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The impact of an after school mathematics program on the educational outcomes of Title I middle school students

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THE IMPACT OF AN AFTER SCHOOL MATHEMATICS PROGRAM ON THE

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF TITLE I MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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DEDICATION

To my wife

Davinia J. Londregan,

And my children,

Kenneth Jacob Londregan and

Riley Lynn Londregan

Thank you for putting up with all the hours I have spent on my doctoral studies over the last four years. You have been a support system that I have relied on heavily to make it through this educational endeavor. Your smiles and laughter have helped me to find the strength and courage to undertake this research project and to see it through its completion.

ABSTRACT

Kenneth Londregan
THE IMPACT OF AN AFTER SCHOOL MATHEMATICS PROGRAM ON THE
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF TITLE I MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
2011
Robert B. Campbell, Ed.D.
Educational Leadership

The purpose of this action research study was to evaluate if participation in an after

school mathematics enrichment program has an impact on student outcomes, including

the students' perception that the after school program helped prepare them for their

regular school day's mathematics class, score better on benchmark assessments, and

succeed on their New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) state test.

One hundred and twenty five students who received free or reduced lunch were asked to

participate in a free extended school program. Thirty students who did not receive free or

reduced lunches were also invited to participate in this extended school day opportunity.

The program ran 4 days a week, 1 hour a day, from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. for a total of

11 weeks. This program concentrated on mathematics and problem solving skills.

Cooperative learning activities, project based learning, solving real-life problems,

and technology integration were utilized to help challenge the participants and keep them

interested. A benchmark assessment was given to the after school program participants

and the control group before the after school program began, and 11 weeks later at the

end of the after school program. On the last day of the program, the participants were

given a survey to determine if they found any value in participation in the program. The

research participants' NJ ASK scores were collected before and after the implementation

of the after school program.

The results suggest that students perceive a benefit from participation in the after school program. The program was indeed effective in improving benchmark test scores (this result was observed for the whole sample and individually for each grade and socioeconomic level, except for Grade 8 students). However, participation in the program was not associated with significant improvements in NJ ASK scores. The difference between the program and control groups in terms of NJ ASK scores was significant only for the subsample of Grade 6 students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problems

Antiquated Time of Instruction

In 1994 the National Education Commission on Time and Learning published a

report titled "Prisoners of Time." The author stated,

Learning in America is a prisoner of time. For the past 150 years, American

public schools have held time constant and let learning vary. The rule, only rarely

voiced, is simple: learn what you can in the time we make available. (U.S.

Department of Education, 1994, p. 2)

The report came up with the following findings: With only a few exceptions, schools

begin between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and finish between 2:15 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

School years begin in late summer, end in late spring, and are open for approximately

180 days of normal instruction. Schools offer 5.6 hours of classroom time of which only

2.3 hours is spent on core academic subjects.

The results are predictable. The school clock governs how families organize their

lives, how administrators oversee their schools, and how teachers work their way

through the curriculum. Above all, it governs how material is presented to

students and the opportunity they have to comprehend and master it. (U.S.

Department of Education, 1994, p. 2)

Fifteen years later, President Barack Obama reiterated this idea, stating, "We can no

longer afford an academic calendar designed when America was a nation of farmers who

needed their children at home plowing the land at the end of each day" (Public Broadcast

Station, 2009). President Obama proceeded to state that children in Korea and other Asian countries attend school over a month more than children in the United States. The amount of instructional time given to our children may have made sense a century ago, but it now puts our students at a disadvantage to students in other industrialized nations.

Lack of Supervision, a National Problem

The American family structure has changed dramatically over the past few years. Diminished is the typical *Leave It to Beaver*-style family structure from decades ago, where a husband goes to work while the wife stays home and cares for the children. The structure of many families now consists of single parent households or homes where both parents work. There is a growing trend of increasing amounts of latchkey children, kids coming home from school without adult supervision. According to a Carnegie Corporation report entitled "A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours," Quinn (1994) reported adolescents spend 40% of their time unsupervised, unstructured, and unproductive. "Each afternoon across the U.S., 15 million children--more than a quarter of our children--are alone and unsupervised after school. The parents of 18 million would enroll their children in an afterschool program, if one were available" (Afterschool Alliance, n.d.a, para 1).

Lack of Supervision, an Increasing New Jersey Problem

Between March and May 2009, the JCPenny Afterschool Fund sponsored the America after 3PM survey. In 2004, New Jersey Schools had a higher percentage of children in afterschool programs than the national average. In 2009, the study found the opposite to be true: 14% of students were enrolled in afterschool programs compared to the national average of 15%. In 2004, New Jersey had a lower percentage of students

unsupervised and taking care of themselves after school than the national average. In 2009, the opposite was true, with 28% of students in New Jersey taking care of themselves when they came home compared to a national average of 26% (Afterschool Alliance, n.d.b). It seems the rest of our nation is making strides toward providing afterschool opportunities for our children, while New Jersey is beginning to fall behind.

Nationally, our Students are Falling Behind in Mathematics

A 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science study confirms the failure of American school systems to increase the number of high-achieving students. This study contained low, intermediate, high, and advanced benchmarks created to gauge student achievement. The test results determined that 7% of United States students had met the advanced benchmark in the field of mathematics, whereas 11% of students in the Russian Federation, 14% in England, and 21% of students in Japan attained advance proficiency. Also of concern, only 35% of students met the high benchmark in the field of mathematics. This is significantly less than the 41% of students in Russia, 43% in England, and 60% of students in Japan who have met this benchmark (Miller, Sen, & Malley, 2007). America has less than half as many students scoring in the advanced proficient range compared to their Japanese counterparts.

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, Falling Behind in Mathematics Compared to the Rest of New Jersey

According to the New Jersey Department of Education State Report Card, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is one of two middle schools located in South Ridge Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey. The length of the school day is 6 hours 44 minutes compared with a state average of 6 hours 30 minutes. Instructional time runs

5 hours 25 minutes compared to a state average of 5 hours 42 minutes. There are 113 teachers. There are approximately 1,347 students enrolled: 453 in sixth grade, 498 in seventh grade, and 396 in eighth grade. The first language of the students is as follows: 72.4% English, 5% Urdu, 3.8% Spanish, 3% Gujarati, 2.7% Arabic, 1.7% Tagalog, 1.5% Cantonese, and 9.8% other. The average sixth grade class size is 22.7 students compared to a state average of 20.7. The average seventh grade class size is 24.9 compared to a state average of 20.4. The average eighth grade class size is 26.4 compared with a state average of 20.4 (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

During the 2006-2007 school year, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, which is located in Middlesex County, New Jersey, had 15.1% of its students earn an advanced proficient score on the mathematics portion of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and knowledge for grade 8 (NJ ASK 8), compared to a state average of 20.4%. (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

During the 2007-2008 school year, Roosevelt had 16% of its students earn advanced proficient scores on the mathematics portion of the NJ ASK 8 compared to a state average of 24.9%. Roosevelt had 8.8% of its students earn a score of advanced proficient in the area of language arts literacy compared to a state average of 11.5%. During the 2008-2009 school year, Roosevelt had 21.8% of its students earn advanced proficient in the area of mathematics compared to a state average of 29.8%.

Due to a failure to meet its Annual Yearly Progress for the 3rd straight year, Roosevelt Middle School offers after school remedial programs to improve the test scores of students who are "in need of improvement." There is also a summer school remedial program for those students who have failed classes during the school year. Conversely,

Roosevelt currently offers minimal after school enrichment programs. There are also only a few opportunities during the summer to help develop and nurture the minds of the top and middle segments of the student population.

Students From Lower Socioeconomic Families are Educationally Disadvantaged

According to Schieffer and Busse (n.d.), "Lower SES (socio-economic status) parent figures have fewer resources to meet the physical, emotional, and educational needs of their children, as well as their own needs"(p. 1). Parents from lower socioeconomic households typically do not have the disposable income to pay for private tutoring and enrichment programs that are available to the children of families from the upper socioeconomic background.

Voters Agree There Is a Need for a Program

American citizens realize students need more than what is offered during a traditional school day. According to Rinehart (2003),

> Nine in ten registered voters agree that there should be some type of organized activity or place for children to go after school every day. Nearly three in four [voters] say after school programs are an absolute necessity in their communities. (p. 12)

In 1994, community pressure to utilize public school buildings following the end of the school day led Congress to fund the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), which is the only federally funded source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Funding increased from $40 million in 1998 to approximately $1 billion in 2002 (Burdumy et al., 2004).

Voters not only believe the programs are necessary, they believe they are an

*absolut*e necessity (80 percent agree, 48 percent strongly agree) and they strongly

support a comprehensive program to enrich learning opportunities for America's

children and teenagers (88 percent favor). (Lake Snell Perry & Associates, 2003,

para. 1).

Time to Think Differently

Anderson (1994) explained that "In the last decade, our nation has watched

young people from other countries outpace our own in scholastic achievement" (p. 8).

Adding the factors of high-stakes testing, overcrowded schools, the requirements of the

No Child Left Behind Act, and the influx of non-English speaking citizens, it is

apparent that we need to find ways to help educate our youth in order to give them a

more competitive edge. Students in Japan and other Asian countries traditionally have

longer school days and go to school more days a year than the students in American

schools (Stevenson & Lee, 1990). These additional hours of instruction may be one factor

in their students' success. It seems reasonable that we need to increase instructional time

to stay competitive.

Addressing the Problem

Creating an after school mathematics enrichment program for students who

receive free or reduced lunch at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School may be one option

that addresses all of the problems stated above: the lack of parental supervision for some

students after school, the lack of quality mathematics enrichment programs offered after

school, the failure of our school to offer as many hours of instruction to students as our

Asian counterparts, the failure of our school to score competitively compared to students

in the state of New Jersey and worldwide in the area of mathematics, and the inability of many parents from lower socioeconomic households to pay for private tutoring and enrichment programs that are available to the children of families from the upper socioeconomic background.

Specifically, the purpose of this action research study is to see if exposing the students in Theodore Roosevelt Middle School to extended day classroom instructional time will have a positive impact on the student participants. If this study is successful, it will lay a foundation for a yearly enrichment program.

Why I Am Qualified to Address This Problem

I have seven and a half years of teaching experience, five at Sayreville Middle School, and the remaining time at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School. I have instructed the following eighth grade mathematics courses: basic skills, pre-algebra, algebra, honors algebra, and problem solving. For four years, I have instructed after school remedial classes geared toward preparing students who scored below proficient levels on standardized tests to help them gain proficiency. I have five years of experience teaching grades 6-8 remedial summer school. Having taught the full gamut of mathematics courses from honors to basic skills, my educational goals and expertise remain focused on challenging students to develop critical thinking skills. I accomplish this by communicating with students at their level and providing an environment that encourages them to share ideas, think creatively, take risks, and make sound choices. As a result, I have enjoyed improved learner retention coupled with respect from students. In addition, I have earned the gratitude of parents and the high opinion of administrators. I am committed to the philosophy that all students can reach success. I am a dedicated and

resourceful teacher with the proven ability to inspire students to learn. My experience includes expanding an educational program and course curricula, participation in extracurricular activities, tutoring, and the use of my "free" time to help students meet their potential. I bring to the classroom authentic learning experiences that I translate into valuable lessons for my students. For this reason, I have the knowledge and drive to implement an afterschool enrichment program.

Goals of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program, and if so, what days?

2. What instructional methodologies are not being used in the school's every day instruction that can be implemented in an after school program?

3. Do students who participate in the extended day program feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

4. Do students who participate in the extended day program score higher on their mathematics benchmark assessment than peers who did not participate?

5. Do students who participate in the extended day program think the program helped to better prepare them for the mathematics sections of state testing?

6. Does participation in the extended day program help students score higher on the mathematics sections of the NJ ASK standardized test?

