, providers of information, coordinators of implementation plans, and advocates for collaboration. Extension staff involved with the study indicated they made conscious efforts to facilitate others in decision making and actions throughout the programming effort.

Commitment by persons involved was seen by study participants as contributing to successful collaboration. Participants indicated that they believed persons involved committed to seeing successful outcomes by going beyond what originally brought them to the effort. The commitment of these persons was noted in how they seemed to stick to the process and how they seem to always be seeking solutions and learning from their efforts.

Participants of this study indicated as the CYFAR project progressed, they established an understanding of other collaborative partners and what it meant to collaborate, thus contributing to the success experienced with the effort. As the collaborative efforts progressed, participant's indicated that getting acquainted with other participating partners resulted in a greater understanding of what each had to offer. Particularly with this understanding, it was noted that new funds were able to be identified to support the continued and renewed directions the project needed to take over time. Also, it was indicated that as those involved participated in a collaborative

manner with the project, it seemed to help them to understand what it meant to collaborate and problem solve together. This was particularly noted as contributing to new partnerships being created that helped with the projects' sustainability.

Having resources to use with operations was believed by study participants as contributing to successful collaboration. Paid staff was seen as essential to helping efforts to run well. Throughout the interview discussions, comment was made on how having funds to hire staff was an important part of program success. Pervasively throughout interview discussions, it was indicated that paid staff were facilitators, coaches, and encouragers of the ELC members becoming involved in responsibilities associated with the effort.

Research Question 3: What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

Challenges to collaboration were primarily directed towards three items. These items were also pervasively noted in responses to other questions, when participants were probed on what if anything hindered fulfillment of roles, responsibilities, involvement. Those challenges to collaboration most spoken of in this study are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

*The Themes, Patterns, and Common Ways of Thinking and Acting Related to:
Challenges to Collaboration for the CYFAR Projects*

Lack of Time to Commit to Collaborative Needs

Lack of Understanding of What it Takes to Collaborate

Established Ways of Thinking and Acting

Participants of this study spoke most often about not having enough time to fulfill the responsibilities of the collaboration, as well as other demands and responsibilities they had. Not having the time to devote to needs of the project was particularly noted by ELC members interviewed. They believed that identifying needs, securing resources, and fulfilling many of the needs of the collaborative process was beyond the time they had and wished to commit to the effort. ELC members indicated many of the project's responsibilities needed to be attended to by paid staff whose job responsibilities were to do such things.

A lack of understanding on what it takes to collaborate was commented on throughout the interviews of all participants. Participants saw this lack of understanding contributing to challenges to collaborative programming. Participants seemed to come to the effort not understanding what working together in a collaborative manner meant, how much time was needed to fulfill responsibilities, and the role they could play in the effort. This seemed to manifest itself in participants resisting committing to responsibilities they believed to be someone else's job and responsibilities only being assumed by a few.

Established ways of thinking and acting were identified as another pervasive challenge to collaboration with the CYFAR project. Volunteer partners were not accustomed to assume roles that they had relied upon paid staff taking on in prior experiences. This resulted in volunteer partners not getting as involved as perhaps they could have been and paid staff assuming many of the tasks of the effort.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the emerging understanding of collaboration by using a qualitative research method to understand the nature and experience of community collaboration with an Extension education program for children, youth, and families at risk in four localities in Virginia. Ten questions and related probes were used to stimulate the interview discussions and to gain insight into three research questions: a) What is the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs) involved with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) projects; b) What has contributed to successful collaboration in Extension education with the CYFAR projects; and c) What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

The findings of this study were generated through face-to-face interviews with 17 key informants knowledgeable of the nature and experience of community collaboration in Extension education at targeted locations. The analysis of this study's findings was developed in two ways: a) a descriptive summary of the interview questions; and b) the themes, patterns and common ways of thinking and acting that relates the research questions.

The results indicated that parties involved with the collaborative efforts researched by this study included Virginia Cooperative Extension, Extension Leadership Councils, Public School Systems, Parks and Recreation, Parents Teachers Organizations, and local businesses. In all localities associated with this study's interest, the findings indicate that Cooperative Extension and the Public School Systems were seen as providing key leadership to the CYFAR efforts. Cooperative Extension was cited as the primary partner providing administration to the CYFAR grant requirements and facilitating involvement. Extension Leadership Councils along with Extension staff in all instances were cited as the initiating partner and were primarily involved in the situation analysis phase of the programming process. Design and Implementation tasks in all instances involved a sub-committee of persons actually involved with program delivery.

This study's participants generally defined collaboration as the process of individuals and groups working together to achieve a common goal. Working together

according to this study's participants included shared decision making, sharing of time, expertise, money, personnel, space, influence, etc. Study participants indicated that the sharing of responsibilities and tasks may not always be equal, because responsibilities and tasks are not always equal.

This study's findings indicate that contributions to collaboration success could be attributed to several items. The contributors included: having a process for involvement, addressing mutual needs, leadership by key people, Extension staff facilitating the involvement of others, commitment by those involved, collaborative partners becoming acquainted with each other and understanding what it took to collaborate, and having paid staff to operate the collaborative projects.

Challenges to collaboration according to this study's findings tended to focus on three areas. The challenges identified included: lack of time to commit to collaborative needs, lack of understanding of what it takes to collaborate, and established ways of thinking and acting.

According to this study's findings, participants learned how to solve community problems and what it meant to work in a collaborative manner. It was reported by study participants that new partnerships evolved that will contribute the continuation and sustainability of the localities programs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the purpose, problem, design and method, and findings of this research study. Also presented in this chapter are the conclusions and implications for research, education, and applications for practitioners.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand the nature and experience of community collaboration with extension education for children, youth, and families at risk in four localities in Virginia. The inquiry, which followed a qualitative research design, addressed the following research questions.

1. What has been the nature and experience of collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs) involved with children, youth, and families at risk (CYFAR) projects.
2. What has contributed to successful collaboration in extension education with the CYFAR projects?
3. What have been challenges to collaboration for the CYFAR projects?

Significance of the Study

Huxham (1996) concluded that because collaboration has emerged as so important to our evolving society, and been so difficult for those seeking to practice it, it is essential that we understand as much as we can about its nature and develop processes that will help it to work successfully. It is important that we understand the inputs of an effort, if we wish to attribute the outcomes to the results of a collaborative nature (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1982) gives a general definition of nature as the fundamental characteristics, proprieties, or processes of a phenomenon. Taylor-Powell, et al. describe inputs as the time and investments of paid and volunteer staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc, provided to produce a particular outcome. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inputs in a collaborative venture constitute its nature; therefore to understand the experience of

collaboration, one should seek to understand the investments and resources provided to the produce the endeavor. This study represents an effort to understand the nature of collaboration.

This study focused on the experiences of one human service agency, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and its attempts to collaborate with community representatives in four counties and cities in Virginia. The findings of this study will be useful to Virginia Cooperative Extension for understanding the collaborative nature of its educational approach with the community in programming for children, youth, and families at-risk. It will also contribute to the emerging body of knowledge on collaboration, thus offering an enhanced understanding to others seeking to implement collaborative efforts. An enhanced understanding on the dynamics of collaboration can contribute to needed insights on the nature of the lived experience.

Although this study is limited to the collaborative nature and experience of one human service agency, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the findings of this study are useful at three levels:

1. Virginia Cooperative Extension to better understand: a) the degree of collaboration that occurs in the VCE programming process, b) the successes and challenges associated with Extension Leadership Council involvement in the programming process, and c) those interventions and adjustments, which might be needed to further develop Extension Leadership Councils to enhance collaboration.
2. Cooperative Extension in general to gain insights into the collaborative activity that occurs in extension education.
3. Human service providers to understand: a) those behaviors and elements that contribute to successful collaboration and sustainability of programs for children, youth, and families at risk, and b) the challenges to collaborative implementation of programs for children, youth, and families at risk.

The Problem

The decade of the 1990s was a period in which widespread recognition was given to the impact that environmental changes and internal limitations were having on

the ability of organizations and businesses to operate effectively. These changes included increased global relationships and operations, restructuring of workforces and business relationships, increased demands of competition, changes in both public and private resource bases, mandates by funders, innovations in technological applications, demographic and political changes, and complex social problems amongst families and communities.

These changes have necessitated that private and public organizations move toward new ways of thinking and acting and find effective means of creating solutions, products, and services. In these changing environments, existing resources were discovered to be inadequate and a single organization could not always effectively provide the solutions, products, and services needed. In the public sector, the need for community development, advice, education, and solving complex social problems has necessitated that community organizations work together to co-ordinate and maximize services. For those depending on or seeking governmental resources to operate, Huxham (1996) noted that governments around the world have provided directives and incentives that work must be carried out in partnership with others to ensure more efficient use of resources, reduction of duplications, and to ensure maximum attention be given to community needs.

In discussions of working together to address changing environments, needs, and challenging issues, terms that were commonly advocated and used to identify or name emerging multi-party relationships included strategic alliances, joint ventures, public-private partnerships, community development, alliance, association, coalition, collaboration, consortium, cooperative, confederation, league, and network (Huxham, 1996; Vaughn, 1994). The term that has dominated the general discourse on working together, however, has been collaboration. Universal recommendations have been given to collaboration as a means to leverage resources, deal with scarcities, eliminate duplication, capture individual strengths, and to create a new capacity to perform work (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). Melaville and Blank (1993) advocated collaboration as the approach to produce effective change for the complex issues evolving with families and communities. When looking at the changes occurring in our communities, Chrislip and Larson (1994) have seen the problems of our communities as

too big for anyone to solve alone. According to these authors, as our society continued to become more diverse and public issues became more complex, it became necessary for us to shift away from our routine approaches to creating change and problem solving to collaborating with others in order to construct positive change.

