

Summary of Evaluation Findings

The Shader Croft School 2019

Prepared for The Shader Croft School

Prepared by PEER Associates

Primary authors: Qing Ren, M.S., and Brian Johnson, Ph.D.



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Background and Methods

The Shader Croft School is a private, non-profit organization that provides specialized instruction to Vermont students, ages 10 to 16. Headquartered in Burlington, Vermont, the programs are specially designed to help Vermont students who experience difficulty during the school year and seek to improve their academic performance. There is a summer program for students that runs each year for five weeks, usually in July.

In 2019, Shader Croft hired [PEER Associates](#) to carry out an external evaluation of the summer program. Shader Croft's leadership team was particularly interested in learning how Shader Croft could influence students' literacy skills and positive youth development. The overarching goal of this evaluation was to understand to what extent and in what ways the Shader Croft summer program impacted participating students' literacy levels and certain youth development goals. Literacy levels were assessed by comparing changes in the participating students' standardized reading assessment scores before and after the summer program with their peer students who did not participate in Shader Croft. Shader Croft students also took part in semi-structured interviews to investigate how the program influenced their literacy learning and socioemotional skills. The students were also asked to provide formative feedback on the program settings and activities.

A total of 41 students participated in the Shader Croft program during the summer of 2019. The majority of these students came from Winooski School District (WSD) and Champlain Valley School District (CVSD). WSD students were all English Language Learners (ELL) from Winooski Middle and High Schools. They participated in the program in two groups: middle school (6th and 7th grades) and high school (8th, 9th, and 10th grades). CVSD students came from three sending schools: Shelburne Community School, Williston Central School, and Hinesburg Community School. They were divided into two groups: one group with older students (mostly 7th graders and one 6th grader) and one group with younger students (4th, 5th, and 6th graders). One student from Burlington School District participated in the program along with the CVSD students¹. All the students in the CVSD group were non-ELL.

The literacy score comparison in this evaluation included 34 students due to data limitations, and the interviews included 37 students based on their availability. Therefore, the results are representative of most students' experience with Shader Croft. Table 1 summarizes the number of students from each school and their grade levels.

¹ The reading assessment scores of this student were not included in this evaluation because it would have required an endeavor to obtain comparison data from an additional school district. However, this student's reading scores showed a good increase over the summer, from the 13th percentile in the spring semester to the 25th percentile in the fall semester.

Table 1. Shader Croft students, 2019

District	School	Total number of participating students (n=41)	Number of students included in test score comparison (n=34)	Number of students included in interviews (n=37)	Grade levels in spring 2019 (based on # students included in interviews)
Winooski School District	Winooski Middle School	11	9	9	6th (n=2) 7th (n=7)
	Winooski High School	12	11	11	8th (n=8) 9th (n=2) 10th (n=1)
Champlain Valley School District	Shelburne Community School	5	5	4	6th (n=1) 7th (n=3)
	Williston Central School	6	4	6	4th (n=1) 5th (n=4) 7th (n=1)
	Hinesburg Community School	6	5	6	6th (n=3) 7th (n=3)
Burlington School District	Hunt Middle School	1	0	1	7th

Reading test score comparison

The two school districts provided available reading test score data for Shader Croft students and their peer students. For CVSD, the peer student comparison group contained all non-participating students from the same grade levels as the Shader Croft participants. For Winooski, the comparison group contained only non-participating ELL students from the same grade levels as the Shader Croft participants. For each school district, the differences between the test scores of spring 2019 (before Shader Croft) and fall 2019 (after Shader Croft) participants and non-participants were compared using a paired *t*-test. Changes in reading test scores (post-score minus pre-score) were compared between Shader Croft participants and non-participants using an independent *t*-test. Because the objective of the analysis was to compare the change of scores before and after summer, students with missing scores either before or after summer were not included in the analysis.

All WSD students consistently used FAST Adaptive Reading (aReading) as the assessment tool in both spring and fall semesters of 2019, so the scaled scores were directly used for the comparison. Some CVSD students used different assessment tools (Degrees of Reading Power

and Star 360 Reading) in the two semesters, so the national percentile ranks were used as the comparison for the purpose of normalization. It should be noted that the reading test scores were not a comprehensive measure of the students' literacy levels, but they were measures recognized by the associated schools and provided insight into one aspect of the students' literacy learning during the summer.