7. How does this project impact my leadership?

8. How does my leadership impact this project?

Methodology

An extended school day program was created to address the above problems and meet the stated goals. One hundred and twenty five students who receive free or reduced lunch were asked to participate in a free extended school program. Thirty students who do not receive free or reduced lunch were also invited to participate in this extended school day opportunity. The program ran 4 days a week, 1 hour a day, from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. for a total of 11 weeks. This program concentrated on mathematics and problem solving skills. Cooperative learning activities, project based learning, solving real-life problems, and technology integration were components that were utilized to help challenge the participants and keep them interested.

Assessment of the Program's Success

Quantitative Research

A benchmark test was given to the participants of the after school program before they began their first day of instruction. The same benchmark test was given to two control groups. The first control group consisted of students who were classified as Title I, but did not wish to participate in the after school program. The second control group consisted of students who were not classified as Title I, were randomly selected to participate in the extended day program, but did not wish to participate. After the last day of enrichment, the same benchmark test was given to the control groups, as well as the participants of the program. Comparisons were made of the difference in the before and after test scores of the control group to the difference in scores for the group participants. The hypothesis was that there would be a greater increase in test scores for the group that participated in the after school program.

Qualitative Research Survey

A survey was given to the students who participated in the after school program. The students were asked the following types of questions:

- How much did you like the program?

- What was good and bad about the program?

- What should be changed about the program and why?

- Do you feel more prepared for the mathematics portion of the state test after participating in this program?

- Do you feel more interested in mathematics after participating in this program?

- Do you feel this program helped make you a better mathematics student?

Qualitative Research Observation

The students were observed during their participation in this program. These observations were recorded in field notes and evaluated. The focus of these observations were student participation, time on task, interest in the activities, and the appearance of overall happiness in the activities.

Roadblocks

Funding for this program was the most difficult part of this study. In the current difficult economic times, many taxpayers are financially hurting. Some taxpayers believe we are spending too much on education, and it is becoming more difficult to convince boards of education and taxpayers to provide money for another program. A one year Title I funding grant was utilized for this pilot study. Finding grants such as the ones offered by the U.S. Department of Education, under the 21st Century Community

Learning Centers fund, is an option to extend this program a few more years.
Unfortunately, grants often only provide short-term solutions, and once money from them
is exhausted, the program will be without funding yet again. Securing long-term funding
is a major step to making sure this program, if successful, transcends beyond temporary
first order change, into longer-term second order change.

Finding student participants was a second roadblock. There is a stigma attached to
our current after school language arts and mathematics program that it is only for our
low-achieving students. There may be a few students who did not want to be associated
with the idea of being a low-achieving student. Additionally, some students may believe
that these after school programs are boring, and others do not want to be bothered
attending school beyond the regular school day. Finally, there is a group of students who
would have liked to participate, but had other after school obligations such as sports,
intramurals, and other extracurricular activities

Steps Toward Reducing Research Bias

The combination of quantitative research through pre and post test, qualitative
research through student and parent surveys, and the collection of field notes helped to
triangulate the results of this study, while reducing bias. All benchmark assessments were
graded by the instructors of the students utilizing standard rubrics reducing the
researcher's bias.

Significance of the Study

Because this is an action research project, any findings pertain principally to the
extended school day program being studied, and Title I students. The significance of this
study is rooted in expanding the knowledge base regarding the influence of adding

mathematics and language arts instructional time on student achievement. This study will have some significance to middle school educators and administrators who are looking for opportunities to expand the number of enrichment and after school program offerings to their middle school students. It will also give insight into the possible prospect of creating an after school enrichment class to meet the increasing demand for after school programs. The findings of this study may be significant enough to warrant replication in similar educational settings.

Limitations

The study has been undertaken with the knowledge that certain limitations will affect the validity of the research findings. Although participants will be selected to represent their respective population, this study solely focused on students at the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, and because of this, its results may not be the same in other schools. I implemented the program in the area of Mathematics, and therefore it will not necessarily have similar results if it were implemented for other subject areas. I only had one year to implement this program and evaluate its results. As far as this dissertation is concerned, I will not be able to conduct this research over the span of a few years to compare and contrast the results. Because of this, the findings of this study should not be generalized beyond the grade levels, subject areas, and school from which the participants were drawn.

Organization of This Study

Chapter II of the dissertation is a literature review highlighting the supporting articles and journals utilized to create the after school enrichment program. Chapter III will deeply explore the methodologies utilized to meet the goals of this research.

Chapter IV will present the results of the research. Chapter V will present the conclusion and recommendations for further research. Chapter VI will discuss my leadership platform: how I have grown to become the leader I am today, and what styles of leadership I plan to employ to implement this program.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical

The idea of after school programs are not new. In 1860 a few woman came together and formed a club for boys, under the premise that boys should have a positive alternative to roaming the streets. In 1906, several of these clubs affiliated, becoming the Federated Boys Clubs in Boston. In 1931 the Boy's Club Federation of America became Boys Clubs of America. By 1990 the name was changed to the Boys and Girls Club of America, and their website explains that

> Character development has been the cornerstone of the Boys & Girls Club experience since the first Club opened in 1860. The first Club professional, John Collins, devised a system of informal guidance to attract boys into the Club, capture their interest, improve their behavior and increase their personal expectations and goals. (Boys and Girls Clubs of America, n.d., para. 7).

Nelson-Johnson (2008) noted, that "During the early 1900s, after-school programs were primarily administered by private organizations to provide a safe environment for children, along with basic health care" (p. 25). After school programs during the early 1900s mainly served the purpose of being a safe haven for urban children, keeping them off the streets and out of trouble. According to DeAnglis and Rossi (1997), in the 1940s after school programs were expanded to school-age children who lacked adult supervision due to young working mothers entering the workforce while their husbands went off to war. Additionally, Halpern (2002) discussed the fact that changes in the workforce occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, when it began to

transition away from the traditional single parent working structure to one that increasingly began to encompass married and single mothers. These changes increased the necessity for after school programs in both urban and suburban areas. Although these programs began catering to both lower income and middle-class families, they still seemed to primarily serve the role of keeping children out of trouble.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has changed the focus of after school programs. Some schools that fail to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress have been looking into after school programs as an opportunity to educate students instead of simply babysitting them. Most of these programs focus on assisting students who are scoring below proficient on standardized tests, or aiding at-risk students.

A study by Collings and Onwuegbuzie (2002) evaluated the extent to which after school peer tutoring would increase achievement levels of at-risk middle school students. Citing the Shell Education Research, Collings and Onwugbuzie contended that middle and high school students in quality after school programs demonstrate better academic performance, behavior, and school attendance, and have greater expectations for the future than their peers who do not participate in such programs. High school youth in after school programs are at least 5% to 10% more likely to earn As and Bs, to have attended a cultural event, or visited a museum in the past month than their peers who do not participate.

Necessity of After School Programs

Every weekday, more than one-third of middle school students are released from school and left to their own devices. At this critical age, when many children either commit to their education or begin to experiment with risky behaviors that

can lead to dropping out, 4 million middle school students have no adult whom makes sure they get a healthy snack, help with homework, or access to sports, exercise, and other enriching activities in the afternoon. (Rinehart, 2008, p. 60)

In many American schools, 3 o'clock in the afternoon denotes a missed opportunity to help students meet their learning potential. As Peterson (2005) noted, "For many children, it's when learning effectively stops and when opportunities for inappropriate behaviors line up to take their place" (p. 14). The national institute on out of school time found that "approximately 8 million children ages 5 to 14 regularly spent time without adult supervision. In some cases, children are alone as much as 25 hours a week" (Pardini, 2001, p. 15). The Kaiser family foundation determined much of this time is spent watching television or playing video games. "The average media exposure among 2 to 4 year olds is well over 4 hours and peaks at about 6.5 hours by the age of 12" (Pardini, 2001, p. 12).

Coupling the fact that after school is a time when unsupervised students are at a "greater risk of accidental injury and death, drug and alcohol abuse, being involved in crime or dropping out of school than their supervised peers" (Pardini, 2001, p. 12) with the increasing number of schools that are failing to meet the learning needs of their students, there is clearly a need for effective after school instruction. This being the case, educators, politicians, and policymakers have been pushing for increases in instructional time, including after school programs. Additionally, the increasing pressure of the No Child Left Behind initiative has increased the focus of schools on standardized testing scores. Despite this, Manior (1997) suggested "Standardized test scores are just one among many tools for school accountability" (p. 11). According to Walker and Arbeton

(2005), "After-school programs provide safe havens that keep youth off the streets and offer them a variety of opportunities to enhance their experiences and skills, including educational outcomes such as grades" (p. 11). Rinehart (2008) stated after school programs, "inspire [children] to learn, and help resolve working parents' worries about what their children are doing in the afternoon" (p. 60). After school programs also create an opportunity to help prepare all students to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards, while preparing them to be competitors in an increasingly competitive global labor force.

The Role of Socioeconomic Status on Student Achievement

According to research by Brown (2000) there is a strong correlation between low test scores on standardized tests, and the socioeconomic level of the students taking the tests. Students from a lower socioeconomic background do not have access to the tools and resources that encourage and foster academic success in their more affluent peers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) became law in 2002. One main focus of the NCLB initiative was closing achievement gaps that occur between low income students and their peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). An evaluation of the New Jersey Department of Education School report card shows that the average economically disadvantaged student scores lower on standardized tests compared with his or her non-economically disadvantaged peers (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Kronick (2005) suggested that students from a lower socioeconomic background have a strong probability of growing into adults who are stricken by social and economic hardships.

Benefits of an After School Program

There are many documented benefits to additional instructional time after school. In one study by the University of Wisconsin, scholars found that the "more time students spent in an after-school program, the better their work habits and interpersonal skills. Other research has found a correlation between participation in after school programs and improved attendance, grade, and test scores" (Pardini, 2001 p.12). Posner and Vandell's (1994) research determined a positive relationship between participation in after school programs and an improvement in students' social behavior and academic performance. Chung and Eugene's (2005) research suggested "Attending school-based after-school programs linked to teacher-reported gains in students' work habits, social skills, task persistence and academic performance relative to unsupervised students" (p. 19).

A Columbia University Study on New York City housing projects compared the juvenile arrest rates to the availability of a Boys and Girls Club. The result of the study found a 22% decrease in drug activity and a 13% decrease in arrest rate for housing projects that had a Boys and Girls Club of America compared to similar housing projects that did not (Schinke, Orlandi, & Cole, 1992). The McLennan Youth Collaboration Lighted Schools Program founded in Waco, Texas, "provides over 650 middle school youth with a safe, supervised environment during after-school hours four days a week from 3:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Children are transported home at the end of the program each night" (McLennan Youth Collaboration, 1997, p. 1). This free program, targeted toward at-risk students, found a 10% drop in juvenile crime after an after school program was made available.

After school programs grant students access to resources that would not normally be accessible to them. For example, one extended day program located in a school library gives the library staff an opportunity to "promote literacy and ethical use of technology. These extra hours also provide at-risk students and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students with access to computers and technology they might not have at home" (Hunter, 2006, p. 42). In another successful after school library program,

> [Forty] student participants gathered in the media center at Fairview Elementary School where they participated in reading time, reading discussions, activities, games, and homework help. Children who took part improved their reading skills, and the program gave "the participants an academic edge." (Manzo, 2008, p. 10)

According to a study conducted by the U. S. Department of Education (2000), students who participate in after school programs benefit from increased learning, improved academic performance, enhanced motivation, more exposure to career choices, enhanced psychological and social development, improved health, improved school attendance, and decreased retention. This study also determined that participation in after school programs increases the occurrences of healthier habits, including reduced instances of substance abuse, decreased risk of teen pregnancy, and increased opportunities to engage in physical fitness.

A follow-up study by the U. S. Department of Education (2009) further discussed the benefits of after school programs highlighting students' increased ability and interest in reading, development of new interests, improved homework completion, improved academic achievement, higher attendance rates, lower dropout rates, fewer grade retentions, and an increase in self-confidence, and future aspirations.