Much of the renewed interest in collaboration in our communities, according to Taylor-Powell, Rossing, and Geran (1998), has been the result of a recognition and appreciation that complex issues are built with multiple factors and dwindling resources, therefore necessitating multiple involvement. Taylor-Powell, et al. point out that solving complex issues requires multiple knowledge, skills, and interventions. Collaboration provides a process in which the resources of multiple parties can be tapped to address the complexity of problems and needs. Bringing together the resources of multiple parties through collaboration, according to Taylor-Powell, et al., creates a synergy of power and ownership in communities.

Collaborative work places people in new situations, with new players, and playing unfamiliar roles (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). Many who have attempted collaboration tend to have difficulty in knowing how to perform in a collaborative manner. From his practice as a consultant to businesses, Marshall (1995) noted that while the hierarchical approach, which has dominated the last century, is no longer relevant or practical, our workforce often lacks the knowledge and skills needed to work together in new ways. When considering the need to collaboratively solve the problems facing families, Melaville and Blank (1993) acknowledged that a limited understanding and ability seem to exist on how to act in a collaborative manner.

While there is a growing body of literature related to the phenomenon, those attempting to collaborate have difficulty interpreting, relating, and applying the information to their needs. A number of reasons have been attributed to these difficulties. White and Wehlage (1995) described the available literature as being primarily of the advocacy genre. Astroth (1991) described the literature as being full of definitions and concluded that many were often ambiguous and esoteric. When Vaughn (1994) looked at the definitions of collaboration she found terms were often used interchangeably. Taylor-Powell, Rossing, and Geran (1998) pointed out that different interpretations can lead to errors in understanding.

Summary of the Research Approach

This qualitative study used an in-depth face-to-face interview approach to data collection to determine the collaborative nature and experiences of community representatives, who serve as members of Extension Leadership Councils, in extension education for at-risk populations in four localities in Virginia. The Director of the Children, Youth and Families at Risk Program in Virginia was consulted to identify persons from each site that were interviewed for this study. To ensure a diversity of persons involved with the interview discussions, the researcher selected Extension staff and others from the community to interview. Along with the Director, 16 people representing Extension staff and the community were interviewed.

A 10 question interview guide was used to steer the interview discussions. The interview guide was developed based upon input from Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialists in Extension Educational Programming and the literature on collaboration. The researcher served as the interviewer for all interviews conducted. Audio taped recordings were conducted with each interview. The transcripts of each interview's tape recording served as the primary data source for this study.

The findings were examined to identify patterns, themes, common experiences, case experiences, relationships, and as well as insights from the researcher based upon the interview experience and the review of the interview discussions. Categories that emerged from the data, and reflected the definitions of collaboration in the literature and the extension programming process were utilized to develop a descriptive summary of participants' responses to the interview questions based upon their experiences. The descriptive summaries developed for each of the interview questions were then utilized to determine themes, patterns, and common ways of thinking across all interview questions that related to the study's general research questions.

Summary of the Research Findings

The results indicated that parties involved with the collaborative efforts researched by this study included Virginia Cooperative Extension, Extension Leadership Councils, Public School Systems, Parks and Recreation, Parents Teachers Organizations, and local businesses. In all localities associated with this study's interest,

the findings indicate that Cooperative Extension and the Public School Systems were seen as providing key leadership to the CYFAR efforts. Cooperative Extension was cited as the primary partner providing administration to the CYFAR grant requirements and facilitating collaboration. Extension Leadership Councils along with Extension staff in all instances were cited as the initiating partner and were primarily involved in the situation analysis phase of the programming process. Design and implementation tasks in all instances involved a sub-committee of persons actually involved with program delivery.

This study's participants generally defined collaboration as the process of individuals and groups working together to achieve a common goal. Working together according to this study's participants included shared decision making, sharing of time, expertise, money, personnel, space, influence, etc. Study participants indicated that the sharing of responsibilities and tasks may not always be equal, because responsibilities and tasks are not always equal.

This study's findings indicate that contributions to collaboration success could be attributed to several items. The contributors included: having a process for involvement, addressing mutual needs, leadership by key people, the facilitation of involvement by Extension staff, commitment by those involved, collaborative partners becoming acquainted with each other and understanding what it took to collaborate, and having paid staff to operate the collaborative projects.

Challenges to collaboration according to this study's findings tended to focus on three areas. The challenges identified included: lack of time to commit to collaborative needs, lack of understanding of what it takes to collaborate, and established ways of thinking and acting.

Findings revealed that participants learned how to solve community problems and what it meant to work in a collaborative manner. Participants reported new partnerships evolved which will contribute to the continuation and sustainability of the involved localities' programs.

Conclusions

This study sought to understand the nature and experience of community collaborative with Extension education with the Children, Youth, and Families at-Risk Projects (CYFAR) implemented by Virginia Cooperative Extension and to situate that experience in the prevailing literature of collaboration. The small number of respondents for this study does not permit generalization to a larger population. However, the findings of this study can be useful to Virginia Cooperative Extension in understanding the collaborative nature of their educational approach with the community in programming for children, youth, and families at-risk and can contribute to the emerging body of knowledge on collaboration, thus adding to an enhanced understanding and insight of how collaboration occurs. The definitions of collaboration found in the literature and the research questions for this study were utilized in formulating the following conclusions of this study's findings.

Collaboration Defined

Melville and Blank (1993) describe a collaborative as a group of community leaders who share a problem, agree to be in a partnership to address the problem, and undertake a series of inter-related activities to address their shared problems. The Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia (1999) described collaboration as a group whose membership is composed of a diverse cross section of stakeholders from the community. This study's participants generally described collaboration as individuals and groups working together to achieve a common goal. Participants reported a cross section of collaborative partners which included faculty and staff of Virginia Cooperative Extension, community representatives who were members of Extension Leadership Councils, staff persons of Public Schools and Parks and Recreation, Parent-Teacher Organizations, and local business persons. It can be concluded that the definition of collaboration that emerged with this study's findings are reflective of the definitions of collaboration presented in the prevailing literature by Melville and Bland and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia. Additionally, it is concluded from the study's findings that collaboration is a

group of diverse community representatives who work together to accomplish a common goal.

Himmelman (1991) defines collaboration as a partnership that shares responsibilities for both large and small tasks that must be accomplished. The participants of this study indicated that in their collaborative experience many resources of those involved were shared and those involved assumed a variety of tasks. Participants reported the sharing of responsibilities and tasks may not always be equal, because responsibilities and tasks are not always equal. Working together, according to this study's participants, included shared decision making, sharing of time, expertise, money, personnel, space, influence, etc. Leadership, according to the findings of this study, has a tendency to shift in a collaborative experience based upon the tasks at hand. Upon a review of the tasks assumed and discussed by this study's participants, it can be concluded that collaborative responsibilities are reflective of Himmelman's description of collaborative responsibilities and that they are not always equal, they are defined by the tasks at hand and the resources needed and may shift over time.

The Nature and Experience of Collaboration for Extension Leadership Councils (ELCS) Involved with Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Projects

Boone (1985) determined that collaboration is an indigenous element of the programming models used in adult education. The programming process used by Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) is based upon the assumptions premised by Boone that the process facilitates a framework for involvement throughout the stages of planning, implementing, and evaluation. A further assumption of the VCE programming process is that this framework allows the Extension educator to facilitate involvement of the learners' system through a representative community partnership referred to as an Extension Leadership Council (ELC). It is assumed that throughout the programming process collaborative decision-making and actions are being achieved with extension agents and members of their ELCs. The findings of this study revealed that ELCs were primarily involved with tasks associated with the planning stage which involved analyzing the local situation to determine and understand needs. The findings indicated that as the programming effort progressed toward the design and implementation

efforts, the ELC assumed an oversight or secondary role in the effort. A conclusion regarding the ELC involvement based upon this study's findings is that the ELC can be involved throughout the programming process; however greatest involvement tends to be in the planning activities associated with an analysis of the situation.

Ko (1998) observed that people were frequently involved in the programming process of adult education as experts, communicators, influencers, linkages, and architects of involvement structures. In this study, it was indicated that ELCs members initiated the involvement of other community members by establishing sub committees, used their influence with others in the community to gain access to resources and to create linkages with other community organizations and helped to legitimize the programming directions by promoting the efforts. Consistent with Ko, it is concluded from this study that ELC members in programming efforts provide avenues for others in the community to become involved, lend their influence and legitimize programming efforts with others in the community, help to secure needed resources, and help to promote programming efforts.

Gray (1989) examined collaboration in a variety of settings which led to her development of a three phase model of collaborative activities. A conclusion of this study's findings is that the experience and nature of collaboration that occurred with Extension Leadership Councils tended to reflect the collaborative actions outlined in the three phase collaboration model developed by Gray. Primarily the ELC experiences seem to be most reflective of the actions Gray presents in Phase 1: Problem Setting and Phase 2: Direction Setting.