Student interviews

Between July and September 2019, PEER interviewed 37 students who participated in the Shader Croft 2019 summer program. Students from WSD were interviewed at the campus of Winooski Middle and High Schools. Students from CVSD were interviewed at Champlain Valley Union High School (CVU), where they gathered throughout the summer for the program. The majority of the interviews were conducted at the end of the summer program in late July. Additional interviews with students who were absent on the summer interview dates were conducted in early September at Winooski School District and Williston Central School.

Students were interviewed individually or in pairs, based on recommendations from Shader Croft teachers. The interviews followed an [interview guide](#) co-developed by PEER and Shader Croft. The students were asked to provide feedback on their general Shader Croft experience and how the experience influenced their self-awareness, attitude toward school, work completion (dealing with disappointment and frustration when doing school work), relationship with peers, and ability to respond to conflict situations. In order to reliably measure these outcomes, the students were given statement cards and asked to sort each statement under one of four levels of agreement in the sorting chart: "Yes," "Sort of," "Not really," and "Unsure." Other semi-structured questions about their Shader Croft experience and the program outcomes were also used to solicit verbal responses from the students.

Findings and Discussion

Reading test scores: Winooski School District

Compared with the spring semester, the average reading test scores of the Shader Croft participants from Winooski Middle School and their non-participating peers both had a statistically significant increase between fall and spring (participants $M=7.1$, $p=0.048$; non-participants $M=3.28$, $p=0.031$). Table 2 shows that the average score increase for Shader Croft participants was greater than the average score for their non-participating peers. However, the difference between the two sub-groups was not statistically significant at a 90% confidence level ($p=0.186$).

The reading test scores of Shader Croft participants from Winooski High School also had a statistically significant increase between spring and fall ($M=3.8$, $p=0.044$). In contrast, their non-participating peers showed a statistically significant decrease in reading scores between spring and fall ($M=-5.4$, $p=0.050$). The independent t -test comparing the reading test score changes for Shader Croft participants with the reading test score changes for non-participating

peers found a statistically significant difference in the mean score change between the two groups ($p=0.009$). **This suggests that Shader Croft did have an effect on Winooski High School students' literacy skills compared with their non-participating peers.**

Table 2. Comparison of literacy scores of WSD students

School/Cohort	Sub-group	Score change mean (M) and standard deviation (SD)	p value of paired t -test	p value of independent t -test
Winooski Middle School	Shader Croft participants	M=7.1, SD=11.3	0.048**	0.186
	Non-participants	M=3.28, SD=3	0.031**	
Winooski High School	Shader Croft participants	M=3.8, SD=6.7	0.044**	0.009**
	Non-participants	M=-5.4, SD=23.2	0.050*	

Note: * indicates $p<0.1$, ** indicates $p<0.05$

Reading test scores: Champlain Valley School District

The average reading percentile ranks of the Shader Croft participants from CVSD had a small increase over the summer; this increase was not statistically significant ($M=0.8$, $p=0.413$). In contrast, the non-participants from the same grade levels had an overall decrease in reading percentile ranks over the summer; this decrease was statistically significant ($M=-2.3$, $p=0.008$). Although comparing Shader Croft participants with non-participants showed no statistically significant difference ($p=0.208$), the data suggested that the Shader Croft students may have had better literacy retention, while their non-participating peers suffered a more observable summer learning loss. This difference was especially notable given that the Shader Croft students' literacy levels were in general less advanced than the many of the non-participants in the comparison group. The comparison group included students of all literacy levels, whereas the summer program participants only included students who experienced literacy learning difficulties during the school year. Table 3 shows the comparison results of CVSD students.

Table 3. Comparison of literacy scores of CVSD students

Cohort	Sub-group	Score change mean (M) and standard deviation (SD)	p value of paired t -test	p value of independent t -test
CVSD students from 5th, 6th, and 7th grades ²	Shader Croft participants	M=0.8, SD=13.1	0.413	0.208
	Non-participants	M=-2.3, SD=16.2	0.008**	

Note: * indicates $p<0.1$, ** indicates $p<0.05$

² The CVSD cohort had fewer students, and the grade level delineation was not as strict between the two class groups. Therefore, the available test scores of all participating students were aggregated in the analysis. Data from the only CVSD 4th-grade student were not included because of a lack of available spring test data.