Johnson (2008) conducted a study to determine if an after school enrichment tutorial program improved third and fifth grade students' reading and math abilities. Seventy-one Title I students from the Power Springs Georgia elementary school were selected to participate based on two factors: the student being classified as per Title I, and the student having scored below the 30th percentile on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The participants attended a 13-week after school tutoring program, consisting of 2 hours of mathematics and reading tutoring twice a week. Students were given pretests and posttests in mathematics and reading to assess their performance. The data were analyzed using a paired samples t test to compare pretest versus posttest scores. Within a 95% confidence level, I determined the third and fifth grade participants achieved statistically significant gains in regard to mathematics and reading.

Nelson-Johnson (2008) carried out a mixed methods action research study at an urban middle school located in southeastern Georgia. This study examined the effectiveness of an after school program, comparing the impact of a constructivist method and a traditional method of teaching mathematics had on the mathematics achievement of seventh graders. An experimental group and control group took the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) as a pretest and posttest to measure the affect the program had on student standardized testing scores. Student attendance data were also collected from the school year in which the after school program occurred. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) determined the experiment group had a larger increase in standardized testing scores and attendance, compared with the control group. A qualitative survey conducted among the experiment group found a linkage between the teaching strategies utilized in the after school program and student attitude toward learning mathematics.

Manior (1997) conducted a quantitative study using the pretest and posttest scores of the Iowa test to study the effects of after school programs on the achievement level and attendance of middle school students. Two hundred and five middle school students were selected from two metropolitan middle schools located in Georgia, with 107 participants and 98 nonparticipants. Both groups were given a pretest and posttest to gauge the effectiveness of the after school program on student testing scores. Participants of this study achieved a greater increase in mathematics and reading scores from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment, compared to nonparticipants.

Cons of an After School Program

After school programs do not come without opposition. Most children have been ingrained with the notion that formal learning stops when the school bell rings at the end of the day. As Weisburd (2005) related, "The last thing they want is more school" (p. 11). It is hard for students to break out of a routine they have been following for their entire life by staying after school and learning after the final school bell has rung. Attendance is a large issue when it comes to the implementation of after school programs, and often, "it is more challenging to maintain attendance among middle-school aged youth than among elementary-school aged children" (Weisburd, p. 12). Unfortunately, Weisburd found that "at the Beacon centers, [there was] nearly a 3% drop in young people's attendance for each additional year in age" (p. 12).

Darcy Olsen, director of education and child policy at the Washington, DC-based Cato Institute stated that children's "lives are so over-structured already. They have more homework than ever and lots of other activities, and only a couple hours after-school before they have to go to bed" (Pardini, 2001, p. 12). Finding space for after school

programs that are located in schools is challenging. Schools often only offer classrooms and other spaces that are used during the day. If, as is the case in some overcrowded schools, there are not enough classrooms and teachers, after school programs are unlikely to have dedicated space (Walker & Arbreton, 2005, p. 11).

Funding is also a challenge for after school programs. As property taxes increase, and people's disposable income decreases, people are looking for ways to solve their financial woes. This is true for most school superintendents who are facing increased pressure from their boards of education to reduce spending. Often, after school programs are just one of the many places school administrators trim the fat. There are federally funded programs that offer money for after school programs such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, but these programs do "not provide nearly enough funds to meet the need for new after-school programs" (Rinehart, 2003 p. 12). Rinehart (2003) stated, "Minnesota and Mississippi had the largest gaps, with funds available to cover just 8 or 9 percent of requests for after-school funding" (p. 12).

Granger and Kane (as cited in Walker & Arbreton, 2005, p. 13) argued that there is little evidence that instructional methodologies such as tutoring and homework help typically offered at after school programs provide notable improvements to student outcomes. Conducted by the Princeton NJ based Mathematica Policy Research Inc., the earlier study found that federally funded programs provided no special learning boost and may even have "led to a slight statistical increase in some negative behaviors" (Viadero, 2007, p. 13).

While the majority of studies have found at least some type of correlation between after school programs and improved student statistics, there are some studies

that have not found such strong correlations. For example, Brown (2008) investigated the long-term impact of after school programs on student achievement in a rural Georgia elementary school. She used 3 years worth of CRCT scores in reading and mathematics and report card grades as the measurement tool for the impact of after school programs on student success. Unfortunately, the results of this study were inconclusive. There was a slight increase in reading scores from second grade to third grade; however, there was a decrease in scores from third grade to fourth grade. This may be because of some of the limitations of this specific study; however, it is worth noting that not all studies find such a strong relationship between after school programs and student achievement.

Additionally, in response to students scoring below grade level at her Mississippi elementary school, Goyette (2008) created an after school tutoring program. There were 146 students from two elementary schools selected to participate, encompassing grades 3 through 6. The results of the study found no significant difference between students that participated in the after school tutoring program, and students who were eligible but did not attend. The only exception was the growth of mathematics and reading scores of grade 3 student participants compared to their counterparts, who did not attend the program. Again, acknowledging that some studies have been inconclusive is important to understanding that more research on this topic must be conducted.

After School Programs Have Been Accepted

Chin and Phillips (2004) used ethnographic data to explore how families from different ethnic and social backgrounds arrange child-care and learning activities for their children during summer vacation. These researchers suggested families' ethnic and social background strongly influences parental access to a wide range of resources including

money, the human capital to assess and improve a child's skills, social capital to learn and gain access to available programs, and cultural capital to know how to cultivate a child's talents. The authors contended most parents want their children to learn, but many families lack the means of accomplishing this ambition. In our tough economy, many people just do not have the money to pay for extra learning opportunities for their children.

Alexander, Entwistle, and Olson (2001) conducted a five 5-year study in the Baltimore City School District to determine where achievement gaps occur between students who are from upper and lower socioeconomic statuses. Their study demonstrated that the increase or decrease of students' knowledge is highly dependent on their out-of-school environment, including the influences of the family and community. This article supports my research as it dictates the strong need to reform school calendars to help close the achievement gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Grossman et al. (2002) contended 93% of Americans agree that after school programs should be offered in their neighborhoods, and two-thirds of voters believe these programs should be funded through their property taxes. Peterson stated, "After-school programs offer the unique opportunity to engage the public and community organizations with schools, dynamic programs build public support that can advance many of a school districts priorities" (2005, p. 11).

Creation of an Effective After School Program for Students From a Lower

Socioeconomic Background

Choosing the correct teaching staff plays an integral role in ensuring students from a low socioeconomic background are successful in an after school program.

According to research by Fashola (1998), negative interactions between lower socioeconomic students and their after school teachers led to a decrease of the students' academic success during the regular school day. Research conducted by Lyon, Fletcher, Torgessen, Shaywitz, and Xhhabra (2004) determined that having a great teacher in itself can have an impact on a student's ability to learn. Teachers who motivate and inspire their students drive them to success in the classroom. This suggests that positive relationships between students and staff after school have a direct impact on the success the student will have in the after school program.

Class size can have an impact on student learning. Small student-to-teacher ratios help the teachers to learn about their students' strengths and weaknesses. A study by McRobbie, Finn, and Harman (2000) suggested that a decrease in class size has a positive impact on student's ability to learn mathematics and reading. Small group settings help keep students focused and on task. It also provides increased opportunities for the instructor to interact with the students (Vaughn et al., 2003). Most of the academic gains are found within the first year of the classroom size reduction. Kane (2004) suggested the most successful after school programs are well structured and regimented. This helps students who are struggling fall into a routine, helping to alleviate the stress of attending the additional hours of instruction.

The design of the activities utilized in an after school program are crucial to the success of an after school program. According to Fashola (1998), effective after school programs need to offer varied activities to help keep students engaged. It is suggested that after school programs should offer activities that differ from the ones offered during the

students' daily mathematics class so students do not feel the after school program is a continuation of the school day.

Conclusion

The creation of after school programs is not a new idea, but rather the culmination of over a century's worth of necessity to fill a void. Initially they were seen as a means of keeping urban children off the street and out of trouble. Now they are viewed as an opportunity to add additional instructional time to the school day, helping students to achieve their learning potential. There is research to both prove and disprove the effectiveness of after school programs in regard to an increase in students' standardized testing scores. However, there are indisputable benefits to after school programs, including decreases in drug and alcohol use among youth, fewer instances of teen pregnancy, and decreased crime rates.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to Hinchey (2008), "Action research always begins with a local question and explores local content, seeking local rather than global insight" (p. 32). This action research study was conducted at the South Ridge School District, a pseudonym for a suburban school district located in Central New Jersey. An extended day mathematics program was created for students who received free or reduced lunch at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is also a pseudonym for the actual middle school where this study was conducted. This program was created to address the numerous problems stated in the introduction. From a local curriculum standpoint, this program addressed the lack of quality mathematics enrichment programs offered after school, as well as the failure of the students at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School to score competitively compared to middle school aged students in the state of New Jersey and worldwide in the area of mathematics. This program addressed local socioeconomic concerns, mainly the inability of many parents from lower socioeconomic households to pay for private tutoring and enrichment programs that are available to the children of families from the upper socioeconomic backgrounds. It also addressed the lack of parental supervision for some students after school.

Calhoun (1994) described the action research cycle as involving "defining a problem, collecting data, organizing data, and tacking action" (p. 2). Theodore Roosevelt Middle School offers after school remedial programs to improve the test scores of students who are "in need of improvement." There is also a summer school remedial

program for the students who have failed classes during the school year. The identified problem was that Theodore Roosevelt Middle School offered minimal enrichment opportunities tailored toward students from a lower socioeconomic background, and there was a need to create a program for these students.

Setting

South Ridge Township Public Schools is a 42-square mile suburban school district located at the southern end of Middlesex County in central New Jersey. The district has a total student enrollment of over 10,000 pupils. Students are housed in 12 elementary schools (grades K-5), two middle schools (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12) (Bosco, 2009).

The length of the school day is 6 hours 44 minutes compared with a state average of 6 hours 30 minutes. Instructional time runs 5 hours 25 minutes compared to a state average of 5 hours 42 minutes. There are 113 teachers. There are approximately 1,347 students enrolled: 453 in sixth grade, 498 in seventh grade, and 396 in eighth grade. The first language of the students are as follows: 72.4% English, 5% Urdu, 3.8% Spanish, 3% Gujarati, 2.7% Arabic, 1.7% Tagalog, 1.5% Cantonese, and 9.8% other. The average sixth grade class size is 22.7 students compared to a state average of 20.7. The average seventh grade class size is 24.9 compared to a state average of 20.4. The average eighth grade class size is 26.4 compared with a state average of 20.4 (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

During the 2006-2007 school year, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School had 15.1% of its students earn an advanced proficient score on the mathematics portion

of the NJ ASK 8, compared to a state average of 20.4% (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

Research Questions

This action research study was conducted to answer the following questions about the after school extended day program.

1. Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program, and if so, what days?

2. What instructional methodologies are not being used in the school's every day instruction that can be implemented in an after school program?

3. Do students who participate in the extended day program feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

4. Do students who participate in the extended day program score higher on their mathematics benchmark assessment than peers who did not participate?

5. Do students who participate in the extended day program think the program helped to better prepare them for the mathematics sections of state testing?

6. Does participation in the extended day program help students score higher on the mathematics sections of the NJ ASK standardized test?

7. How does this project impact my leadership?

8. How does my leadership impact this project?

Quantitative Study: The First Cycle in the Action Research Study

Each of the 125 students who were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch was assigned a number. Using a random number generator, two lists of 40 students were generated. Surveys were given to the students on the first list, and surveys were given to

the parents of the students on the second list (Appendix A). Within seven days of the survey distribution, 28 surveys from the Title I eligible students were returned, and 26 surveys from the parents of Title I eligible students. A letter was sent to the 40 students and the 40 parents who received the surveys. The letter thanked those who had returned the surveys, and reminded those who did not return their surveys to please complete them. Within 2 weeks of sending the reminder/thank-you letter the following surveys were returned: 36 surveys from the Title I eligible students, and 38 surveys from the parents of Title I eligible students. A second follow-up was deemed unnecessary due to an initial return rate of 92.5%. There may be a negligible amount of non-response bias based on the 7.5% of surveys that were not returned.