Gray described Phase 1 Problem Setting as meeting face- to-face to jointly define the problem. It is important at this phase to identify and legitimize stakeholders who can serve as part of the solution as well as assist with understanding the problem. At this phase commitment to address the issues should be established and resources to operate the collaborative identified. At least one of the stakeholders, according to Gray, needs to serve as the convener of the collaborative effort. In this study Extension staff served as the convener of the collaborative effort. ELC members were believed to be stakeholders representing the interest of the community. All ELCs involved in this study reported spending time upfront to understand the requirements of the supporting

funding which resulted in their commitment of being a partner in the CYFAR programming efforts for their locality. At this phase an understanding was also acquired regarding the resources available through the grant and with Cooperative Extension to launch the effort. The ELC played a major role in conducting an analysis of the local situations to arrive at a common definition of the problem, to identify the affected audiences, and to determine other stakeholders. In addition to being reflective of Gray's Phase 1 actions, it is concluded that ELCs can serve as conveners and identifiers of needs, stakeholders, and resources in collaborative programming.

Phase 2 according to Gray includes setting directions based upon stakeholders understanding and interest. At this phase Gray sees subgroups being established to give focused attention to the issues identified, joint searching for information, and exploring options for the directions to take. The ELCs in this study did organize sub committees who focused on further exploration in the community with the issues of concern and to determine options for programming direction. From these findings it can be concluded that ELCs played a role in a specific focus on specific issues and played a role in examining and considering options in programming tasks and decision-making.

It can be reasoned from the results of this study, that ELCs actions were also reflective of Gray's Phase 3: Implementation. In this phase Gray proposes the building of external support and monitoring actions taken. The ELCs were reported as lending their influence to build the external support needed for access and resources and monitoring the progress of the implementation efforts through a designated representative to the sub committee or the Extension Staff. Throughout the interviews it was reported that ELC members would lend their influence and assistance in securing other partners' buy-in, expertise, facilities, monetary resources, human resources, and other needed support. From this study's findings, the overall ELC was vital to monitoring the progress of a targeted program effort, ensuring that support of monetary or community resources are available and promoting programming efforts.

According to Boone (1985), the adult educator assumes the role of engaging the community in decisions and actions throughout the programming process . This study's findings revealed that Extension staff played key roles in facilitating the involvement of the ELC in decision making and other actions related to the programming effort. To gain

the involvement of ELC members, it was reported that Extension staff served as coaches, facilitators, and encouragers of ELC participation. Extension staff reported they made conscious effort to ensure ELC involvement. Based on this study's findings, Extension staff members were essential to ensuring ELC involvement with decisions and actions throughout the programming process.

Lambur and Board (1995) found ELC members reported they did not have the time to commit to what was expected of them in the programming process. Margenum (1999), Butterfield (1996), and Selin and Chavez (1995) also found collaboration to be time consuming in light of the other demands participants had on their time. This study also revealed that ELC members did not have the time they believed they needed to assume programming responsibilities.

Dimmock (1993) pointed out that systems have norms for thinking and behaving and therefore will expect certain behaviors. Lambur and Board (1995) found in their study of ELCs a belief by ELC members that programming activities were the responsibility of Extension Agents and were not theirs. These notions were reflected in this study's results as well. ELC members commented often that there were many tasks that they believed best to be handled by Extension staff due to the time needed to adequately address those tasks and did not see certain roles as appropriate for them to assume. Therefore it can be concluded from this study that norms for ELC involvement need time to cultivate.

Contributors to Successful Collaboration in Extension Education for at Risk Populations

The conclusions on contributors to successful collaboration for this study are based upon seven items which emerged in the findings: having a process for involvement, addressing needs, leadership by key people, extension staff facilitating involvement, establishing an understanding of collaborative partners and how to collaborate, and having paid staff.

Boone (1985) touts the programming process of adult education as a process for collaboration which provides a framework for others to become involved in the decision making and actions of the adult education organization. This study's interview discussions are reflective of the assumption Boone espoused. Comments regarding the

programming process indicated the process helped collaborators understand the community and identify true needs, helped identify roles for collaborators to assume, and facilitated decision-making. This study's findings support a conclusion that the programming process of Cooperative Extension was an essential framework for facilitating collaboration between Extension educators and the community.

Boyle (1981) in examining the programming practices of Cooperative Extension discovered that when others were involved in programming efforts, relevant decision making occurred regarding needs and legitimization of programs was achieved with learner groups and their representatives. Participants of this study believed that true community needs were addressed and seeing the community benefit had an energizing effect on the partners and their commitment to continued success. Participants often spoke about successful fulfillment of their roles being based upon their seeing true needs of the community being addressed. It is concluded from this study that when others are involved in identifying community needs, felt needs are identified, and addressing these needs contributed to the collaborative partners' interest and commitment to successful collaboration.

Chrislip and Larson (1994) found leadership as essential to collaborative endeavors and that the role of the leader is to convene, energize, facilitate and to sustain the process. They found that collaborative leaders inspire a commitment to action, lead as peer problem solvers, build broad based involvement, and sustain hope and participation. According to this study's results, effective collaboration was achieved through the leadership of key persons. Participants indicated that key leaders were seen as inspiring a vision for a program, encouraged others through their own enthusiasm for the program, helped others to see the importance of their involvement, facilitated others' involvement in decision making and leadership, assigned tasks, were good communicators, and recognized the contributions of others. Often study participants described these key individuals as having the personality to work well with all kinds of people and build the relationships needed for collaborative success. These persons were also credited with understanding the programming process and utilizing it to involve others. Leadership from key persons with certain personalities, skills, and knowledge was needed for successful collaboration it is concluded from the results of

this study. Key leaders need to know how to engage and motivate others and have an understanding of a process for involving others.

Boone (1985) describes the adult educator not only as a subject matter educator, but as a facilitator of others' involvement in the programming activities, and as an action strategist. Chrislip and Larson (1994) note that strong leadership is evident in successful collaborations and should not just be advocacy of the process but applied to actions throughout, particularly noting small successes along the way. In a review of contributors to successful collaboration, Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994) found that team synergism and behavior is achieved through guidance, coaching, coordination and fostering creativity, interdependence, commitment and accountability to the team. Participants of this study described Extension staff as conveners of others, advocates for collaboration, grant stewards and administrators, facilitators of the processes for involvement and programming, builders of meeting agendas, providers of information, coordinators of implementation plans, and sustainer of the collaborative effort. Extension staff interviewed indicated they made conscious efforts to facilitate others in decision making and actions throughout the programming effort. Extension staff played an essential role in collaborative involvement of others in the programming process and providing leadership to needs throughout the process.

Singer (1998) and Melville and Blank (1991) point out that the people are important to the success of collaboration. Butterfield (1996) examined community collaboration experiences and found members feeling ownership to the process and its outcomes as being important. Commitment by persons involved with this study was seen by participants as contributing to successful collaboration. Participants indicated that they believed persons involved were committed to seeing successful outcomes by going beyond what originally brought them to the effort, seemed to stick with the process, were always seeking solutions, and were always learning from those efforts. Commitment as described by this study's participants was important to achieving collaboration success.

The literature discusses the importance of understanding partners' expertise and clarifying roles in achieving collaborative success. Florin, Mitchell, and Stevenson (1993) stress the importance of clarifying roles. Forsythe, Meszaros, and Turner (1994)

have suggested that subject expertise within the group should be identified and roles agreed upon for collaboration effectiveness to occur. Butterfield (1996) discovered in her discussions with partners in rural child care efforts that understanding roles and interactions often were seen as being important to effective working together. Winer and Ray (1996) point out that when roles are determined working together is empowered. In this study, participants reported that as the collaborative efforts progressed, getting acquainted with participating partners resulted in greater understanding of what each had to offer, which helped to bring clarity to the roles that each could take on in the collaboration, thus enhancing collaborative behavior. The current literature and this study finding's illuminate the importance of partners understanding each other's roles and expertise, therefore it is concluded that understanding individual partners' resources and expertise and clarifying roles contributed to collaboration success.

Having resources for collaboration success is often cited in the literature on collaboration (Gray, 1989; Melaville & Blank, 1991; Forsythe, Meszaros, & Turner, 1994; Butterfield, 1996). Having resources to use with operations was believed by this study's participants as contributing to successful collaboration. Paid staff were seen as essential to helping efforts to run well and programs to be successful. Paid staffers were described as facilitators, coaches, and encouragers of the ELC members and others taking on responsibilities of the collaboration. From the results of this study, having resources to operate and to hire designated staff was important to collaboration success.

Challenges to Collaboration for the CYFAR Projects

The conclusions on challenges to collaboration for this study are based upon three items which emerged in the study's findings. Those include lack of time to commit to collaborative needs, lack of understanding of what it takes to collaborate, and established ways of thinking and acting.

Margerum (1999) concluded from Innes, Gruber, Neuman and Thompson (1994), and Selin and Chavez (1995), that collaboration is a complex process that is consuming of time and other resources. Butterfield (1996) reviewed a community experience with collaboration and found time needed for other responsibilities of partners made having

time enough time to devote to collaborative responsibilities challenging. Participants in this study also spoke about not having enough time to fulfill the responsibilities of the collaboration in light of the other demands for their time. ELC members indicated that identifying needs, securing resources, and fulfilling many of the needs of the collaborative process was beyond the time they had and wished to commit to the effort. The results of this study support the lack of time as a challenge to collaboration.