Youth development outcomes

As shown in Table 4, the youth development outcomes measured in the interviews with Shader Croft participants showed largely positive results. The most positively identified outcomes were self-awareness, attitude toward school (confidence), and relationships with peers. **More than half of the students noted that Shader Croft helped them to understand themselves better.** Table 5 summarizes the themes that emerged from students' responses on improved self-awareness through their Shader Croft experience. A few students (46%, n=17) noted that Shader Croft helped them to discover what they were good at (students mentioned dancing, singing, writing, reading, etc.) and/or interested in (students mentioned becoming a doctor, building houses, working in a factory, etc.).

Table 4. Youth development outcomes (all students, n=37)

Statement	Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better .	21 (57%)	12 (32%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school .	15 (41%)	10 (27%)	5 (14%)	7 (19%)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school .	26 (70%)	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	6 (16%)
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work .	15 (41%)	10 (27%)	7 (19%)	5 (14%)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students .	25 (68%)	5 (14%)	5 (14%)	2 (5%)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students.	15 (41%)	2 (5%)	10 (27%)	10 (27%)

Table 5. Themes related to improved self-awareness

Self-awareness	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
I learned what I am good at (dancing, singing, writing, reading, etc.) and/or interested in (becoming a doctor, building houses, working in a factory, etc.).	17	46%
I learned what I am having trouble with and how to work on it (writing, pronouncing big words, giving presentations, etc.).	4	11%
I was able to improve my language skills (reading, writing, and/or speaking).	4	11%
I learned self-control/ability to focus.	2	5%
I did not meet my personal goals.	2	5%

"Shader Croft has helped me with knowing that I'm a good reader and I'm a good writer. I know I can do it better in school after Shader Croft because of the vocabulary which I got.... [I] didn't know any of those words. In only twenty days, I learned that many words."

- CVSD student

A number of students (41%, n=37) strongly agreed that Shader Croft inspired them to care more about doing well in school. Table 6 shows the themes that emerged from the responses associated with this outcome. The improvement in language skills played a role in inspiring students to care more about their school performance. Some students mentioned that they were motivated by future career prospects that they learned about from the adventures. The majority of students (70%, n=37) reported that Shader Croft gave them increased confidence in doing well at school. The most frequently mentioned outcome was their improved confidence in giving presentations and public speaking. A few students also noted that the teachers' encouragement was critical in boosting their confidence to improve language skills. The improvement helped students to feel more confident that they could do well at school (Table 7).

Table 6. Themes related to attitude toward school performance

Care more about doing well in school	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
My language skills improved.	7	19%
I am motivated by my future career/going to college.	4	11%
I learned how to focus better.	2	5%
I am able to memorize better.	1	3%
I learned social skills.	1	3%

Table 7. Themes related to confidence in doing well at school

Confidence in doing well at school	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
I am more confident to give presentations/speak publicly.	10	27%
I feel more confident because of improved language skills (reading and writing).	7	19%
Teachers' encouragement boosted my confidence.	6	16%
I feel more confident in general.	4	11%
I did not receive enough support to improve language skills.	1	3%

"Sometimes... when you're not doing very well, people make fun of you. But here no one is laughing. It's just like listening to you and... the teacher helps you."

- Winooski middle school student

"I was very scared to do presentations. Now I am so confident and proud of myself. I can present well and speak clearly. I also feel more comfortable talking with other people."

- Winooski high school student

"I didn't like reading. But now I think I like it a lot more, and I think I'll probably start reading more in school."

- CVSD student

"You learn more from Shader Croft than going to regular school. That's what I think. If I asked any question, they would help me with what's wrong with it and help me fix it. So now I can ask other people for help."

- Winooski high school student

A number of students (41%, n=37) strongly agreed that Shader Croft helped them to not give up on difficult school work. These students consistently mentioned that the teachers' encouragement provided necessary support to finish a difficult project or task.

"We were doing this project... I was almost giving up and then the teacher just told me to try and see what happened.... I tried and she helped me. I think I'm finished with the project today."