The goal of these surveys was to gauge student and parent perceptions of various after school programs. The survey research was created to address the following research questions:

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?

- Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program and if so, what days?

This research aided in understanding whether or not Title I students were willing to participate in an after school program. It also helped to determine if parents wanted their child to participate in this program.

Qualitative Study: The Second Cycle in the Action Research Study

The goal of this cycle was to address the following research question:

- What instructional methodologies are not being utilized in the school's every day instruction that can be implemented in an after school program?

Three elements were utilized to conduct this study: classroom observations; the collection of the observed teachers' lesson plans, handouts, class rosters, and graded assessments; and interviews with teachers who were observed.

To find teachers willing to participate in classroom observations, a mass e-mail was sent to the entire teaching staff at the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School asking for volunteers who had a period four or five class and were willing to be observed for the study. These teachers were informed that these observations would be conducted for a doctoral level class and would not have any bearing on their yearly contractual classroom observations. Of the 122 teachers e-mailed, 18 gave permission to have their class observed, 15 teachers stated they were fine with a classroom observation being conducted, but they were not available during those two periods, and the rest of the teaching staff did not respond.

The names of the 18 teachers who were open and available to an observation were placed into a hat and selected at random. The first teacher selected would be observed over three continuous days to see how much variation occurred between each lesson. A second teacher was chosen to be observed for two continuous days, also to ascertain variation in lessons from day to day. The next five teachers were selected to be observed for one day only. The teacher selected for the three continuous days taught eighth grade pre-algebra during the observation period. The teacher selected for the two day

observation taught sixth grade regular education social studies. In order of their random selection, the remaining five teachers taught sixth grade honors mathematics, eighth grade regular education science, seventh grade regular education social studies, seventh grade pre-algebra, and eighth grade basic skills mathematics.

Prior to the classroom observation, each teacher who was to be observed was asked for a copy of the lesson plans. These plans were used to determine a baseline for the types of instructional strategies utilized in the classroom, the pacing of the class, and the depth of instruction as it relates to Bloom's Taxonomy and higher order thinking. These lesson plans in conjunction with classroom observations and teacher interviews helped to triangulate the instructional strategies utilized by the observed teachers.

Each teacher was also asked for a copy of his/her class list of the students in the class. After the classroom observation was conducted, this list was brought to guidance and used to find each student's standardized testing scores. This information, along with the classroom observation and the interviews with the teachers, was used to try to determine if the students' levels of ability had any impact on their behavior in the classroom. For example, if students seemed bored, was it because they were not being academically challenged, because they had no interest in the subject, or some other reason or combination of reasons?

Each of the 10 classroom observations lasted approximately one hour. The observations started about 15 minutes before the students arrived in order to see how students entered the classroom. The observations continued for about 5 minutes after the end of class to see how students exited the room and if any students stayed behind, and if so, for what reason. Copies of all handouts given to the students were collected and

inventoried. Copies of any assessment given were also collected and inventoried after they were graded. After the observations were conducted, the teachers were asked to participate in a 30-45 minute recorded interview where questions were asked about their classroom instruction and general educational practices (see Appendices B and C for interview protocol and consent to participate). Five teachers agreed to meet with me after school to conduct these interviews. These five names were placed into a hat, and three were selected at random. The interview with Ms. X. was conducted in her classroom after school and recorded using a digital voice recorder. This interview took approximately 45 minutes. The second interview with Mrs. Z. was conducted in my classroom after school, and was also recorded using the digital MP3 player. This interview took approximately 35 minutes. The third interview with Ms. Y. took place in her classroom. This interviewee preferred not to be recorded and agreed to an interview under those terms only. This interview took approximately 40 minutes.

A week after the formal interviews were completed, an informal interview was conducted with each of the three interviewees to gain clarification about some of the answers given during the prior interviews. In addition, a few more questions were asked that had developed after reading over the typed field and interview notes.

**Quantitative and Qualitative Research: The Third Cycle in the
Action Research Study**

Student Participants

A list of every student at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School who received free or reduced lunch was generated by the guidance department, resulting in a list of 125 students. A letter was sent home to each of these students asking for them to voluntarily participate in the after school program. The students were given the option to participate

up to four days a week, Monday through Thursday, to receive extra help in mathematics. The program length was 11 weeks, 1 hour per day from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. The students were provided access to the late bus for free at the end of each day.

The letter asked parents to check off a box stating their interest in having their child attend the after school program, or the box informing us that their child will not be participating. The letter asked parents of children who were participating to please fill out the attached permission slip and informed consent form (Appendix D). Finally, this letter asked the parents to have their child drop off this letter in the main office. At the end of the week, a list was generated of students who did not return their forms. I called the homes of these students to ascertain if the parents wanted their child to attend. If the parent wanted to have their child attend the program, they were notified that an informed consent form must be filled out prior to their participation.

Out of the 125 qualifying students, 77 students agreed to participate in the after school program. For a control group, the 48 students who did not want to participate in the after school program were asked to voluntarily take the same pretest and posttest as the group participating in the after school program. To make this convenient for the student, they were told they could take this assessment during their mathematics class provided their teachers would approve. Twenty-five of the students agreed, and each of their teachers allowed them to take the test during class. Informed consent was secured from these 25 students' guardians.

For an additional two control groups, a list of all the students who did not receive free and reduced lunch in the building was complied. A number was assigned to each student. Using a random number generator, 60 students were selected. The first 30

selected were asked to also take the pretest and posttest during their mathematics class periods. Of those 30, 25 agreed to participate. Informed consent was secured from these students' parents. The second group of 30 students selected were offered the opportunity to attend the after school program. Fourteen of these students accepted the opportunity. Informed consent was secured.

Staff Participants

Twenty teachers were selected to participate in the after school program based on positive teacher observations, possession of the required teaching certifications, and previous experience and success in after school programs. These teachers were employed in the district and were highly qualified in the subject area in which they were asked to instruct. They were offered 45 dollars for every hour of instruction and for the creation of students' individual learning plans. Seventeen teachers accepted the offer. Informed consent was secured for the staff prior to their participation.

The third phase of this action research project was an evaluation of the program's successes and failures. This action research project was evaluated utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. According to Hinchey (2008), triangulation is "collect[ing] multiple types of data – minimally three – to increase confidence in [the research] findings" (p. 76). The combination of two assessments, interviews, and observations, was utilized for triangulation purposes. This helped to gain a deeper understanding of the success of this program and to reduce researcher's bias. Specifically, the goal of this cycle was to address the following research questions:

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?

Quantitative Research

The participants' NJ ASK scores prior to and after their participation in the after school program were collected. The change in test scores between the non-participant group was compared to the change in scores in the enrichment group using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) for analysis. This was conducted through an analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the NJ ASK scores (in 2009 and 2010) and benchmark test scores (pretreatment and posttreatment) for the whole sample, and segmented by group. An independent samples *t* test was used to determining whether there were significant differences in the change from pretreatment to posttreatment in the benchmark test scores between the Control and Program group.

Each participant in the after school program, along with control group members, took a pretest before the program began and a posttest at the completion of the program. These tests were from the Buckle Down State Test Preparation series (www.buckledown.com), which mimic the actual NJ ASK assessment.

As a second quantitative measure, a benchmark test was given to the participants before they began their first day of instruction. After the last day of the after school program, a similar benchmark test was given to the participants of the after school program and control groups. SPSS was used to compare the differences in the before and

after test scores of the control group to the differences in scores for the program participants. The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference in the increase or decrease of test scores for the groups that participated in the after school program compared to the control group.

Qualitative Research

At the end of the extended day program each student who participated in the extended day school instruction was given a survey. The goal of the survey was to address the following research questions:

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?

The survey asked the following questions:

1. Did participation in this after school program help prepare me to take the mathematics portion of the NJ ASK?

2. Did participation in this after school program help me feel more prepared for my classes during the school day?

3. Am I glad that I participated in this after school program?

4. Would I continue this program for the rest of the school year if I were given the opportunity?

5. Would I continue this program next year if I was given the opportunity?

6. What did I like about participation in the after school program?

Qualitative Research: The Fourth Cycle in the Action Research Study

The goal of this cycle was to answer the research question, "How does this project impact my leadership?" The day after the 22 teachers were notified they were selected as instructors in the after school program, they were asked to complete a 30 question leadership inventory to gauge my leadership behavior. Each question had a rating scale associated with it as follows: 1 = almost never, 2 = rarely, 3 = seldom, 4 = once in a while, 5 = occasionally, 6 = sometimes, 7 = fairly often, 8 = usually, 9 = very frequently, and 10 = always.

Each teacher was asked to keep the survey anonymous, and place the survey in my mailbox once it was completed. The week following the conclusion of the after school program, the 22 teachers were given the same 30 question leadership inventory. The mean scores of the preassessment were compared to the mean scores of the postassessment to ascertain if the staff members viewed any changes in my leadership style after completion of the after school program.

Kotter's Eight Step Change Model

Kotter's (1996) eight step change model served as a roadmap to successfully implement this change initiative. During the first stage of change, Kotter explained the need to create a sense of urgency. "A high rate of urgency does not imply ever present panic, anxiety, or fear. It means a state in which complacency is visually absent, in which people are always looking for both problems and opportunities" (Kotter, 1996, p. 162). Theodore Roosevelt Middle School has not made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) and is in its third year of being labeled as a school in need of improvement. I discussed with our school administration the implications of continuing down this path of low achievement.

This helped to instill the sense of urgency needed to get my school administration to open their minds to a new change initiative. This urgent communication that change is necessary aligns with the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards 2.2: providing an effective instructional program, and 2.3: applying the best practice to student learning.

Kotter's (1996) second step in his change model addresses the issue of getting staff to "buy in" to the change by creating a "powerful guiding coalition." It is said that "no man is an island," and it is unrealistic to believe that one can undertake a successful change initiative alone. Assembling the right team of individuals to guide the transformation is essential for its success. These coalition members must have expertise in the area of change, and have commitment to the change, positional power, and political power. This is where a working knowledge of Bolman and Deal's (2003) theory of reframing organizations was useful as I conducted a cultural scan of our school and determined the current culture of the building. The organization of the right group of people, who were familiar with the inner workings of the school's culture, was essential for this change initiative to be successful.

To make this change successful, I had to identify the true educational leaders in my school in order to get their approval and support. This included some of our teachers, the department supervisor, the school principal, and the district superintendent. It was not hard to get these pivotal staff members to commit to this initiative, as increasing standardized testing scores was in their best interest. Getting input from parents and PTA members provided me an opportunity to gain valuable insight into what the public thought about this change initiative. I built a coalition with these key stakeholders as we

worked together to achieve our common goal. The creation of this coalition meets ISLLC Standards 4.1 and 4.2: promoting the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members.

Kotter's (1996) third step, called "creating a vision" for change is paramount to the success of this new initiative. Through compromise, accommodation, and negotiation, my school administration and I crafted and developed a shared vision focusing on the enrichment of Title I students. A blueprint for my after school program was created, and funding was procured. This aligns with ISLLC Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5: promoting the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision.

The fourth point Kotter (1996) addressed to implement change is communication. Communicating the progress and growth of one's change initiative is critical to its survival, yet many change initiatives fail to do this. If the staff is not reminded of the modification, they will most likely forget, or even worse, become disenchanted with it. Those involved should periodically be made aware of the progress the change initiative is making.

I continually reminded our stakeholders of what we were trying to accomplish. I reminded our after school tutors of the importance of helping these students succeed and of the need for our school to make AYP. I also addressed questions and concerns about our project. This phase also meets ISLLC Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

Kotter's (1996) fifth step is based on removing obstacles. In this particular change initiative, an obstacle that I encountered was some students wanting to stop program attendance before its completion date. Some students grew weary of spending an extra

hour after school for instruction. A few students stopped showing up all together. Through opening up lines of communication with parents as well as speaking to the students, I was able to convince these students that it was in their best interest to complete the program. This collaboration meets ISLLC Standards 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3: promoting the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members.