The body of literature on collaboration has been growing, however those attempting to do collaborative work have difficulty interpreting, relating and applying the available information to their needs. Melaville & Blank (1993) acknowledged that a limited understanding and ability seem to exist on how to act in a collaborative manner. Collaborative work places people in new situations, with new players, playing unfamiliar roles (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Green, 1998). Marshall (1995) noted that while the hierarchical approach is no longer practical or relevant to many of our emerging needs, our workforce lacks the knowledge and skills needed to work in a collective way. A lack of understanding on what it takes to collaborate was commented on throughout this study's interviews and was seen as contributing to challenges to collaborative programming. Participants seemed to come to the effort not understanding what working together in a collaborative manner meant, how much time was needed to fulfill responsibilities, and the role they could play in the effort. Not understanding what it takes to work with groups can be a challenge to collaboration, according to the results of this study.

The literature notes that a challenge to collaboration can be engaging in a multiple party effort when you are more accustomed to a traditional, long-standing ways of thinking and acting. According to Melaville, Blank, and Asayesh (1993), systems have a life of their own and often will resist change. Dimmock (1993) points out that a system's members over time expect certain behaviors. The community and other potential collaborators hold to certain norms, which accordingly, will govern their behavior. According to Dimmock, many change agents lack personalities, values, and competencies to include people in a change effort and empowering others to take ownership for their own interventions is challenging. Established ways of thinking and acting were identified as challenges to collaboration with the CYFAR project in this

study. It was noted that volunteer partners were not particularly accustomed to assuming roles that they had relied upon paid staff taking on in prior experiences. This resulted in paid staff assuming many of the tasks of the effort. Sink (1996) acknowledged that an empowerment or betterment journey is difficult and requires social learning. From this study it is concluded that established ways of thinking and behaving is a challenge to collaboration. The literature and this study's findings also lead to the conclusion that collaboration is time consuming, collaborative responsibilities take time to assume, and collaborative behavior takes time to develop.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Given the current interest, need, and advocacy for collaboration as a means to address critical issues of our time, it is imperative that extension and other adult educators have knowledge and skills in how to work with others to create change. As stated when this study was conceptualized, its findings would be significant to Virginia Cooperative Extension understanding the involvement of ELCs in the programming process, Cooperative Extension also understanding how to achieve collaboration, and other human service providers understanding those actions contributing and impeding collaboration attempts to deal with complex issues of children and families.

This study's findings reveal that vital roles for Extension Leadership Councils in programming include determining need, advocacy, and resource acquisition. Their success in fulfilling their roles was highly dependent on Extension staff facilitating involvement through coaching and motivating and their understanding of the programming process. Challenges to their involvement seem to rest with not having the time necessary to commit to programming tasks and also a lack of understanding collaboration. These findings point to the need for ELCs to be trained in collaboration and programming, with primary focus directed towards techniques associated with assessing community needs. In involving ELCs, this study's findings also imply that it is important for Extension staff to recognize the time needed to address programming needs and to create collaborative involvement. This recognition needs to be factored in the time ELC members might have available and the time that is needed to assume

programming tasks. Equally important, this study implies that enough time needs to be allowed to carry out multi party actions.

Extension staff members are pivotal to ELC involvement according to this study. It is important to note that the employment of Extension educators in Cooperative Extension has been based upon their education and training in specific technical areas related to agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and/or family and consumer sciences. More often than not, these academic preparations lack the knowledge and skill building needed to facilitate the involvement of people in an educational programming process, community development, and development of commitment and ownership of others. Sadowske (1991) commented on the technician/scientist role that adult educators such as Extension professionals assumed as being dysfunctional in the emerging environment. According to Sadowske, if people are to be actors in their own problem solving, then it becomes necessary for the adult educator to serve as a mentor, catalyst, a guide, a supporter, and a facilitator. This study's findings are consistent with the vision of Sadowske. This study suggests the need for academic programs in which aspiring Extension professionals are engaged, including coursework in facilitation, decision making, teamwork, and human resource development. Implications are also in order for Cooperative Extension to address the collaboration capacity of their professionals by providing staff development aimed towards the same. This study's findings suggest the need for Cooperative Extension professionals to be knowledgeable and proficient in the stages and elements of the Extension educational programming process so they might give direction and engage others in that process.

This study and the literature points out that collaboration requires one to have knowledge and skills in communication, group processes, shared decision-making, consensus building, etc. These skills are needed by not only Cooperative Extension, but also those human service providers addressing complex issues of families and children which require the expertise and resources of multiple entities.

Findings of this study revealed that key leadership is critical to mobilizing and sustaining collaboration. They also reveal that leadership can change as collaborative efforts progress and evolve. Single resource solutions are few and far in between for

families and communities at risk. Cooperative Extension and other human service providers are often faced with working with others to formulate and implement appropriate solutions. Therefore this study implies that these professionals need to be proficient in how to achieve multi party leadership which engages and inspires others to action.

Resources such as paid staff to devote to the regular and routine needs of collaborative projects were revealed also as important to collaboration success in the study. As Cooperative Extension and human service providers become faced with the need to collaborate, this study suggests it is important to have resources to support staff attention to engaging others and performing tasks.

Boone (1985) stated that continued growth of the field of adult education depends upon practitioners generating more refined inquiry into its operation, theory formulation, and further development in principles and practices. This research provides insight on the roles and actions that have accommodated collaborative involvement in the extension educational programming process. Continued research is needed on the practice of collaboration in Extension education and other efforts to further enhance our understanding of how to practice as adult educators and the growing body of collaboration literature. Further research is also needed in Extension education to determine how Extension Leadership Councils and other community members become engaged as collaborators in stages of the programming process beyond the situation analysis stage.

It is also important to understand more about those key persons that assume leadership roles in effective collaborative endeavors and what they believe to be elements of their effectiveness. Research on collaborative efforts that overcome challenges as those found in this study would also be a useful addition to the base of literature on collaboration.

The intent of this study was not to provide inferences, but to gather insights on the nature and experience of collaboration and to contribute to the body of literature. Due to the small sample size involved with this study, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted with other collaborative Extension efforts and those of other human service providers. Further examination of the nature and experience of collaboration in

other settings and the addition of those studies to the body of literature would provide enrichment to the directions others need to achieve collaboration.

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APPENDIX A

Cooperative Extension and Collaboration

A Review of Current Literature

A review of literature published since 2000 regarding Cooperative Extension and collaboration indicates that Extension professionals and other agencies continue to engage in and promote collaborative initiatives. Collaborative programs are being implemented across a variety of programmatic and professional arenas, including health, youth and family-related fields, and community development. Much of the recent literature further discusses the need to collaborate and expanding collaborative efforts into new arenas, as well as issues with evaluation. Thus, much like the literature of the 1980's and 1990's, current articles continue to discuss the mechanics of collaboration and its related activities. However, although the mechanics are generally based on "lessons learned", there remains a paucity of research examining the actual experiences of individuals/organizations engaged in collaborative efforts. Such information could be particularly useful for Extension professionals as they increasingly serve as collaborative partners in an array of initiatives.

One broad arena in which collaborations are being utilized and encouraged is health. Goard and Dresbach (2003) conducted a project in a rural Ohio farming community to identify the health concerns and issues as perceived by local residents. Ohio State University (OSU) Extension, the local health department, and a local health agency partnered on the project. The project began with a series of participatory meetings in which residents identified factors that impact health. Upon identifying three major areas of focus, participants began an asset map to identify the resources already available in the county. These data were compiled and utilized to survey local residents with a "Community Health Assessment". Results of the surveys were to be used to determine how to allocate the limited resources of the agencies.

The authors note, however, that there are some challenges to addressing health at the community-level. The process itself may be burdensome to some individuals since it takes time to complete the project. Without instantaneous results, attrition may become a problem. Moreover, agencies participating in collaborative efforts face the

perceived risk of losing their individual identities. However, according to Goard and Dresbach (2003), Extension professionals in local communities have the skills to act as facilitators in the process with agencies, and thus contribute to the overall improved health of the community.

Another specific area in the health arena in which there is a call for more collaboration is in the field of pharmacy. From the perspective of the University pharmacy programs, collaboration will address the challenge of integrating science and professional practice to ensure continuous learning for pharmacists, particularly in light of emerging technologies and more drugs on the market (Duggan, 2004). One example of this type of collaboration is with OSU Extension and College of Pharmacy, who have established a formal collaboration, titled the Ohio Extension/Pharmacy Alliance for Community Health (Ohio EPACH), which aims to address health literacy issues (Mehta, Reschke, Cable & McDowell, 2003). OSU Pharmacy students and faculty were already engaged in service-learning activities at the community level, and at the formation of the collaboration, the underlying philosophy was for each to “do what each does best.” The authors noted that the necessary factors for a successful collaboration included having a commitment from the administrators to university outreach, as well as clearly identified contributions that each partner brings to projects.