- Winooski middle school student

In terms of peer relationships, **68% (n=37) of students said that Shader Croft helped them feel comfortable with other students in the group.** Most students simply acknowledged the fact that they got along well with other students in the group. Seven students (19%, n=37) specifically mentioned that they made new friends at Shader Croft. Table 8 summarizes the themes that emerged from the students' responses on dealing with conflict. Many students mentioned that they never had a conflict with other students in the group, while some students (19%, n=37) related that they had learned techniques to handle a conflict.

Table 8. Themes related to conflict resolution

Ability to respond to conflict	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
I learned ways to handle conflict (chill down, apologize, ask for help).	7	19%
Teacher helped to investigate and address conflict.	5	14%
I kept it to myself when I was unhappy with the situation.	5	14%
Teacher did not help to address conflict.	3	8%
Had conflict with teacher.	2	5%

Tables 9A-D show the youth development outcomes by student groups.

Overall, Winooski students reported more positive outcomes compared with the CVSD students. The Winooski middle school students had slightly more positive responses to the self-awareness and school attitude indicators compared with the Winooski high school students. Meanwhile, the differences between the two CVSD groups were more observable in that the younger students had notably more positive responses on these indicators compared with the older students from CVSD.

"Before, whenever I was mad I would just take it out on everybody. Now I count to ten in my head when I am mad."

- CVSD student

Table 9A. Youth development outcomes, Winooski Middle School (n=9)

Statement	Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better .	7 (78%)	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school .	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school .	8 (89%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work .	6 (67%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students .	6 (67%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students .	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	5 (56%)

Table 9B. Youth development outcomes, Winooski High School (n=11)

Statement	Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better .	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school .	5 (45%)	3 (27%)	1 (9%)	2 (18%)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school .	10 (91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work .	4 (36%)	5 (45%)	0 (0%)	2 (18%)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students .	9 (82%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students .	6 (55%)	0 (0%)	3 (27%)	2 (18%)

Table 9C. Youth development outcomes, CVSD younger group (n=8)

Statement	Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better .	5 (63%)	3 (38%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school .	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school .	7 (88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (13%)
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work .	3 (38%)	3 (38%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students .	7 (88%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students .	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)	2 (25%)

Table 9D. Youth development outcomes, CVSD older group (n=9)

Statement	Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better.	2 (22%)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	0 (0%)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school.	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school.	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	2 (22%)	4 (44%)
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work.	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	4 (44%)	2 (22%)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students.	3 (33%)	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students.	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	6 (67%)	1 (11%)

Experience with Shader Croft

The interviews asked about the students' experience with the summer program. **The adventures were the students' favorite aspect of the program.** Out of all 37 students interviewed, 29 (78%) mentioned that the adventures were their favorite part of the Shader Croft experience. Three students noted that they liked being able to choose and plan their own adventure, while many others indicated more generally that their own adventure was the best of all. Table 10 summarizes the favorite experiences identified by the students.

Table 10. Highlights of students' Shader Croft experience

What did you like about Shader Croft?	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
Adventures/Afternoon field trips	27	73%
Spending time with friends/Making new friends	6	16%
General learning experience or opportunity	5	14%
Did not like the overall experience	5	14%
Being able to choose adventures	3	8%
Reading classes	3	8%
Writing classes	2	5%
Morning circle	2	5%

The vast majority of students had a positive experience with Shader Croft. Half of the students did not note anything that they did not like about Shader Croft. About a quarter of the students mentioned that they did not like some of the classes or having to work/learn. Only five students (14%, n=37) actively expressed negative feelings about their overall experience with Shader Croft, and four of them specified that they had social conflicts with other students or frustrating communication with the teachers³. Table 11 summarizes the negative experience identified by Shader Croft students.

"I liked Shader Croft because it helped me learn new words and new stuff. Also it made me have fun, be with my friends, and be happy."

- Winooski middle school student

"I like how we go on all these field trips in the afternoons and in the mornings sometimes. It is really fun."

- CVSD student

"I want to tell them that they did a good job.... The teachers were really nice to us."