Kotter's (1996) sixth step, planning and "creating short term wins" can be an extremely effective tool in keeping one's supporters motivated while disproving skeptics. Imagine running a marathon without going through any checkpoints, seeing any mile markers, knowing what place one was in, or how far one had gone. Most likely one would give up. Seeing tangible signs of success rekindles the fire to keep driving forward until the finish line. I highlighted any successes that occurred along the way, thus creating momentum for more victories. When I heard a story of a student doing better in class, I shared it with our stakeholders. When I heard a student tell me they enjoyed the extra help after school, I passed that information along. Winning is addictive. The more wins our stakeholders saw, the more they wanted to accomplish. This related to ISLLC Standards 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

Kotter's (1996) seventh step is called "building on the change." This step is commonly overlooked, but is extremely critical to the success of any change. Kotter tells a story of a CEO thanking his executives for the great job they had done implementing a new transformation. Unfortunately, the message that was received was that the difficult work was behind them. "Short-term wins are essential to keep momentum going, but the celebration of those wins can be lethal if urgency is lost" (Kotter, 1996, p. 132).

"Whenever you let up before the job is done, critical momentum can be lost and regression may follow" (Kotter, p. 133).

As we declare our small victories as mentioned in the previous step, we must make sure our staff is well aware that the fight is not even close to being over. We must stay focused, keeping our sights on the target. This is also the time where we keep looking for improvements. A mid-program assessment was given to the students so we could ascertain our students' progress. We reflected on what was working with our program and what needed to be improved. This reflection meets ISLLC Standards 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3.

Kotter's (1996) last step is called "anchoring the change." It is important to make sure the school administration continues to support our change initiative by reminding them of our progress and growth. If I had lost the support of these key people, my vision could have ended up as one more fad idea that had come and gone. It is crucial to retell success stories to stakeholders so they become what Bolman and Deal (2003) call the "stories and myths" as outlined in their symbolic frame of organizations. This was the time where we recognized the members in our change coalition by remembering their contributions. This meets ISLLC Standards 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3: promoting the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources.

All of these steps helped to ensure our change transitions toward second-order, long lasting change, away from the short-term, first-order change. These steps support the developing and implementing of a shared vision, supporting the growth of the change initiative with positive reinforcement, and driving staff members to stay focused with a constant sense of urgency. The steps seem logical, focused, and within my means. More

importantly, they are a good fit for my leadership comfort zone, allowing me to utilize

situational and servant leadership styles.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Cycle I

The broad research questions that drove this cycle focused on the following:

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?

- Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program and if so, what days?

The survey was constructed with eight items. Four items were created to answer the broad topical questions introduced in Cycle I. The first two items were of a Likert type and the following two were multiple choice. The final four items were demographic in nature (see Appendix A).

Broad research question 2 asked, "Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program help students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?" To address this question, an evaluation of survey questionnaire item 1 was done using a frequency table (Table 1). Broad research question three asked, "Do survey participants believe participations in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?" To address this question, a frequency table was constructed for the responses to questionnaire item 2 (Table 1). Cross-tabulations were used to determine if demographics impact perception of

learning programs. These yielded useful results regarding achievement levels of the students and the opinions of parents compared with students (Table 2). The cross tabulations yielded statistically insignificant results in regard to gender and ethnicity.

I first surveyed Title I eligible students at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School to determine if they had previously participated in after school learning programs. To address this question item 3 was evaluated. A frequency table was constructed to determine in which extended school programs, if any, our Title I students had previously participated (Table 3). I then addressed the broad research question "Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program, and if so, what days?" Item 4 was evaluated to address the question, "Would Title I eligible students at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School participate in an after-school learning program if one were available, and if so, when?" A frequency table was constructed to determine which days of the week would most likely yield the highest student turnout for an after school learning program (Table 4).

Tables were also constructed to display demographic information for the gender and ethnicity of the survey respondents (Tables 5 and 6). While gender and ethnicity failed to yield any statistically significant data, this information may be beneficial to future statisticians trying to emulate this study and compare their results.

Table 1

Perception of grade improvement of those who attended the after school program.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. **After school** learning programs help a student to earn better grades than if they did not participate in this program.	13.5%	56.8%	10.8%	18.9%	0%
2. **After school** learning programs help a student score higher on standardized tests than if they did not participate in this program.	21.6%	48.6%	18.9%	10.8%	0%

Table 2

Do participation in after school learning programs help a student to earn better grades, than if they did not participate in these programs

	Students	% of Students	Parents	% of Parents
Strongly Agree	6	16.7%	4	10.5%
Agree	14	38.9%	28	73.7%
Undecided	4	11.1%	4	10.5%
Disagree	12	33.3%	2	5.3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Table 3

Percent of Title I eligible students who attended various learning programs based on achievement level

	Achievement Level of Student			
	High	Medium	Low	Unsure
After school state testing preparation classes at Roosevelt Middle School	4.8%	9.0%	100.0%	0.0%
After school state testing preparation at learning centers such as Sylvan	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
After school tutoring at Roosevelt Middle School	14.3%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
After school tutoring at learning center such as Sylvan	4.8%	0.0%	50.0%	33..3%
Remedial **Summer** School	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Enrichment **Summer** School	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 4

Days of the week students would be willing to participate in after-school learning programs based on the achievement level

	Achievement Level of Students			
	High	Medium	Low	Unsure
Monday	33.3%	27.3%	100.0%	0.0%
Tuesday	52.4%	36.4%	100.0%	0.0%
Wednesday	38.1%	18.2%	50.0%	0.0%
Thursday	33.3%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Friday	19.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Not Interested	33.3%	30.0%	0.0%	100.0

Table 5

Gender of survey respondents

	Parent	Student	Total
Male	14	12	26
Female	22	26	48
Total	36	38	78

Table 6

Ethnicity of respondents

	Parent	Student	Total
Asian	4	6	10
Black/African American	2	2	4
White/Caucasian	20	18	38
Hispanic	12	10	22
Native American	0	0	0

Item 1 found 70.3% of students and parents believe after-school learning programs help a student to earn better grades, compared to 18.9% of participants who disagree. Item 2 found that 70.2% of survey participants agree or strongly agree that after school learning programs help a student score higher on standardized tests compared with 10.8% of participants who disagree.

Based on the above findings, students and parents perceive a benefit from student participation in after school learning programs. Table 2 shows that 55.6% of students believe that students who participate in after-school learning activities earn better grades than students who do not, while 84.2% of parents share the same viewpoint.

Have students who are eligible for Title I funding at Theodore Roosevelt Middle school previously participated in after school and summer learning programs? Roosevelt Middle School is currently in its third year of being a school in need of improvement and offers supplemental educational services as a requirement of this status. As table 3 shows,

100% of low achieving survey respondents participated in after-school state testing preparation classes at Roosevelt Middle School compared with 95% of middle achieving students and 4.8 % of high achieving students. It should be noted survey participants designated as average achieving did not participate in any other learning programs besides the after school program. This survey showed that 50% of low achieving students participated in after school tutoring programs at Roosevelt Middle School compared with 14.3% of high achieving students. In addition, 50% of low achieving students participated in after-school tutoring at learning centers such as Sylvan compared with 4.8% of high achieving students. Fifty percent of low achieving students participated in summer learning programs compared with 4.8% of high achieving students.

Would Title I students at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School participate in an after school learning program if one were available, and if so, when? Referring to the findings in Table 4, higher percentages of lower achieving students are willing to participate in after school learning programs than their higher achieving counterparts. All students who are willing to participate in a after school program, regardless of achievement level, are more willing to attend an afterschool learning program Monday through Thursday rather than Friday, with Tuesday being the most popular day of possible attendance. According to Table 4, a higher percentage of low achieving students are willing to participate in summer learning programs compared to high and middle achieving students. Mondays through Thursdays again were more popular days for possible enrollment.

All of the survey questions were thoroughly answered. Students and parents at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School perceived a benefit from participation in after school

programs. Students at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School have previously participated in after school learning programs, with low achieving students attending the largest number of after school and summer learning opportunities, followed by high achieving students, and finally middle achieving students. Low achieving students are more likely to attend after programs than their middle and higher achieving peers. The most likely days of attendance would be Monday through Thursday, with a lack of interest in Friday.

Cycle II

Qualitative research methods were used to address the following research question:

2. What instructional methodologies are not being utilized in our schools' every day instruction that can be implemented in an after school program?

To answer this question this cycle focused on three broad topical ideas:

1. What are the similarities in instructional strategies and themes found in the classroom instruction at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School?

2. What are the differences in instructional strategies and themes found in the classroom instruction at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School?

3. Are there instructional strategies that are not currently being implemented in our school programs during the regular school day that could be implemented in an after school program.

Major Theme One: Instructional Strategies

The first major theme I identified is the types of instructional strategies that were used to facilitate learning. Four types of methods used to help students learn were noted during the study. The first method is called "teacher-based learning" in which the teacher

explains a concept or idea, and the students sit and listen. The second method is called "teacher-student" where the teacher and student are involved in a mutual exchange that results in knowledge being gained. The third method is called "student-centered" where the student works independently reading or completing a task to gain knowledge or reinforce a skill. The last method is called "cooperative learning" where students work together to help each other learn or reinforce a concept.

Teacher-student interaction was the most utilized during this study as it occurred in every observed lesson and for the longest duration of time. This was followed closely by teacher-based instruction, which also occurred in every class observed, but on a much less consistent basis than teacher-student instruction. This was followed by student-centered learning, which also occurred during every observation in the completion of "Do Now" activities, silent student reading, and practice worksheets. Surprisingly, cooperative learning was underutilized, appearing only once in a 6th grade pre-algebra mathematics lesson.

Discussion

It appears that many teachers today, even the newer ones, are teaching in the ways in which they themselves were taught. Although many teachers have learned using these methods, these methods may not be the most effective way of instructing the students of today. "Current research on teaching and learning has resulted in a shift to a more student-centered classroom where the goal of the lesson is developing understanding. It is not enough that a teacher demonstrates a procedure and students can follow it" (Bay-Williams & Meyer, 2003, p. 54). New methods of teaching our students have been evaluated, many with positive results. House reported:

Students who reported that they more frequently tried to solve an example related

to the new topic and that they more often worked together in pairs or small groups

on a problem or project also tended to show more enjoyment for learning

mathematics" (House, 2005, p. 92).

"Cooperative learning involves groups of students working to complete a

common task" (Siegel, 2005, p. 339). Vygotsky stated,

What lies in a zone of proximal development at one stage is realized and moves to

the level of actual development at a second. In other words, what a child is able

to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow"

(Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211).

This idea was reiterated by Doolittle (1995), "Through social interactions with

more knowledgeable others, such as more advanced peers and adults, children eventually

develop higher mental functions such as language, counting, problem solving skills,

voluntary attention, and memory schemas" (p. 3). Based on this research, it seems

obvious that our classrooms should implement cooperative learning on a more

consistent basis.

So why are teachers not utilizing this instructional strategy? The three teachers

interviewed for this study were asked about cooperative learning. Although the study

showed that cooperative learning was an underutilized instructional method, the

interview questions were designed to determine the extent of its absence as well as the

reasoning for its exclusion. During a recorded interview, Ms. X. was asked how often she

used cooperative learning activities in her classroom (see Appendix E for complete

transcript). She stated, "At the end of each chapter, I try to do at least one [cooperative

learning activity]." She stated that when students are doing mathematics that requires rote memorization and repetition such as multiplication of positive and negative numbers, she utilizes traditional instructional strategies. She stated, "When they get more into the geometry and the area and perimeter aspects of things, I do more." Ms. X. was then asked if she used cooperative learning in some classes and not others. Her response was,

> I do not do it with all my classes, and this year, it does not have to do with their
>
> ability to work in groups, it has to do with the size of the class and the size of
>
> the classroom.