Ohio EPACH has worked on several projects. One project focused on herbs and dietary supplements. OSU Extension personnel developed two fact sheets to address questions related to supplements, and Pharmacy faculty members reviewed them. Pharmacy faculty also joined an Extension committee and jointly provided an in-service to Family and Consumer Sciences professionals and continuing education for pharmacists on the topic of supplements. These outcomes have been shared at professional meetings and the collaboration has been recognized by professional associations both regionally and nationally. Ohio EPACH has also worked with county agents, such as in implementing a “Senior Health Day” project. Medication counseling was provided by Pharmacy students and faculty, and the local Extension staff worked to plan and organize the program. This collaborative project led to the development of a local committee of health care professionals who work with Pharmacy faculty and Extension personnel on health education programming. The current focus of Ohio

EPACH is health literacy needs, and projects are being implemented for geriatric patients and their care providers, along with childcare providers and parents in Appalachian regions of the state. At the time of publication, results were unavailable. However, the authors still noted that there were positive results of the contribution in general. The noted benefits of the collaboration to date are contributions to the well-being of Ohioans, service-learning opportunities for students, and a connection between university administration, faculty, and the communities they serve.

Nutrition education is an additional health-related program in which collaboration is being encouraged and Extension is involved. Gillespie, Gantner, Craig, Dischner, & Lansing (2003) provide principles and strategies for developing productive and effective partnerships for nutrition education, action, and research. Based on the experiences of authors in developing collaborative food system partnerships, six specific strategies were identified. First, participants must agree on common goals and indicators of progress. Secondly, roles and responsibilities must be clarified. Third, protocols must be developed for working relationships. Fourth, there must be a commitment to providing necessary resources. Fifth, a flexible trusting atmosphere must be created. Finally, the partnership should be continually reassessed, and roles should be adjusted as appropriate. Moreover, Gillespie et al., (2003) asserted that finding an appropriate balance is key to a successful collaboration, and four major areas in need of balance were identified. Balance is needed in the process in terms of taking enough time to make concrete decisions while not delaying action too long. Balance is also needed in the approaches to solving problems and building assets. Further, there should be a balance regarding actions initiated by the community versus those initiated by the university. Finally, there must be a balance in terms of giving credit for accomplishments to individuals, as well as the group.

A second major area in which collaborative ventures are becoming seemingly essential is community development. As a result of the complexity of societal concerns, community development programs themselves have become more complex, and multiple organizations/groups must work together to address these issues. Bradshaw (2000) examined two cases in which organizations formed collaborative ventures to address complex community development challenges in their respective communities.

The two cases represented an urban and a rural example of successful collaborations, led by nonprofit community development corporations focused on affordable housing and related issues. Though increased complexity was not the goal of these collaborations, it became necessary to respond to the realities of social complexity. As evidenced in these cases, issues such as poor water quality, the need for social and human services, educational and training needs, and economic distress at the neighborhood level demand attention and necessitate intervention at multiple levels when implementing community development projects. The organizations involved in the aforementioned case studies were surprised at the level of complexity that they experienced in their respective projects, despite their experience in the field.

Bradshaw (2000) further argued that complexity in collaborative community development projects may be the result of complex needs, but it is not an ideal goal. There are, however, both problems and strengths associated with complex projects. The problems include potentially diverting attention from the underlying issue being addressed, possible vulnerability resulting from multiple organizations with varying goals, and the high cost of time and resources needed for administration, which may limit top leaders' ability to identify future projects and creatively contribute to current endeavors. The major strength identified by the author is the ability to implement more robust projects. As each of the participating organizations has both similar and distinct resources and strengths, needs identified by the collaboration can be addressed by one or more of the participants with relative ease.

In sum, though not easy, Bradshaw (2000) argued that collaborative ventures in the field of community development are successful, cost-effective and appropriate given the complexity of current social concerns. Moreover, he noted that there are multiple points at which to intervene for those focused on community resource improvement and capacity-building. Extension professionals may play a particularly useful role in these processes, such as providing leadership trainings and other necessary educational programming for citizens of the community, as well as representatives of the participating agencies/organizations. Additional literature supports this notion and points out that Extension personnel are in the business of education that meets local needs and thus are positioned to make a unique contribution to the success of community

development and other collaboratives (e.g., Borich, 2001; Brown & Evans, 2004; Prins & Ewert, 2002).

Borich (2001) further stated that Extension can greatly benefit from collaborations. He asserted that Extension maintains an agrarian image and notes that USDA faces numerous challenges in the expansion of educational programs into urban areas. Yet, in light of the shift of the United States' population to more urban and suburban areas, the need is essential. In response to this need, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and the Iowa State University Department of Community and Regional Planning submitted a joint proposal and received a HUD COPC grant. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) operates the Office of University Partnership, who directs the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC). The HUD COPC program funds institutions of higher education to develop outreach programs in urban environments.

The ISU COPC program in Iowa centered on establishing an outreach center in the Des Moines Enterprise Community, and aimed to bring together university-level and field-level Extension staff to focus on the community development needs of the inner city. When the proposal was submitted, there were no continuous partnerships or collaborations among any organizations or groups in the Enterprise Community. Thus, the ISU COPC program focused on strengthening integrated and neighborhood planning, and worked with public and private agencies to create a common voice for the Enterprise Community through collaboration. To assist the community with planning, ISU Extension staff and Community Planning faculty provided leadership trainings, as well as skill-building activities through studio classes in civil engineering, landscape architecture, and community planning. During the first two years, 60 adult residents completed the training, and leadership trainings were adapted and provided to youth.

Borich (2001) noted that, while it was too soon to document impacts, there were some immediate, positive results of the program. The program was well-received and has contributed to the city's and local community's collective vision for the future of the Enterprise Community. Moreover, the ISU COPC program received two "Local Best Practice" awards from HUD, as well as the "Key to the City" from the City of Des Moines. Borich (2001) concluded by asserting that HUD and USDA Cooperative

Extension would both benefit from working collaboratively with one another on urban community development initiatives, and offered Iowa's COPC program as an example of the possibilities. USDA Cooperative Extension would gain a means by which to expand its rural roots into urban programs and HUD would meet its goals with establishing university-community partnerships to solve local problems, a mission Extension has been involved with since its inception.

Moreover, Extension professionals have been connected with efforts specifically intended to strengthen communities since the early 1900s (Prins & Ewert, 2002). Historically, Extension collaborated with churches, particularly in rural communities, to focus on shared concerns regarding community-strengthening. In recent years, these relationships have declined, but Extension has continued to work with other agencies to address local problems and create a strengthened democratic society and healthier community without compromising the integrity of either organization. Extension professionals have a long history of effective programming at the community level (Mehta et al., 2003) and faith-based organizations are increasingly providing public services to local citizens (Prins & Ewert, 2002). Thus, Extension has the ability to strengthen the work of mediating structures, including churches, to build social capital.

Irrespective of the mediating structure, Extension faculty are making various contributions to collaborative efforts and increasing recognition is being given to these endeavors. In light of requirements to show accountability and document results, effective means of evaluating one's contributions to collaborations is needed. Brown and Evans (2004) developed the *Collaborative Community Change* model in response to the challenge that many Extension professionals face with respect to evaluation. The authors asserted that the work of Extension personnel is most often in the form of providing leadership, capacity building, or technical assistance to initiatives, organizations, and committees, with some provision of direct service programming. Such leadership-oriented work may affect community, statewide, or regional concerns either directly or indirectly. However, it is challenging to identify means by which to examine the impact of Extension professionals' work on community change. Thus, Brown and Evans (2004) created the *Collaborative Community Change* model.

The *Collaborative Community Change* model contains some portions that are adapted from Taylor-Powell et al. (1998). The model further integrates factors that have been linked to successful collaborations with the varied services provided by Extension personnel in the process of addressing identified issues and influencing positive community change. Thus, the model aims to point out various pathways through which community change may be influenced, as well as to identify potential roles and activities of Extension professionals toward this end. Therefore, the *Collaborative Community Change* model may serve as a means by which to guide the evaluation of capacity-building and community development activities. The following are elements of the model in which it was noted that Extension professionals might interact with groups in community development and capacity building.

- Operating procedures
- Shared direction
- Outcomes orientation
- Leadership
- Mentorship
- Comprehensive Planning
- Inclusiveness
- Communication
- Climate
- Decision Making
- Conflict Resolution
- Resource Development
- Program Development
- Policy Change
- Community Awareness
- Citizen Development

Noting that many Extension professionals use the Logic Model process to plan and evaluate programs, the Logic Model was overlaid upon the *Collaborative Community Change* model to show its applicability and utility. Brown and Evans (2004) also provided examples of potential outputs and outcomes at each of the stages of the

model. Outputs from the first stage of the model include work (such as trainings or advising) that is done to enhance the aforementioned factors, including communication, climate, leadership, decision making, etc. Outcomes at this stage could entail changes in those factors following training sessions. At the next stage of the model, in which an Extension professional provides programming, outputs might include work that is done to contribute to the development of resources, programs, etc., such as writing grants or curriculum, hosting workshops, or marketing. Outcomes may be changes in the amount of resources, program improvement, increased community awareness, and ultimately, positive changes in the community.

Brown and Evans (2004) further noted that there are some limitations of the model, such as the fact that there are numerous immeasurable factors that affect community change and that an Extension professional can not conclude that his/her trainings “led to” community change. However, they assert that the work of Extension professionals should be viewed as one factor that contributes indirectly to the community change process, and thus should be measured and documented. In light of accountability issues, along with the desire to work effectively, the model provides one possible, promising approach to the evaluation of collaborative and capacity-building activities.

In addition to health-related programming and community development projects, Extension professionals have incorporated and are advocating for collaboration in parenting programs, as well as wildlife, natural, and aquatic resource issues. With respect to parenting education, Fox (2005) contends that parents’ goals for their children should be incorporated into the planning and implementation of programs. Citing previous research that documents the relationship between the goals that parents set for their children and their related parenting behaviors, Fox (2005) offered suggestions for building collaborative relationships with parents. He first suggested that language used in programs be free of jargon, cultural differences be recognized and appreciated, and parents’ unique knowledge of their children be realized.