- Winooski high school student

Table 11. Negative experiences of Shader Croft students

What did you not like about Shader Croft?	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
Nothing	19	51%
The classes (writing, reading, or trip planning)/Too much work/Having to learn	8	22%
Negative experience with other students or teachers (experiencing social conflicts with other students or poor communication with teachers)	4	11%
Certain adventures (swimming in a wild water body, getting in touch with farm animals, etc.)	3	11%
Lunch	1	3%

During the interview, **nearly half of the students (46%, n=17) mentioned that their Shader Croft experience went as expected without any surprises.** The most commonly noted (pleasant) surprise was that the adventures were part of the program. Three students

³ It should be noted that the interviews were conducted on a day toward the end of the summer program, and the students' emotions may have been influenced by the dynamics and events that happened immediately prior to the interviews that day or week. Thus, the reported social conflicts and frustrations may not be representative of the student's overall experience with Shader Croft.

mentioned not realizing in advance that they were going to have to do work at Shader Croft (Table 12). When asked how Shader Croft was different from regular school, **46% (n=37) of students noted that Shader Croft provided more opportunities to go on field trips and less school work.** A few students also mentioned differences in the daily schedule and subjects (Table 13). The majority of the students (68%, n=37) said they would recommend Shader Croft to their friends because of their positive experience (Table 14).

Table 12. Student responses to “Did anything surprise you at Shader Croft?”

Did anything surprise you?	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
Going on field trips/Visiting new places	5	14%
Having to work/learn	3	8%
Location of Shader Croft	2	5%
Meeting new people	2	5%
Content of some field trips	2	5%
Schedule differences from regular school	1	3%
Everything	1	3%
Expected to do more math and science	1	3%
Friend was not able to come	1	3%
More fun than regular school	1	3%
Fewer kids this summer	1	3%

Table 13. Student responses to “How was Shader Croft different from regular school?”

How was Shader Croft different from regular school?	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
More field trips/Less school work	17	46%
Shader Croft has fewer classes	8	22%
Different subjects (e.g., no oral expression class in regular school)	4	11%
No difference because bullying happens everywhere	1	3%
Classes stay in the same room at Shader Croft	1	3%
Shader Croft is at a different (unfamiliar) location	1	3%
No grading at Shader Croft	1	3%
Being able to choose what to do at Shader Croft	1	3%

Table 14. Students' willingness to recommend Shader Croft

Would you recommend Shader Croft to your friends?	Number of students	Percentage (n=37)
Yes	25	68%
No	4	11%
Depends/Unsure/Maybe	8	22%

"I told everyone that Shader Croft was amazing. A friend joined because I told them."

- Winooski high school student

"[I would recommend Shader Croft to my friends] because they would love all the adventures.... During the summer, they don't really do much.... This might be a fun opportunity and it helps them keep up with the next school year [and] with their reading and their writing."

- CVSD student

Some differences were observed between the four student groups. Almost all Winooski students (both middle school and high school) noted that the adventures were their favorite aspect of Shader Croft. Meanwhile, more students at CVSD mentioned being able to meet new friends from other schools as their primary positive experience with Shader Croft. In addition, four out of nine students from the Winooski middle school group mentioned writing, reading, or oral expression classes as their least favorite experience, suggesting that the more targeted literacy learning activities may have been a bigger barrier for this group compared with other groups of participants. All five students who said they had an overall negative experience with Shader Croft were from the older group of CVSD students. The youth development outcomes of this group were also the lowest among the four Shader Croft student groups. This pattern was not observed in any other groups. The Winooski students did not identify any prominent conflict between students or with the teachers.

Conclusions

- Overall, this evaluation has found preliminary evidence that **Shader Croft can have a measurable impact on participants' literacy standardized test scores, particularly for ELL high school students.** The data also suggested that **Shader Croft may help to prevent a "summer slide" related to reading skills.**
- The data suggest that the **Shader Croft School 2019 summer program had the strongest influence on literacy levels among the high school English Language Learners from WSD.** There was a statistically significant increase in their reading scores between spring and fall, while their non-participating peers had a statistically significant summer slide. **For WSD high school ELL students, the**

change in reading test scores for the Shader Croft participants was significantly higher compared with the score change for non-participants.