She proceeded to explain that she had no trouble utilizing cooperative learning strategies in her class of 20 students. Ms. X. stated that problems occur during a class that has 28 students because, "even if they're are all talking at a regular level, and they are not screaming, it's too loud, and you can't think, and you are not getting work done."

Ms. Y. had made a similar statement during a non-taped interview when she commented that she also avoids cooperative learning activities because of classroom size. She has a few classes where the students fill almost every desk, and the noise level just gets too loud becoming a distraction to the classrooms around her. Even though she does have a few smaller classes, she feels it would be unfair to offer opportunities to some groups of students and not others. In addition, she stated that it would make planning and pacing of class significantly more difficult. One possible suggestion that Mrs. Z. had was to keep classroom size to a maximum of 16, allowing the formation of four cooperative learning groups of four students each. Burnett (1995) suggests overcrowding has a detrimental impact on student learning and the implementation of cooperative learning in classrooms:

Crowded classroom conditions not only make it difficult for students to concentrate on their lessons, but inevitably limit the amount of time teachers can spend on innovative teaching methods such as cooperative learning and group work or, indeed on teaching anything beyond the barest minimum of required material. (Burnett, 1995, para. 4)

Major Theme Two: Classroom Disruptions

The next theme that this paper will discuss is classroom disruptions. Every class observed had at least one disruption of instruction while one class had six disruptions. These intrusions included students walking into a classroom lesson that was in progress and asking a teacher a question, an outsider calling the classroom via the intercom and asking the teacher for something, and a student getting up to use the restroom or leave the room for some other reason. These intrusions had the largest impact on instruction during the utilization of teacher led instruction, and teacher-student instruction, while they had the least impact on instruction during the use of cooperative learning groups. For instance, when a student walked in to ask Ms. Y. a question about aces points (a reward system used by the school where high point achievers go on field trips), the entire lesson stopped and did not restart for approximately a minute and a half. These intrusions had the smallest impact during the use of cooperative learning. For example, a teacher walked into Mrs. F's class asking to borrow a mathematics manipulative kit. The class was working in a cooperative learning group, and continued to work as the teachers' conversation went on.

Although it seems like common sense, a review of the field notes verified these opinions. Mrs. U's eighth grade science class of 26 students had more internal disruptions

such as students raising their hands and stopping instruction asking to use the restroom or sharpen a pencil than in a Ms. W's basic skill mathematics class, which only included six students.

Discussion

It is impossible to completely eliminate classroom disruptions. The main office will always need to contact the classroom, and other teachers will always find a reason to come into a class and ask the teacher a question. These small intrusions may not seem like much, but with class periods limited to 45 minutes, cumulatively these interruptions have a significant impact on student learning. Utilizing cooperative learning groups in an after school program will significantly help to minimize the impact of these intrusions on student instruction. In an informal follow-up interview, Ms. X. stated, "Keeping class size down to 12-16 students greatly reduces classroom disruptions. Student misbehavior is cut down, in part because classroom management becomes easier with less students." Having fewer students also translates to fewer opportunities for students to leave a classroom for the lavatory and other reasons. As Ms. Y. said in an interview,

> I've noticed in a large class that sometimes one student asks to go the bathroom, and a minute later five other students are asking to go as well. This doesn't seem to happen as much in my smaller classes. I believe keeping the class size in the after school program to 16 students will have a positive impact on the occurrences of internal distractions.

Major Theme Three: Use of Technology

The third major theme this paper will explore is the use of technology to engage students in instruction. Of the 10 classroom observations conducted, technology was

utilized in three lessons. The seventh grade social studies class used a television set hooked up to a laptop to display power point images of maps. Overhead projectors were utilized in two lessons, once during a sixth grade social studies lesson to display notes, and once during the eighth grade basic skills class to display practice problems.

Discussion

In what some could argue is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, it is shocking that the only technology utilized during the ten classes observed was a television set and an overhead projector, both of which are outdated technologies. I asked the three teachers I interviewed why they did not utilize technology in their instruction. All three voiced similar answers: the school is very limited in the technology that is available for use. Mrs. Z. stated,

> There are only 5 LCD projects available for the entire school to share. There are two smart boards, which are also moved from classroom to classroom. These tools must be signed out for, and set up by the teacher who wants to use it, a process that is time consuming and frustrating at times.

There are technology labs, but these are often utilized by the technology teachers during the school day, limiting access to the rest of the teachers. LCD projectors for PowerPoint presentations, use of the smart board for digital lessons, and regularly scheduled trips to the computer lab will be essential components of the after school program as these technologies will be readily available during after school hours. This will not only engage students in lessons, but it will help to increase standardized testing scores as well as helping to prepare students to be competitive in an ever changing global environment.

Major Theme Four: Lack of Higher Order Thinking

The fourth major theme noted during this study was a lack of Bloom's Taxonomy higher order thinking, as well as connections between how the lessons learned in the classroom can be utilized in the students' everyday lives. For example, the objective of Mr. C's grade 7 mathematics lesson was, "Students will be able to multiply powers of 10 mentally." The objective of Ms. X's eighth grade mathematics lesson was, "Students will be able to identify and use properties of addition and multiplication, and students will be able to use properties of addition & multiplication to simplify algebraic expressions." A scan of the objectives in the plan books of all the teachers observed showed a major focus toward meeting the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (remembering, understanding, and applying) while barely touching higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Discussion

Mrs. Z. stated, "We have so much to cover in the curriculum that we end up just scratching the surface of each topic we cover." The students end up with superficial exposure to many different topics, but they are not given the opportunity to gain a deep understanding and mastery of those topics. When and how are memorizing mathematical properties going to be useful to most students in their everyday life? Students need skills that transcend beyond rote memorization and basic applications. Students need to be able to think critically. They need to be able to develop abstract thinking skills that can be applied to solving real world problems. Nowhere during any of the mathematics lessons observed did the teacher make any connections between the material being taught and its real world applications. Ms. X. stated how she wished she had time to engage in large

scale student projects to really show the students how what they are learning can be applied in a real-life setting. For example, she said, "Like you have a wedding and you need to save up 35,000 dollars, you have 3 years to do it, you have these expenses, and how much did you save each month." A focus of an after school program should be on solving real-world problems and tapping into higher order thinking skills.

Major Theme Five: The Do Now

The fifth theme of this paper is the Do Now activities currently being utilized. When students entered into Mrs. Z's classroom, they settled down, and without direction began working on their Do Now activity, which was previously written on the front board. The teacher used the Do Now time to check homework and take attendance. This activity took between 5 and 7 minutes for students to complete. The questions asked during the Do Now were either review material from the previous day's lesson, or anticipatory knowledge that helped transition into the day's lesson.

Discussion

According to Wolfe (1997), the idea of a Do Now activity or anticipatory set is taught to most education majors learning about Madeline Hunters theories on lesson plans and pacing. There is strength in this routine because students are conscious as to what the classroom expectations are, and a level of consistency is instilled. Per interviews with the observed teachers, there is a drawback to the Do Now. Teachers have them incorporated into their lessons because it is an expectation from the school administration, but some teachers have expressed concerns with the practice. During a taped interview, Ms. X. discussed how Do Now activities can cut into instructional time.

She felt this time could be better utilized getting students situated for a group activity, or beginning a lengthy and complicated lesson. In one statement she said,

> I wouldn't always do a Do Now. I like the Do Now when I'm checking homework because it gives them something to do besides waiting for me, but sometimes that I know will take longer, or if I want to do group work, you know it gets in the way.

> Do Now activities amount to 5 to 10 minutes of instructional time, or approximately $1/8^{th}$ to $1/4^{th}$ of the class period. The teachers observed and interviewed said it would be nice to have the option of not doing a Do Now activity and transitioning straight into a lesson creating more instructional time and a broader array of learning opportunities.

Cycle III

The findings from this cycle were focused to address the following broad research question:

- Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the area of mathematics?

Student participants in the after school program were surveyed at the end of the program. Their responses are reported in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Table 7

Grade 6 End of Program Survey Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Participation in the after school program helped prepare me to take the NJ ASK	28%	59%	13%	0%
Participation in the after school program helped me feel more prepared for my classes during the school day	44%	50%	6%	0%
I am glad I participated in this after school program	38%	50%	9%	3%
I would continue this program for the rest of the school year if I were given the opportunity	25%	28%	38%	9%
I would continue this program next year if I were given the opportunity	41%	31%	25%	3%

Of the sixth grade students, 87% believed it helped prepare them to take the NJ ASK, compared to 13% who disagreed. Of the sixth grade students, 94% believed participation in the after school program helped them feel more prepared for their mathematics classes compared to 6% who disagreed. Eighty-eight percent of sixth grade participants are glad they participated in the after school program, compared with 12% who wish they had not. Fifty-three percent of sixth grade students would continue to participate in the after school program for the rest of the school year if they had the opportunity to do so, compared with 47% who would not. Seventy-two percent of the sixth grade students who participated in the after school program would participate in it next year if they were given the opportunity, compared with 28% who would not.

Table 8

Grade 7 End of Program Survey Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Participation in the after school program helped prepare me to take the NJ ASK	48%	50%	2%	0%
Participation in the after school program helped me feel more prepared for my classes during the school day	34%	57%	9%	0%
I am glad I participated in this after school program	56%	34%	5%	5%
I would continue this program for the rest of the school year if I were given the opportunity	39%	30%	23%	8%
I would continue this program next year if I were given the opportunity	41%	45%	7%	7%

Ninety-eight percent of seventh grade students who participated in the after school program believe it helped prepare them for their NJ ASK test compared with 2% who disagreed. Ninety-one percent of the seventh grade student participants believe participation in the after school program helped them to be more prepared during their daily mathematics class, compared with 9% who disagreed. Ninety percent of the seventh grade student participants are glad they participated in the after school program, compared with 10% who wish they had not. Sixty-nine percent of seventh grade students would continue the program for the remainder of the school year if given the opportunity, compared with 31% who would not. Eighty-six percent of seventh grade students would participate in the after school program next year if given the opportunity, compared with 14% who would not.

Table 9

Grade 8 End of Program Survey Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Participation in the after school program helped prepare me to take the NJ ASK	44%	38%	6%	12%
Participation in the after school program helped me feel more prepared for my classes during the school day	44%	44%	6%	6%
I am glad I participated in this after school program	56%	25%	12%	7%
I would continue this program for the rest of the school year if I were given the opportunity	56%	12%	7%	25%
I would continue this program next year if I were given the opportunity	20%	56%	12%	12%

Eighty-two percent of the eighth grade participant of the after school program believed it helped prepared them for the NJ ASK, compared with 18% who did not perceive any benefit. Eighty-eight percent of the eighth grade participants of the after school program believe it helped prepared them for the everyday mathematics class, compared with 12% who did not perceive a benefit. Eighty-one percent of eighth grade participants were glad they participated in the after school program, compared with 19% who were not. Sixty-eight percent of the eighth grade participants would continue with the after school program for the rest of the school year if given the opportunity, compared with 32% of students who would not. Seventy-six percent of the eighth grade participants

would participate in the after school program next year if given the opportunity, compared with 24% of students who would not.

Survey Question 6

The sixth survey question is, "What did you like about participation in the after school program?" There were six themes that occurred in this open-ended survey question. Five themes were positive and one was negative.

Theme 1

Thirty-two survey respondents commented that they liked how the after school program helped prepare them for their mathematics class. Some of the comments from the respondents were as follows:

"I wouldn't really understand something in class, but we would go over in after school, and it made more sense."

"I learn stuff that I did not in class."

"It helped me to do better in Mr. J's math class."

"It gave me more confidence in taking tests. I have been getting better grades in math class since I started staying after school for help."

"I got to learn things that I did not understand before math class seems easier now."

"I feel like I started doing better in my math class after staying after school."

"The stuff we learned in math class started making more sense after we spent more time on it after school."

"I learned different ways to do problems in math. I even showed Ms. X. (student's mathematics teacher during the day) what I learned."

"It helped get me ready for class the next day."

Theme 2

Twenty-two survey respondents commented that they liked the teachers in the after school program.

