For this interview, I interviewed Mrs. Jennifer Hays, the principal of Ralls County Jr. High School in Center, MO. Mrs. Hays was my high school social studies teacher and recently took the principal job in Ralls County, which is a small, rural district near to where I grew up. This is a district and, specifically, an athletic department that I competed against multiple times when I was in junior high school, so I am somewhat familiar with their situation coming into the interview.

I think in many ways this school’s strengths also tend to be connected to its weaknesses. They benefit in several ways from being a smaller district. Coaches are able to make more personal connections and address 3rd dimension needs in a way that might be more difficult for coaches at a larger school with many more student athletes to manage. They also have fairly modern athletic facilities due to recent renovations. However, while I think they are more than capable of addressing student’s fundamental 1st dimensional needs, they also lack the finances and resources of a bigger district which can make it more challenging to accommodate coaches with appropriate amounts of resources.

Speaking to Mrs. Hays, I also found that this district is like many other small rural districts when it comes to coaches’ development. I think most school districts of this size tend to be very 1st dimension oriented, which is a point that was stated in this course. I think there’s a high focus placed on fundamental and physical development among student athletes and significantly less so in the 2nd and 3rd dimensions. I think there are a lot of coaches at districts of this size that would benefit from a course like this. As Mrs. Hays stated, most professional development for coaches is something that they have to do on their own accord. I happen to believe that coaches are even more influential than teachers and, as a result, should receive similar degrees of required professional development to help them become coaches on a level deeper than just the physical. I also know that this is easier said than done at lower-income school districts. I would also like to encourage these coaches to emphasize the importance of the cerebral and spiritual aspects of the sport they are coaching. There are many opportunities in team sports to teach the values of strategy, teamwork, togetherness, and other skills outside of the physical domain.