- **The middle school ELL students from WSD also benefited from Shader Croft.** Their reading scores significantly increased between spring and fall. However, this advantage was not significantly different from their non-participating peers, whose reading scores also increased.
- **The Shader Croft participants from the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of CVSD** had a slight increase in reading scores between spring and fall, while their peer students had a statistically significant summer slide. Although this advantage for the participants was not statistically significant, **the data provide some evidence that Shader Croft may have helped participants to avoid a summer slide in literacy levels.**
- Compared with outdoor adventures, the learning components and classes were not the students' favorite, but their outcomes were observable. **Many students mentioned benefiting from improved language, learning, and social skills.**
- **Confidence building was a key outcome in the youth development realm.** Encouragement and support from Shader Croft teachers helped the students build confidence in learning and endurance to pursue difficult tasks. While a few students from all groups noted that Shader Croft helped them become more confident in giving presentations and speaking in front of a group, this benefit was most evident among WSD middle school students.
- Overall, **Shader Croft had more measurable and observable positive effects on literacy levels, youth development, and experience building among the ELL students from WSD** (compared with non-ELL students from CVSD).
- **Most students had overall positive experiences with Shader Croft.** The most highly rated experience was the adventures. Students enjoyed being able to plan their own adventures. However, **the Shader Croft experience had different perceived values for the ELL students and the CVSD students.** The ELL students from WSD mostly emphasized their excitement with the adventures and building confidence in language learning and self-expression. For the CVSD students, the highly valued aspect of their Shader Croft experience was the opportunity to develop new relationships with their peers.
- While Shader Croft helped the 5th, 6th, and 7th graders from CVSD to prevent a summer slide in their literacy levels, **the younger students from CVSD had a more positive personal experience compared to the older students (7th graders).**
- In early planning discussions for this evaluation, Shader Croft proposed to use a quasi-experimental design (QED) to measure the changes in literacy levels of participants compared with non-participants, with the intention to meet [Tier 2 or Tier 3](#)

[of Evidence in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). However, the number of Shader Croft participants simply does not meet the large sample size ($n > 350$) required for Tier 2. **This evaluation met some, but not all, of the criteria of Tier 3, given budget and resource constraints.** Table 15 provides a breakdown of the alignment between the method used in this evaluation and the Tier 3 criteria. As shown in the table, in an ideal scenario to meet the Tier 3 criteria, a pre-test and post-test immediately before and after the summer program would need to be conducted, and the selection of the control group (especially for CVSD) would need more deliberation. These steps, while feasible, will likely require a significant amount of additional funding and coordination with the schools and school districts.

Table 15. Methodological alignment with ESSA Tiers of Evidence Tier 3 criteria

Tier 3: Promising evidence	Method of this evaluation	Ideal scenario
Well-designed and well-implemented correlational study or well-designed and implemented RCT or QED without a large/multisite sample.	We used the spring and fall reading test scores to simulate the pre-test and post-test in QED.	Conduct a pre-test and post-test of literacy levels and youth development indicators immediately before and after the summer program for participants and a control group.
Statistical controls for selection bias.	CVSD: We used the whole student population in the comparable grades to minimize selection bias. WSD: We used the whole ELL student population in the comparable grades to minimize selection bias.	Compare Shader Croft participants to students who meet the same criteria of participant selection. In Winooski, this was the population of ELL students. In CVSD, it would have been better to establish clearer boundaries for the participant selection criteria.
Significant favorable effect on relevant outcome.	We documented significant favorable effects on literacy outcomes.	Significant favorable effects are documented.
No overriding negative effects from causal studies	We did not document any overriding negative effects.	No overriding negative effects are documented.

- **Recommendations for future evaluation:** PEER typically offers program recommendations to clients based on the evaluation results. Because the initial scope of this evaluation and intended use of the report did not include demands for program recommendations, PEER has opted to offer recommendations for future evaluation instead.
 - Tracking multi-year changes in the students' literacy levels can provide insights into the program's longer-term effect. For example, reading scores of the participants can be tracked for three or four semesters and compared with the scores of non-participants.
 - If CVSD consistently collects student engagement data in the future, some variables may be used to conduct a quantitative evaluation of how the program helps participants to achieve certain positive youth development goals.
 - The cumulative effect of the program can be explored by comparing changes in literacy levels of returning participants to one-time participants.
 - Developing an evaluation toolkit can be useful for gathering ongoing input and measuring the effectiveness of the program. The toolkit may include adapting the existing instruments used in this evaluation, establishing regular contacts for accessing school data, forming a routine analysis procedure, and doing periodic checks with students and parents through the summer program.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Areas of Inquiry