"The teacher explained step by step."

"The teachers answers exactly what you asked, and helped you in that topic."

"The teacher are awesome."

"Kind teachers that made you understand everything."

"The teachers had a nice attitude."

"I wish the after school teacher was my real teacher all year."

"The teacher after school was better than my math teacher during the day."

"Ms. S. was so cool. I really liked staying after school with her."

"Nice teachers who help you with everything."

Theme 3

Nine survey respondents commented that they liked how the after school program prepare them for the NJ ASK state assessment.

"After staying after school, I feel more ready for the ASK."

"I am no longer scared of the NJ ASK."

"I feel more confident that I will do well on the ASK test."

"It helped you get ready for the NJ ASK."

Theme 4

Seven survey respondents commented that they liked the individual help they received from the after school program.

"If I had a question the teacher was able to sit down with me and help. My regular teacher doesn't do that."

"I liked how the teacher would sit with me and would explain math more if I didn't get how to do it."

"The individual help."

"My teacher spent a lot of time sitting with me, and helping understand stuff I didn't get during math class. I wish my real teacher would do that."

Theme 5

Seven survey respondents commented that they liked how they engaged in fun mathematics activities.

"We did all kinds of math games. They made learning really fun."

"We did some really fun things in our class."

"I liked learning in a fun way."

"I was able to have fun while doing the subject I hated the most."

"I liked the activities we did. I wish my teacher would do them during the day, they were really fun. I really liked the math scavenger hunt. Who wants to be a millionaire was pretty cool too."

"I think it was pretty fun because we got to participate in activities."

Theme 6

Seven survey respondents commented that there was nothing positive about the after school program.

"I don't think the program was good, and there is nothing I like. I didn't want to go but my mom made me."

"I didn't like any of it."

"I really hate math during the day, and I hated staying after school to do math."

"I didn't like anything."

"I honestly didn't like it, it didn't help me at all."

Cycle 3: Qualitative Results

Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 139 individuals. Table 10 presents the distribution of the sample in terms of grade (6th, 7th, or 8th), socioeconomic level (Title I, non-Title I), and by group (Program vs. Control). As can be seen from this table, most of the participants in both groups were in seventh grade (46% in the Control group, and 48.31% in the Program group). In terms of socioeconomic level, the data would suggest that it was higher in the Control group (50% Title I students) than in the Program group (84.27% Title I students).

Table 10

Distribution of the Grades and Socioeconomic Level, by Group (N = 139)

	Control (n = 50)		Program (n = 89)	
Variable	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Grade				
6th	14	28.00	32	35.96
7th	23	46.00	43	48.31
8th	13	26.00	14	15.73
Socioeconomic Level				
Non-Title I	25	50.00	14	15.73
Title I	25	50.00	75	84.27

Table 11 presents the mean and standard deviation of the NJ ASK scores (in 2009 and 2010) and benchmark test scores (pretreatment and posttreatment) for the whole sample, and segmented by group. As can be gleaned from this table, average NJ ASK 2009 scores were very similar between both groups (Control M = 183.44 vs. Program M = 184.22). On the other hand, the Control group did better than the Program group in the benchmark pretest (Control M = 46.52 vs. Program M = 41.25).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics on Test Scores, by Group (N = 139)

	Control (n = 50)		Program (n = 89)		Total	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
NJ ASK 2010	181.80	20.74	186.78	29.14	184.99	26.46
NJ ASK 2009	183.44	21.95	184.22	26.51	183.94	24.89
Post Test	46.56	13.05	51.40	15.32	49.66	14.68
Pre Test	46.52	12.62	41.25	13.50	43.14	13.39

Data Analysis

The first analysis involved determining whether there were significant differences in the change from pretreatment to posttreatment in the benchmark test between the Control and Program groups. Likewise, the difference in the change in NJ ASK from 2009 to 2010 between the Control and Program groups was assessed. An independent samples *t* test was used to conduct these comparisons. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Changes in NJ ASK (2009 vs. 2010) and Benchmark Test, by Group (N = 139)

	Group	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*p*
NJ ASK Change	Program	2.55	19.15	1.36	0.18
	Control	-1.64	13.83		
Benchmark Test Change	Program	10.16	10.26	5.46	<0.001
	Control	0.04	10.86		

Note: The t column corresponds to the t-statistic of the independent samples t-test for each of the variables. The p column represents the p-value associated to that t-test.

As can be gleaned from this table, the Program group experienced an average improvement of 2.55 points in the NJ ASK, whereas the Control group experienced a decrease of 1.64. However, this difference was not significant at the .05 level ($t(137) = 1.36$, $p = 0.18$). For the benchmark test, the average change for the Program group was 10.16, versus 0.04 for the Control group. This difference was statistically significant ($t(137) = 5.46$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, for the whole sample, the results suggest that the program was effective in improving the benchmark test scores, but not the NJ ASK scores.

Analysis by Grade

The analysis presented in the previous section was then repeated separately for each grade. Therefore, it was conducted for the subsample of individuals in sixth grade, then for the subsample of individuals in seventh grade, and then for eighth grade. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether the program had varying effectiveness depending on the grade of the students. Table 13 presents descriptive statistics on the test scores by grade, and Table 14 presents the results of the t tests.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics on Test Scores, by Grade and Group (N = 139)

Grade	Group		NJ ASK 2010	NJ ASK 2009	Post Test	Pre Test
6	Control (n = 14)	*M*	181.43	189.29	48.21	52.29
		SD	20.27	21.43	15.85	14.30
	Program (n = 32)	*M*	193.63	189.16	56.16	47.03
		SD	26.78	27.21	14.80	11.45
7	Control (n = 23)	*M*	178.09	178.26	47.78	48.30
		SD	22.31	24.54	10.40	11.63
	Program (n = 43)	*M*	186.77	186.81	49.88	40.60
		SD	28.46	20.32	14.43	12.72
8	Control (n = 13)	*M*	188.77	186.31	42.62	37.15
		SD	17.88	16.28	14.20	6.38
	Program (n = 14)	*M*	171.14	165.00	45.21	30.00
		SD	32.28	34.30	16.99	13.35

Table 14

Changes in NJ ASK (2009 vs. 2010) and Benchmark Test, by Grade and Group

(N = 139)

Grade		Group	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*P*
6	NJ ASK Change	Program	4.47	19.21	2.02	0.05
		Control	-7.86	18.62		
	Test Change	Program	9.13	9.19	4.14	<0.001
		Control	-4.07	11.55		
7	NJ ASK Change	Program	-0.05	18.51	0.03	0.98
		Control	-0.17	11.56		
	Test Change	Program	9.28	9.78	4.07	0.00
		Control	-0.52	8.39		
8	NJ ASK Change	Program	6.14	21.24	0.57	0.57
		Control	2.46	9.67		
	Test Change	Program	15.21	13.00	1.99	0.06
		Control	5.46	12.47		

Note: The t column corresponds to the t-statistic of the independent samples t test for each of the variables. The p column represents the p-value associated to that t-test.

The following conclusions can be drawn from Table 14. First, for students in grade 6, participants in the Program group had significantly higher improvements in the NJ ASK (M = 4.47) than students in the control group (M = -7.86, $t(44) = 2.02$, $p = 0.05$). Similarly, they also had significantly higher improvements in the benchmark test (Program M = 9.14 vs. Control M = -4.07, $t(44) = 4.14$, $p < 0.001$). Second, for students

in grade 7, participants in the Program group had significantly higher improvements in the benchmark test than the Control group (Program M = 9.28 vs. Control M = - 0.52, $t(64) = 4.07$, $p < 0.001$). No significant differences were observed for the improvement in NJ ASK scores. Finally, for students in grade 8, no significant differences were observed for the improvement of either the NJ ASK or the benchmark test scores.

Analysis by Socioeconomic Level

The previous analyses were repeated once again, this time separating by socioeconomic level (Title I vs. non-Title I). The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether the program had varying effectiveness depending on the socioeconomic level of students. Table 15 presents descriptive statistics on the test scores by socioeconomic level, and Table 16 presents the results of the t tests.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics on Test Scores, by Socioeconomic Level and Group (N = 139)

Socioeconomic Level	Group		NJ ASK 2010	NJ ASK 2009	Post Test	Pre Test
Non-Title I	Control (n = 25)	M	185.72	183.76	47.28	44.68
		SD	19.44	18.26	11.29	11.14
	Program (n = 14)	M	194.93	185.43	50.79	37.57
		SD	25.59	15.60	17.67	14.87
Title I	Control (n = 25)	M	177.88	183.12	45.84	48.36
		SD	21.64	25.49	14.80	13.93
	Program (n = 75)	M	185.25	184.00	51.52	41.93
		SD	29.66	28.15	14.97	13.22

Table 16

Changes in NJ ASK (2009 vs. 2010) and Benchmark Test, by Socioeconomic Level and

Group (N = 139)

Socioecon. Level		Group	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*P*
Non-Title I	NJ ASK Change	Program	9.50	14.98	1.93	0.06
		Control	1.96	9.42		
	Test Change	Program	13.21	14.79	2.84	0.01
		Control	2.60	8.69		
Title I	NJ ASK Change	Program	1.25	19.65	1.48	0.14
		Control	-5.24	16.58		
	Test Change	Program	9.59	9.20	5.22	0.00
		Control	-2.52	12.31		

Note: The t column corresponds to the t-statistic of the independent samples t-test for each of the variables. The p column represents the p-value associated to that t-test

As can be extracted from Table 16, students of both socioeconomic levels who were in the Program group had significantly higher improvements in the benchmark test scores than students in the Control group. For non-Title I students, the average improvement in the benchmark test for the Program group was 9.50, versus 1.96 for the Control group ($t(37) = 2.84$, $p = 0.01$). Likewise, for Title I students, the average improvement in the benchmark test for the Program group was 9.59, versus -2.52 for the Control group ($t(98) = 5.22$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, no significant differences were found in the improvement of the NJ ASK scores for either of the two socioeconomic groups.

Qualitative Research: the Fourth Cycle in the Action Research Study

The goal of this cycle was to answer the research question, "How does this project impact my leadership?" The Pre Leadership Practices Inventory was given to the 22 teachers selected to instruct the after school program. Fifteen of the 22 surveys were received within four days of their distribution. An e-mail was sent to the 22 teachers thanking those who had completed the survey, and reminding those who had not yet completed it. By the eighth day after their initial distribution, 19 of the 22 surveys had been returned. The week following the conclusion of the after school program, the Post Leadership Practices Inventory was given to the 22 teachers who had instructed in the after school program. Within four days of the distribution of the surveys, eight had been returned. After the first follow-up e-mail, a total of 12 had been received. A second follow-up e-mail was deemed necessary. Within 10 days of the initial distribution date, 16 of the 22 surveys had been received. Table 17 represents the mean scores for the preinventory and postinventory.

Table 17

Leadership Practices Inventory

Question	Pre Inventory	Post Inventory	Change
Sets a personal example of what he/she expects from others.	7	8	1
Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	3	6	3
Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.	4	8	4
Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.	8	9	1
Praises people for a job well done.	4	7	3
Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on.	3	5	2
Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.	2	4	2
Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	3	9	6
Actively listens to diverse points of view.	7	8	1
Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.	3	7	4
Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes.	7	9	2
Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	4	8	4

Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.	4	5	1
Treats others with dignity and respect.	8	10	2
Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.	7	10	3
Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.	4	9	5
Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	4	7	3
Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	3	3	0
Supports the decisions that people make on their own.	7	9	2
Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	4	8	4
Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	6	7	1
Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	6	10	4
Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.	6	9	3
Gives peoples a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	6	9	3

Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.	5	9	4
Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.	5	8	3
Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	8	10	2
Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	3	7	4
Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	4	8	4
Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.	5	8	3

The average score I received during the pre-inventory was a five representing "occasionally" displaying the leadership behavior. The average score of the post-inventory was an eight representing "usually" displaying the leadership behavior. This is a 60% increase in score from the pre-inventory to the post-inventory. I scored highest in the categories of:

- Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
- Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
- Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.
- Treats others with dignity and respect.