At a basic level for collaboration, the staff of parenting programs should work with parents to clarify their goals and share ways in which the program can aid in accomplishing them. For a more complex collaborative relationship, established

parenting programs should be modified to meet the goals of parents. At the most sophisticated level, parents and Extension educators should work together to actually create the program. The educational experience should be intentionally tailored to the needs that are generated from the parents' goals. Despite the level of collaboration, Fox (2005) maintains that parenting programs would likely generate more positive outcomes if parents become true partners in the process. Thus, collaborating with parents in the process of parental education is a promising strategy for ultimately improving the lives of children through positive, effective parenting.

Aquatic resources education, wildlife management, and natural resource management are additional arenas in which collaboration is being implemented and encouraged. In New York State, the NYS 4-H Sportfishing and Aquatic Resources Education Program (SAREP) for youth was developed by Cornell University Cooperative Extension and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Brown, Ferenz, Krasny, & Tse, 2003). Since its inception in 1989, volunteers were recruited and trained, and then ultimately 4-H SAREP clubs were formed to focus on angling skills and water-related activities. Approximately 35,000 youth were involved in these clubs each year. However, New York City had very few clubs, and thus a limited number of youth participants.

The primary challenge in New York City was volunteer recruitment, particularly 4-H club leaders. In an effort to engage more youth in aquatic resources education, Cornell Cooperative Extension – New York City and SAREP sought opportunities to collaborate with other youth serving organizations. A two-day instructor training was held in New York City in 1998, and 25 individuals representing eight collaborating organizations attended. As a result, 15,000 youth and 4,000 adults were engaged in SAREP programs from June to December 1998. As of 2002, the collaboration had expanded, with over 100 volunteers and staff from 17 organizations partnering on SAREP in New York City.

Brown et al. (2003) expressed that there were both strengths and challenges associated with taking a multi-agency collaborative approach to 4-H SAREP clubs. The strengths of collaboration on this project included serving more participants, decreased costs, more program publicity, the establishment of a local SAREP network, and more

acceptance of the SAREP program by states' Department of Environmental Conservation, SAREP's primary funding source. Moreover, SAREP is better able to compete for grant funding due to the diversity of the collaborating agencies. The program is also more likely to meet its goals. The noted challenges included the administrative time associated with managing the partnerships, as well as the risk of Cornell Cooperative Extension losing some of its identity.

Rodewald (2002) reported that there may be similar benefits and concerns with respect to interagency collaboration on natural resources and wildlife management. She noted that there is a need for Extension to respond to the public's interest in environmental issues, and that many federal and state agencies are engaged in educational outreach efforts regarding wildlife ecology and management. To gauge the potential for successful collaboration between Extension and state agencies, Rodewald (2002) compared the wildlife management priorities identified by state agencies in Ohio with those reported by county and district Extension personnel. A mail survey was developed by the author with input from OSU Extension and School of Natural Resources faculty and staff. The mail survey used a Likert-type scale and asked respondents to rate the broad range of wildlife management topics in terms of their own level of knowledge on the topic, as well as their perception of the importance of the issue to their clientele.

Mail surveys were sent to the 100 county and district Extension personnel who are involved with agriculture and natural resources in some aspect. An additional 59 surveys were sent to state agency personnel who interact with the citizens that have specific concerns with forestry and wildlife, such as wildlife specialists, private lands biologists, and service foresters. Sixty percent of the Extension surveys and 61% of the state agency surveys were returned (n=96). For 21 of the 29 topics, the Extension and state personnel did not differ significantly in their rating of perceived importance to clients. On the other hand, there were significant differences in the two groups' self-assessed knowledge for 24 of the 29 (83%) wildlife topics. This may have been due to the greater level of training that state personnel receive. The author, thus, concluded that there was great potential for collaboration between Extension and state agencies. Results of the survey indicated that there are common priorities for wildlife issues, and

that state agency personnel have the subject matter expertise to deal with complex needs. Extension professionals are experts in educational outreach programs and have established networks. Therefore, the collaboration could draw on each organization's strengths. Rodewald (2002) finally maintained that collaboration is not a threat to Extension, despite having to share credit with partnering agencies, and that the best way to address wildlife issues is through partnerships.

Hinkey, Ellenberg & Kessler (2005) further supported collaboration in natural resource management and provided strategies for getting scientists engaged in collaborative processes. They also asserted that Extension professionals are uniquely equipped to work with scientists on this issue. Clearly, Extension is very experienced in working with various stakeholders in assessing concerns and making joint decisions. As well, Extension professionals translate science into practice for the general public. Thus, Extension personnel can help scientists learn about and engage in collaborative processes without losing their credibility.

Using the scientific method as a starting point, Extension professionals can use language familiar to scientists to compare collaborative problem-solving processes to scientific problem-solving processes. Hinkey et al., (2005) presented a table outlining the comparisons and indicated that this technique was successfully used at two collaborative meetings held with scientists to address research needs for coastal management, as well as education initiatives. Moreover, the process is being used in a workshop for Extension agents, coastal resource managers, and researchers to aid in the design and implementation of effective public participatory processes. As noted, Extension professionals are in the business of public issues education and are skilled at ensuring sound problem-solving and decision-making techniques are employed. Therefore, Extension can serve as a natural agent for education of collaborative processes, the roles of each player, and effective strategies for implementation.

Summary of the Review of Related Literature

In summary, it is evident that collaboration continues to gain recognition as an appropriate, promising strategy for meeting community needs, especially for at-risk populations. Moreover, given the requirements of funding agencies that groups partner with one another, along with the complexity of social concerns, collaborative endeavors will likely continue to expand. The current literature reports many benefits, and a few challenges, associated with collaboration. The reported benefits of collaboration include the ability to provide more robust programs and meet a greater number of needs (Goard & Dresbach, 2003; Mehta et al., 2003), assistance with accomplishing each agency's individual goals (Borich, 2001; Mehta et al., 2003), the ability to address complex problems more effectively (Bradshaw, 2000; Prins & Ewert, 2002), and cost-effectiveness (Bradshaw, 2000). The noted challenges include a perceived risk of loss of individual agency identity (Brown et al., 2003; Goard & Dresbach, 2003) and the administrative time associated with managing the partnership (Bradshaw, 2000; Brown et al., 2003).

Recent literature on collaboration and Cooperative Extension also offers many "lessons learned" and suggestions for effective collaborative ventures. Gillespie et al., (2003) presented six strategies for effective collaboration, and much of the other literature parallels these strategies. First, assessing whether the agencies hold the same priorities and goals with respect to the issue being addressed is essential to a successful partnership (Gillespie et al., 2003; Rodewald, 2002). Secondly, the specific roles of each agency should be clarified (Gillespie et al., 2003; Hinkey et al., 2005; Mehta, 2003). Third, time should be spent on developing protocols for working relationships (Gillespie et al., 2003) and a common language should be utilized (Fox, 2005; Hinkey et al., 2005). Fourth, a plan and commitment for sharing resources and drawing upon each agency's strengths for the benefit of the project must be established (Bradshaw, 2000; Brown et al., 2003; Gillespie et al., 2003; Rodewald, 2002). Fifth, the relationships must have an atmosphere of trust and respect for each agency's goals (Gillespie et al., 2003; Mehta, 2003). Finally, as the partnership is maintained, roles should be reassessed and adjusted, as deemed appropriate (Gillespie et al., 2003).

An overview of the lessons learned from the experiences of Extension professionals provides useful insight on the mechanics of collaboration, as well as some of the potential benefits and challenges. In light of the need for partnering, this information is particularly useful. However, there is clearly a need for more investigation into the actual experiences of the participating agencies and individuals, as the current literature provides little information in this regard. Given the role of Cooperative Extension in the community, and particularly in serving at-risk populations, Extension professionals specifically would benefit from such information. Thus, the current study will make a major contribution to the literature on collaboration and serve to significantly enhance the understanding of how it is actualized.

APPENDIX B

Stakeholder Focus Group Interview Guide

Let me first begin by thanking each of you for participating in this discussion this afternoon. Our discussion will focus on the study I will be conducting on the nature and experience of community collaboration with Extension programming here in Virginia with the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk grant. As each of you are aware, in 1996 Virginia Cooperative Extension received a \$750,000 CYFAR grant from USDA to implement extension programs to address the needs of children, youth, and families at risk. A requirement of the grant was that these programs be research based, collaborative, and be self-sustaining at the end of the 5 year grant.

Given the CYFAR grant requirements, it was decided by the state design team giving leadership for the effort, that the programs implemented be done so with the Extension Leadership Councils (ELCs) in the four localities identified to receive the resources. As you are aware, when our Extension Leadership Council model was conceptualized, the vision was that community representatives would be collaboratively involved in our educational process by assuming major, equal, or secondary responsibilities for the design, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and renewal and/or termination of our educational efforts. This is based upon the assumption that our programming process would serve as a framework for collaborative decision-making, identification of tasks, leadership roles, responsibilities, and joint action. The design team believed the lessons and insights gained from working through these ELCs could help us to understand the collaborative ability of the ELC model and could be helpful in the continuing development of that partnership with VCE.