- I. Overall impression about the program:
 - A. What did you like about the program?
 - B. What did you not like as much about the program?
 - C. Was it different than you expected? How so? Did anything surprise you?
 - D. How is it different from the regular school year?
 - E. What did you get out of Shader Croft? Do you feel Shader Croft helped you in any way? If not, how could they improve?
 - F. Would you recommend Shader Croft School to a friend or another student at your school? Why or why not?
- II. Youth development:
 - A. Self-awareness (I know and understand my strengths, interests, challenges) and concept of self as a capable student and learner (40DA #38, 39)
 - B. Attitude toward school (40DA #21, 22, &24)
 - C. Work completion (dealing with disappointment and frustration when doing school work)
 - D. Relationship with peers (40DA #33)
Feel comfortable and confident among group members and teachers.
 - E. Ability to respond to conflict situations with peer students (40DA #36)

Interview Guide

Introduction

- Self-introduction.
- The purpose of the interview is to understand how you feel about the Shader Croft experience (e.g. what you like, what you do not like) and what you got out of it.
- There are no right or wrong answers. You can be open and honest.
- This is not a test. Your answers will not be graded. Shader Croft will get a report from me that summarizes the interviews as a whole. The purpose is to make Shader Croft better next year.
- The interview is voluntary. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of the questions or staying here, you do not have to.
- It will take about 15 minutes.
- Can I have your permission to record the interview? No one at Shader Croft will be able to listen to the recording. I use it to go back and take notes after our interview.
- Questions?

General impression of the program

- What did you like about Shader Croft?
- What did you not like as much about Shader Croft?

- Was it different than you expected? How so? Did anything surprise you?
- How is it different from the regular school year?

Youth development outcomes

Option 1. Sorting activity

Now I'm going to give you a set of cards that have some statements. These may or may not describe your experience at Shader Croft. I will read the cards to you, and then I want you to put each card under the label that best matches how you feel about the statement. Again, remember that there are no right or wrong answers--be honest about how you feel!

Sorting chart laid out on the table:

Yes!	Sort of	Not really	Unsure
Place statement cards here	Place statement cards here	Place statement cards here	Place statement cards here

(After the cards have been placed in piles, the interviewer will go through each statement and ask the participant to explain why they chose each answer for each card.)

Statement (to be printed on cards)	Associated youth development outcomes
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better. (For example, what I am good at, what I am interested in, what I have trouble with.)	Self-awareness (I know and understand my strengths, interests, challenges, 40DA #38, 39)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school.	Attitude toward school or learning (40DA #21, 22, 24)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school.	
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work.	Work completion (responsibility and dealing with frustration/disappointment)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students.	Relationship with peers (40DA #33)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students.	Ability to respond to conflict situations with peer students (40DA #36)

And now for my final question. What else you'd like to share about your Shader Croft experience?

Option 2. Voting activity

Now I'm going to read some statements. These may or may not describe your experience at Shader Croft. After reading each statement, I want you to put a candy in the bowl that best matches how you feel about the statement. There are four bowls here: "Yes", "Sort of", "Not really", and "Unsure". Remember that there are no right or wrong answers--be honest about how you feel!

Statement (to be read to students)	Associated youth development outcomes
Shader Croft has helped me understand myself better. (For example, what I am good at, what I am interested in, what I have trouble with.)	Self-awareness (I know and understand my strengths, interests, challenges, 40DA #38, 39)
Shader Croft has helped me care more about doing well in school.	Attitude toward school or learning (40DA #21, 22, 24)
Shader Croft has helped me feel more confident that I can do well in school.	
Shader Croft has helped me not to give up on hard school work.	Work completion (responsibility and dealing with frustration/disappointment)
Shader Croft has made me feel comfortable with other students	Relationship with peers (40DA #33)
Shader Croft has helped me learn what to do when I have a conflict with other students.	Ability to respond to conflict situations with peer students (40DA #36)

After voting for each statement, the interviewer will ask the participant to explain why they chose each answer for each statement.

And now for my final questions.

- What did you get out of Shader Croft? Do you feel Shader Croft helped you in any way? If not, how could they improve?
- Would you recommend this program to a friend or another student at your school? Why or why not?
- What else you'd like to share about your Shader Croft Experience?