Original Research Process Paper

For my original research, I decided to explore how generalizing—doing multiple sports, clubs, and activities—impacts students in high school. I was drawn to this topic because of my own experience balancing soccer, robotics, schoolwork, and other commitments. I’ve always wondered whether doing a lot helped me grow, or if I would’ve been better off narrowing my focus. To dig deeper into this question, I chose to interview a former high school student who had a wide range of involvement: National Honor Society, Key Club, Soccer Team, Swim Team, and Baseball Team.

I decided to use an interview as my research method because I wanted to capture detailed personal insights that wouldn’t show up in a simple survey. During our conversation, the interviewee said they never felt pressured to specialize and preferred trying new things. They explained that generalizing helped them form more friendships, exposed them to a wider range of experiences, and made them quicker at learning new skills.

They also pointed out that generalizing kept them excited and motivated—it prevented burnout and made their high school years more enjoyable. More than just skill-building, they said generalizing helped them grow emotionally. It taught them how to deal with failure, manage expectations, and adapt when they felt unprepared or inexperienced.

When asked if they would change anything, they said they wouldn’t specialize earlier. They wished they had done even more. Their advice to underclassmen was clear and bold: “Don’t [specialize]—you’ll lose.” They believe that many schools and coaches still pressure students to specialize too soon, which limits their growth and experiences.

This interview reinforced what I’ve been learning through my academic research: that generalization builds adaptability, resilience, and confidence. More importantly, it showed me how powerful real-world stories are when it comes to understanding abstract concepts. This process helped me connect personal reflection with academic research in a way that makes my argument stronger and more meaningful.