As Extension Specialists, each of you is responsible for giving leadership to volunteer and paid staff's utilizing the concepts and principles of the of the Extension Educational Programming process. Therefore it is important that the study investigate that which could be useful for you, as you serve as a programming resource for the organization. In addition to the literature on collaboration, your input will be used in the development of the questions I will use when I interview those involved with the project in each of the four localities.

Here is how we will operate this afternoon. I have a set of questions I will be asking you. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I am interested in each of your opinions, regardless if it is different than someone else's. Please feel free to share based upon your perspective.

Let me suggest a few things that will make our time together productive. Please speak up and I ask that one person speak at a time. There is a tendency in discussions like these for some persons to talk more than others; however, it is important that I hear from each of you. Therefore, if one is sharing a bit more than others, I will ask that we give others an opportunity to share and I will ask those who aren't sharing as much, what your thoughts are. I will be tape recording the discussion and Karen will be assisting by taking notes. At no point however, will any of your names be associated with the comments.

My role will be to ask the questions and keep our discussion going. I have a set of several questions to guide our discussion. Let's begin.

Questions

1. Let's go around the group and I would like each of you to tell me if you were conducting this study, what would you explore?
2. What topics would you cover?
3. What would you like to learn from this study?

Explore the following questions if responses have not seemed to address/include.

4. The programming model used by Cooperative Extension assumes that the extension educator collaborates with people in the community in carrying out programming. How would you like to see us explore the reality of that assumption in this study?
5. The literature on collaboration generally defines collaboration as a mutual or joint sharing of interest, resources, responsibilities, risks, and rewards. How might this definition be explored by this study?
6. No one model of collaboration seems to exist. However, amongst the models that are available in the literature there are similarities and differences.

Covered among the models are such things as (*review items from a handout which lists items reflected in the models—Appendix B*)---How might we explore this in this study?

This concludes all the questions I had prepared to ask you. Thank you.

APPENDIX C

Common Elements of Collaboration Identified From the Models of Collaboration

Stakeholder Focus Group Handout

- Leadership
- Diverse and Multiple Involvement
- Widespread Commitment/Ownership
- Member and Community Linkages
- Information Sharing
- Communication
- Common Definition of Problem
- Shared Vision
- Process Orientation
- Identification and Sharing of Resources
- Structuring of Tasks and Organizational Maintenance
- Clear Roles
- Capacity Building for Action
- Action Planning and Implementation
- Shared Responsibilities
- Monitor, Evaluate, Refine/Adjust
- Institutionalization of Membership and Leadership
- Accountability
- Recognition of Accomplishments

APPENDIX D

Pilot Interview Guide

Key Informants

Let me first begin by thanking you for taking time to discuss with me your experiences with the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk program here in [*Name of Locality Here*]. From this point on I will refer to the program as CYFAR. As I mentioned to you when we spoke on the telephone, we are very interested in understanding the experiences that Extension Leadership Council members like yourself have had with the programming efforts for CYFAR in their locality. What you share with me today is very important to us gaining that understanding.

To facilitate our discussion today, I have a set of questions I will be asking you. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I am only interested in hearing about what your experiences have been and your opinions and observations of the how the programming occurred. I will be tape recording the discussion. The tape recording is merely being done to insure that I have accurately captured what you have said. However at no point will your name be associated with any form of the discussion reported. If at any point you do not want the tape recorder to be on, simply say so. Do you have any questions?

Let's begin.

Questions

1. When you think of the term collaboration, how would you define or explain what is meant by that term?
2. How did you see what you just described being reflected in the programming efforts of the CYFAR program here?
Probes:
Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?
3. How were you involved with the programming efforts for CYFAR?
Probes:
Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?
What do you think contributed to your fulfillment of your role?
What do you think, if anything, hindered your fulfillment of your role?
4. How did you see community members of the Extension Leadership Council involved with the programming efforts?
Probes:
Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?
What do you think contributed to their fulfillment of their roles?
What do you think, if anything, hindered their fulfillment of their roles?
5. How were Extension Staff involved in the programming efforts?

Probes:

Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

6. What do you think went well with this effort?

Probes:

What contributed to that happening?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

7. What would you say were the challenges and barriers to the implementation of the collaborative effort?

Probes:

What do you believe contributed to this?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

8. Who would you say were the key players in the getting the CYFAR programming carried out?

Probes:

What role did they play?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

9. Who would you say gave leadership to the program?

Probes:

What did you see them doing?
Could you please give me some specific examples of that?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

10. What, if any, other partnerships or volunteers did you see developed and involved with the CYFAR programming efforts?

Probes:

What did you see them doing?
What are some specific examples of that?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

11. What do you see happening to the CYFAR program now that the funding has gone?

Probes:

What is the reason you think that will happen?
What evidence could you share with me of that occurring?

At this point, I have no other questions I had planned to ask you. Are there other comments you would like to share of your experience with the CYFAR program that my questions did not give you the chance to address? If so what are those experiences? Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with me. This concludes my interview.

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide

Key Informants

Let me first begin by thanking you for taking time to discuss with me your experiences with the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk program here in [*Name of Locality Here*]. From this point on I will refer to the program as CYFAR. As I mentioned to you when we spoke on the telephone, we are very interested in understanding the experiences that persons like yourself have had with the programming efforts for the CYFAR project in their locality. What you share with me today is very important to us gaining that understanding.

To facilitate our discussion today, I have a set of questions I will be asking you. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I am only interested in hearing about what your experiences have been and your opinions and observations of the how the programming occurred. I will be tape recording the discussion. The tape recording is merely being done to insure that I have accurately captured what you have said. However at no point will your name be associated with any form of the discussion reported. If at any point you do not want the tape recorder to be on, simply say so. Do you have any questions?
Let's begin.

Questions

1. When you think of the term collaboration, how would you define or explain what is meant by that term?
2. How did you see what you just described being reflected in the programming efforts of the CYFAR program here?
Probe:
Could you please give me some specific examples of what you just described?
3. How were you involved with the programming efforts for CYFAR?
Probe:
Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What do you think contributed to your fulfillment of your role?
What do you think, if anything, hindered your fulfillment of your role?
4. How did you see members of the community and/or the Extension Leadership Council involved?
Probe:
Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
What do you think contributed to their fulfillment of their roles?
What do you think, if anything, hindered their fulfillment of their roles?
5. How were Extension Staff involved with the programming efforts?
Probe:

- Could you give me some specific examples of what you just described?
6. What do you believe went well with this effort?
Probe:
What contributed to that happening?
 7. What would you say were the challenges and barriers to the implementation of the collaborative effort?
Probe:
What do you believe contributed to this?
 8. Who would you say provided key leadership to the collaborative effort?
Probe:
What did you see them doing?
 9. What, if any, other partnerships or volunteers did you see developed and involved with the CYFAR programming efforts?
Probe:
What did you see them doing?
 10. What do you see happening to the CYFAR program now that the funding has gone?
Probe:
What is the reason you think that will happen?

At this point, I have no other questions I had planned to ask you. Are there other comments you would like to share of your experience with the CYFAR program that my questions did not give you the chance to address? If so what are those experiences? Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with me. This concludes my interview.

APPENDIX F

Letter to the Director of The Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk Program Requesting Names of Extension Leadership Council Members to Consider for Interviewing for the Study

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Extension Educational Programming
233 Smyth Hall (0452), Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 231-9442; FAX (540) 231-6284
board@vt.edu

To: [Insert Name Here]
Director, Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk Program

From: Barbara A. Board
Extension Specialist, Program and Leadership Development
Date: [Insert Date Here]

Subject: Study of the Nature and Experience of Community Collaboration with Extension Educations with at Risk Populations in Virginia.

Your assistance is requested to help in the identification of persons involved with Extension Leadership Councils working with the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Programs. To study the Nature and Experience of Collaboration that has occurred with the CYFAR programs here in Virginia, we will conduct key informant interviews to gather information related to the experiences that community representatives on Extension Leadership Councils have had with the effort.

Attached you will find a form, which we would like for you to list all Extension Leadership Council members and subcommittee members, if appropriate, involved with the programs for CYFAR at each locality from 1996-2001. You will note, along with their name, we are also requesting their address, telephone number, and email address if applicable. Please return the completed list, for each locality, to me at the address above by *[Insert Date Here]*.

A total of 4 persons per locality will be selected for the face to face interviews to determine the nature and experience of collaboration that occurred with the CYFAR projects in their respective locality.

Should you have questions, please give me a call. Your assistance is appreciated.

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Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion., sex, age veteran status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

**Extension Leadership Council Members and Sub Committee Members
Involved with
The Children, Youth, & Families At-Risk Program
1996-2001**

Location of Council: _____

Name of Member	Address	Telephone Number	E-mail Address (if applicable)
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(make copy if more space is needed)

Return to:

Barbara A. Board

Extension Specialist, Program & Leadership Development

231 Smyth Hall (0452), Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA 24061

APPENDIX G

Script for Telephone Contact

Requesting Interview of Persons Selected for the Study

Date _____
Interviewee's Name _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____ E-mail Address _____

Hello [Insert Name of the Person Here], My name is Barbara Board, I am an Extension Specialist in Program and Leadership Development with Virginia Cooperative Extension. I am calling you because you have been involved with the Extension Leadership Council's efforts in [Insert the Name of the Locality Here] in providing Extension education for Children, Youth, and Families at Risk. We are coming to the end of the funding for that program and we are very much interested in finding out about the experiences persons like yourself have had with the programming efforts.

We are asking selected persons if they would meet with us for an interview in order that we might hear about those experiences. May I meet with you for an approximately one to one and a half hours to discuss your experiences with the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk Program? *If NO, thank them for their time and terminate the call.*

If YES, continue. [State the Name of the Person Here], when would be a good date and time to meet with you for our discussion? Can you meet me at the [Locality Name] Extension Office for our interview at that time? If NO, ask them where a convenient location might be? [Agree upon the date, time, and location of the interview here.]

[State the Name of the Person], I am looking forward to our discussion. I will meet you on [Restate the Date, Time, and Location Here] I will be sending you a letter also with these details. [Confirm the Address and Telephone Number You Have for the Person]. Thank, you for your time.

Appendix H

Letter to the Selected Interviewee for the Study

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Extension Educational Programming

233 Smyth Hall (0452), Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 231-9442; FAX (540) 231-6284
board@vt.edu

[Insert Date Here]

Dear *[Insert Name of Interviewee Here]*

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me on *[Insert the Date Here]*, at *[Insert the Time Here]*, at the *[Insert the Location Here]*. As stated in our telephone conversation, our discussion will focus on your experiences with the Extension educational programming efforts for the Children, Youth, and Families At Risk program in *[Insert the Locality Here]*.

I am pleased that you are able to join me for this discussion. Your input will be very important in helping us to understand the experiences of Extension Leadership Council members in this important program effort.

Should you have questions or need to get in touch with me prior to our interview, you may contact me at the above telephone number or email address. Looking forward to our discussion.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Board
Extension Specialist, Program and Leadership Development

A Land-Grant University--Putting Knowledge to Work

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, veteran status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

APPENDIX I

An Example

First Reading Compilation of Key Words and Phrase Developed in the Analysis of the Study Transcripts

1. When you think of the term collaboration, how would you define or explain what is meant by that term?

Name of 1st Interviewee

- Working together
- Sharing resources---human financial, and space
- Programming to compliment one another
- Addressing multiple issues at one time

Name 2nd Interviewee

- Sharing responsibility in both the decision making and the implementing
- Trust

It's not just about the decision-making, its also the time in which they invest time the process. The process I am thinking about is not just the process in deciding what to do, but it's also in the implementation of the program. Collaboration is not just sitting down at the table with a group of people making decisions on what is needed in the community and saying this is how we're going to address that need, it's a step further than that, its investing time in the implementation and success or not success of the program. Most of the people who have invested time in this whole process, stuck with the process and stayed around and therefore it was sustained. I feel like people who invest time in the process, they become emotionally attached to that program. I become emotionally attached to some of the programs and wanted to make sure this program stayed around. Typically because I was seeing that it was changing the community or addressing the issue that we initially wanted to address. (2-3-4)

Name of 3rd Interviewee

- Cooperation among agencies in the delivery of services
- People working together to achieve a shared goals and individual goals
- A collection of agencies addressing multiple issues at the same time.

Part of our embracing the programs of Cooperative Extension has to do with consistency with our goals of wanting to help to support these families in making their lives work as well as possible. To the extent we can provide through organizations such as yours and others, it furthers our goals as real estate owners (3-3)

Name of 4th Interviewee

- Organizations, agencies, and individuals working together
- Focus on a common goal

Name of 5th Interviewee

- Representatives from different sectors of the community working on a common goal.
- Each person is contributing something that represents their area of expertise.
I would say it means representatives from different groups working together on a shared goal. Each group is contributing something that goes along with their specialty area. Whatever area of specialization that they have that relates to the goal, they are contributing something related to that. (5-1)

Name of 6th Interviewee

- Organizations and individuals working on a common goal
- Sharing resources, skills and expertise as they implement the solution
- Always evolving and open based upon the needs that are revealed as the implementation occurs and progresses

Name of 7th Interviewee

- A Group of individuals working together
- Working together to accomplish the same goal

Name of 8th Interviewee

- Establishing common goals
- Working equally to achieve goals
- Working with others to achieve individual and organizational interest

Name of 9th Interviewee

- The process of people working together to achieve a common goal
- It is hard work, with a lot of give and take
- People have to give up power and control. Failure to give up power and control can slow the collaboration down
It is a lot of hard work. It really is hard and work and I think people underestimate the amount of work that is involved in it if it's a true collaborative effort. There really is a lot of give and take and there has to be a setting aside of individual agendas and deciding what a common purpose is and what each person or organization can bring to the table to achieve to achieve a common purpose. It is very hard work, because you have to give up some control, some of your individual power for the collaborative effort itself.(9-1).

Name of 10th Interviewee

- Different groups working together for a common goal
When I hear the word collaboration it means different groups working coming together and working together for a common goal. Working together to define that goal and working together in the execution of that goal. (10-1)

Name of 11th Interviewee

- Individuals jointly working together to achieve a goal
- People working together to plan and make decisions
- Sharing duties and tasks
- People working together respectively
- It is not always equal because it is difficult to compare tasks
- Sharing in the implementation of responsibilities
- People being involved at various stages
It's not necessarily equal. What I may be doing may be the implementation-80% of the work. Somebody else may be doing the PR or outreach-It may not be equal. The key is

people need to do what they say they are going to do. I think it is good to say upfront that parts of this will be 80% and parts of this will be 10% of the job. People are always looking for equal and that is a misconception (11-1)

Name of 12th Interviewee

-Different organizations working together to identify and accomplish a common/mutual goal

Name of 13th Interviewee

-People working together to achieve a common goal

-People contributing what they are good at

-It is a slow process

-A lot has to be invested to keep it going

It's a slow process. You have to invest a lot in keeping the process going (13-1)

Name of 14th Interviewee

-Groups and organizations working together for a common goal

-Carrying out tasks together

-Sharing in the decision making

Name of 15th Interviewee

-Sharing in decision-making,

-Sharing of resources, time personnel, materials

In collaboration, I believe everything is on the table. You mesh your resources. They may be fiscal, time, personnel, material. You share decision making and you end of making some real changes in the way you go about doing your work in order to make sure that everybody is at the table and working collaboratively. (16-1)

Name of 16th Interviewee

-Working together

-Sharing ideas, perspectives

-Sharing decision-making

-Creating goals that meet the interest of all

Name of 17th Interviewee

-Organizations and individuals working together

-Working together for a shared interest, a common goal

-Shared decision making

APPENDIX J

An Example: Third Reading of the Transcripts Compilation of Themes, Patterns, and Common Ways of Thinking of Each Question

1. When you think of the term collaboration, how would you define or explain what is meant by that term?

- Individuals, organizations, and agencies working together to address a common goal
- Shared decision making
- Sharing in tasks and responsibilities
- Sharing of resources-i.e. talents, expertise, time, money, influence, space
- Resource sharing is not always equal
- Partners become involved at different stages

2: How did you see what you described being reflected in the programming efforts for the CYFAR program here?

- Those involved included schools, parks and recreation, business, Cooperative Extension
- Partners worked together to determine needs
- Meetings were conducted of those involved to trouble shoot, make decisions and decide upon actions to be taken
- Partners involved played different but needed roles
- Partners involved provided different but needed resources
- Extension provided educational programs and staff
- Parks and Recreation provided space and staff
- Schools and business provided space and access to targeted group
- ELCs provided influence and money when needed

VITAE

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Barbara A. Board
Northeast District Extension Director

I. Curriculum vitae.

A. Education.

M.S., 1992: Virginia Polytechnic and State University-Blacksburg
Major: Housing, Interior Design, and Resource Management

B.S., 1977: Virginia State University-Petersburg
Major: Textiles and Clothing in Business

B. Experience.

2002-Present: Northeast District Extension Director
Virginia Cooperative Extension

1/97-2002: Extension Specialist, Program and Leadership Development,
Virginia Cooperative Extension

11/92-12/96: Extension Specialist, 4-H, Virginia Cooperative Extension

11/90-11/92: Central District Extension Director, Virginia Cooperative
Extension

6/89-11/90: Extension Specialist, Administrative Projects, Virginia
Cooperative Extension

6/87- 6/89: Extension Specialist, EEO/AA/Program Compliance, Virginia
Cooperative Extension

11/84- 6/87: Extension Agent, Unit Director/4-H/CRD, Amelia County, Virginia
Cooperative Extension

8/80-11/84: Extension Agent, 4-H, Amelia County, Virginia Cooperative
Extension

7/78- 8/80: Extension Agent, 4-H/Home Economics, Charlotte, County,
Virginia Cooperative Extension

6/77-7/78: Assistant Manager, K-Mart Ladies Wear, Richmond, Virginia

C. Memberships.

Kappa Omicron Phi, National Home Economics Honor Society Member
Phi Upsilon Omicron, National Home Economics Honor Society Member
Phi Delta Kappa, National Education Fraternity Member

D. Professional Associations.

Epsilon Sigma Phi, Alpha Gamma Chapter, President
Extension/Outreach Faculty Association, Member/Past President
Virginia Extension Agents' Association, Member
Virginia Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Member

E. University Service.

Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Marketing Committee Member
Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Electronic Media Peer Review Committee Member
Virginia Tech Faculty Senate, Past Member
Virginia Tech Commission on University Support, Past Member
Virginia Tech Reconciliation Committee, Past Member

F. Community Organizations.

Roanoke Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated,
Golden Life Member