I scored lowest in the categories of:

- Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.

- Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.

- Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Many schools are turning to alternate instruction methods such as after school

learning programs to increase standardized testing scores, and increase student learning.

The after school program at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School was designed to answer

seven broad research questions. The results of which are as follows:

Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps

students feel more prepared and confident during their regular school day in the

area of mathematics?

Before participation in the Title I after school program 55.6% of students believed

that students who participate in after-school learning activities earn better grades than

students who do not while 84.2% of parents shared the same viewpoint. This averaged

out to 70.3% of survey participants who believed participation in an afterschool learning

programs helps students perform better in their mathematics class, compared to 18.9% of

participants who disagreed.

After participation in the after school program, 91% of the after school program

student participants agreed the after school program helped them perform better in their

mathematics class, compared with 8.3% of students who disagreed. The data suggest that

participation in the after school program had a positive impact on students' views that the

after school program will help students do better in their daily mathematics class.

Do survey participants believe participation in an after school program helps prepare students for the mathematics sections of state testing?

Before participation in the Title I after school program, 70.2% of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that after-school learning programs help a student score higher on standardized tests, compared with 10.8% of participants who disagreed. After completing the Title I after school program, 92% of survey respondents agreed the program would help increase their standardized testing score, compared to 7.6% who disagreed.

The data suggest that the survey participants believe participation in an after school learning program helps students perform better in their daily mathematics class, and increases the students' standardized testing scores. The participants' positive outlook on the benefits of after school program increased after they had participated in the program.

Are students willing to participate in an extended school day mathematics program, and if so, what days?

The results of the Cycle I survey suggest lower achieving students are more willing to participate in after school learning programs than their higher achieving counterparts. All students who are willing to participate in a after school program, regardless of achievement level, are more willing to attend an afterschool learning program Monday through Thursday, rather than Friday, with Tuesday being the most popular day.

When the Title I program was created, 61.6% of students who were classified as Title I agreed to participate in the program. Eighty-three percent of students who did not

qualify for Title I funding agreed to participate in the program. Overall 65.8% of all participants who were invited to participate in the after school program agreed to do so.

After participation in the after school program 63.3% of survey respondents stated they would continue the after school program for the rest of the school year if they were able to, compared to 36.6% who would not. Seventy-eight percent of the survey responded stated they would participate in the after school program next year if they were given the opportunity, compared with 22% who would not. The data suggest many students are willing to participate in an after school program if they are given the opportunity to do so.

What instructional methodologies are not being utilized in the school's every day instruction that can be implemented in an after school program?

Every lesson, regardless of grade, subject level, and achievement level of the student had obvious similarities. These included the use of identical instructional strategies, occurrences of classroom disruptions, lack of technology usage, lessons tapping into the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, and inclusion of a Do Now activity.

I found instructional strategies that were not currently being implemented in Theodore Roosevelt Middle School during the regular school day that were implemented in an after school program. These strategies include: technology infused among instruction, classroom assignments focusing on project-based and real-world problems, focusing more toward evaluating and creating, and less toward remembering and understanding.

Do students who participate in the extended day program score higher on their mathematics benchmark assessment than peers who did not participate?

Does participation in the extended day program help students score higher on the mathematics sections of the NJ ASK standardized test?

The purpose of this analysis was to examine whether participation in an afterschool program was associated with improved scores in the NJ ASK and in a benchmark test. The results suggest that the program was indeed effective in improving benchmark test scores (this result was observed for the whole sample and individually for each grade and socioeconomic level, except for grade 8 students). However, participation in the program was not associated with significant improvements in NJ ASK scores. Only for the subsample of grade 6 students, the difference between the Program and Control group in terms of NJ ASK scores was significant.

Limitations

The study was undertaken with the knowledge that certain limitations might affect the validity of the research findings.

1. Although participants were selected to represent their respective population, this study solely focused on students at the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, and because of this, its results may not be the same in other schools.

2. I only implemented a program in the area of mathematics, and therefore it would not necessarily have similar results if it were implemented for other subject areas.

3. I only had one year to implement this program and evaluate its results.

4. This study did not attempt to ascertain why students chose not to participate in the after school program. It also did not make any attempts to determine the motivation for those students who did participate. Some student participants may have been forced to attend the after school program by their guardians. The motivational level and reasons for the student's participation may have had an impact on the student's academic growth during their time in the program.

5. Some of the students taking the pre-benchmark and post-benchmark tests believed the test scores were not important because it was not an official state test. These students may not have tried as hard as they would have on a NJ ASK test, giving the students a lower score than they could have achieved if they took the assessment more seriously.

6. Due to time limitations I was only available to observe classrooms during periods 4 and 5 of the school day. This significantly limited the number of teachers that could be observed.

7. The study only investigated one type of after school program. It does not reflect the effectiveness of other after school programs that employ different methodologies of implementation.

Because of these limitations, the findings of this study should not be generalized beyond the grade levels, subject areas, and school from which the participants were drawn.

Biases

Most of the faculty survey respondents knew me previous to their participation in the after school program. Faculty and staff had known me for two and a half years prior to their participation in the after school program. Many of the student participants were also familiar with me due to previous interactions in the school building. Although all surveys completed by students and faculty were kept anonymous, many of the respondents knew who I was, and as such may have responded in a manner that would not be consistent with answers they would have given if they did not know the researcher.

During Cycle II, teachers were asked for permission to access to their classrooms. In all cases, the teachers were made aware ahead of time what days I would be entering their classroom. This may or may not have impacted the way lessons were planned and taught.

Students were not required to participate in the after school program. The voluntary nature of student participation created a level of selection bias that was beyond my control. Differences may have existed between the children and their parents of the students who elected to volunteer for this program, and students who did not, and were not considered in this study.

Recommendations

As a result of analyzing the data for the research study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Many students and parent respondents on the Cycle I survey claim to be "high achievers." Based on the academic progress of the students, the actual amount

of high achievers may be lower than reported. It would be interesting to see if checking students' standardized testing scores and their grades showed the same level of achievement as perceived.

2. It would be helpful to know if the student participants wanted to participate in after school learning programs at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, or if their parents made them attend because it was offered free of charge.

3. As stated in the limitations, classroom observations were scheduled ahead of time, and the teachers knew well in advance when the visitations would occur. It would be interesting to see if the same patterns and themes outlined in this research study occur later on in the school year, with different teachers, and during surprise observations.

4. The study should include a larger and more diverse group of student participants. The results of these groups could be compared and contrasted to determine if there are any differences in academic growth between each group.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. It is recommended that this study be replicated in other schools, districts, grades, subject areas, and socioeconomic levels to determine if similar results will occur.

2. It is recommended that this study begins earlier in the year, and lasts longer than it had, to determine if the increase in instructional time will have an impact on students' academic growth.

3. It is recommended that student attendance be recorded and cross tabulated with students pretest and posttest scores to determine the impact attendance in the after school program has on students' academic growth.

4. It is recommended that a summer learning program be created to determine if students' state testing scores increase or decrease at a rate consistent with students who do not participate.

5. It is recommended that students' marking period grades are recorded and analyzed from before participation in the after school program, during participation in the after school program, and after participation in the after school program. This will help determine if the after school program has an impact on the students' daily mathematics class.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPACT OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT ON MY LEADERSHIP

Eugene V. Debs in a speech at Canton, Ohio, in 1918 declared,

I never had much faith in leaders. I am willing to be charged with almost anything, rather than to be charged with being a leader. I am suspicious of leaders, and especially of the intellectual variety. Give me the rank and file every day in the week. If you go to the city of Washington, and you examine the pages of the Congressional Directory, you will find that almost all of those corporation lawyers and cowardly politicians, members of Congress, and mis-representatives of the masses -- you will find that almost all of them claim, in glowing terms, that they have risen from the ranks to places of eminence and distinction. I am very glad I cannot make that claim for myself. I would be ashamed to admit that I had risen from the ranks. When I rise, it will be with the ranks, and not from the ranks. (Debs, 1920, p. 1)

Leadership is a complex term with varying definitions and meanings. Bernard Bass (1995) defined leadership as "the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance…, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, and as an effect of interaction" (p. 38). I am a firm believer that a great leader's purpose is to help lead a group of people toward the successful completion of a common goal. "Leaders inspire a shared vision. They gaze across the horizon of time, imagining the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 65). "Authentic leadership is a

metaphor for professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices in educational administration" (Begley, 2006, p. 2).

I have read about numerous leadership styles such as autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic/participative leadership, laissez-faire, people-oriented/relations-oriented, servant, situational, task-oriented leadership, transactional, and transformational leadership. If I were asked to explain who I am as a leader, I could take the easy way, focusing on what the good qualities are in each of these theories, and how I perfectly demonstrate those characteristics in my leadership. But the reality is, there is no such thing as a perfect leader, or a person who perfectly demonstrates the best of all the numerous styles. Through my leadership platform, I am going to discuss my past history, because past experiences influence present actions and decisions. I will then discuss situations that demonstrate and reflect my leadership, and what leadership styles, if any, are demonstrated by my actions. Finally, I will conclude my platform with a summary detailing how I intend on growing to become a stronger leader.

How Did I Get to Where I am Today?

There is an old cliché that a person does not know where he is going until he knows where he has been. The past is not a map to where an individual is going; it is a record of where he has been. Its function is not to drag back through emotional turmoil, but to empower, by reminding of lessons learned so to avoid the necessity of having to learn them again in the future. More importantly, past experiences shape morals and values, creating the essence of who a person is as a leader. "Leaders should know their own values and ethical predispositions, as well as be sensitive to the value orientation of others" (Begley, 2006, p. 9).

I remember enjoying elementary school. I had a strong circle of friends, with whom I am still best friends today. I do not recall ever being placed in any leadership roles. I do remember being placed into the "blue jay" reading group, which was the reading group for those who were slow readers. I remember being frustrated when I kept asking, "How come I am not in the robins?" and being told that I was not ready to be moved up to that level. This began my frustration with English class, so I started focusing more and more of my attention to mathematics.

I clearly recall excelling in mathematics as a child, enjoying doing my math homework, and going to the front board answering questions in front of the class. I enjoyed showing off my mathematics aptitude, as well as helping students in my class who were not able to understand the content. The teachers presented their mathematical lessons with passion and enthusiasm. We worked on many hands-on activities, and were engaged in various games that reinforced the content that was previously presented to us. One example of this occurred in sixth grade. After we learned about the coordinate plane, we played a game of coordinate plane battleship. We used the coordinate plane instead of a traditional battleship game board, but followed the same rules of a battleship game. Working in cooperative learning groups of two, we would call out coordinate pairs, trying to sink all of our opponent's ships. I remember thinking how much fun we were having, not realizing how much we were also learning at the same time. I remember being captivated by this instruction, always being curious and excited as to what we were going to do next.

It was not just the activities that spurred my passion for mathematics. The teachers seemed to present the content in a clear and logical fashion, which to me, made

it seem very easy to learn and understand. If there was anything that I did not understand, my teachers always seemed eager to stay, and give me the extra help I needed to understand the material.

During this time, I scored a perfect score on the IOWA test (the New Jersey mathematics standardized test at the time). After this accomplishment, I was invited by the John's Hopkins University talent search to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Somewhere shortly afterward, I began to lose my connection to mathematics. For the next few years, I was assigned mathematics teachers who seemed to put little effort into their lessons. The passionate and enthusiastic presentation of material had been replaced. Over the next few years, I faced the same mundane ritual of seeing my teachers put a few problems on the board, explain them, and then give us a 30 minute class period to do our assigned homework problems. If I asked the teachers for help, I was told to check the examples from the book, and use them as a guide to the understand how to do the problems. I became disenchanted as the content continued to be demonstrated without passion and emotion.

During the early years of my formal education, I struggled in English class. I was not as fast or as strong a reader as many of the other students. My writing also lacked structure, as I struggled to write paragraphs and essays. One day, my eighth grade English teacher handed a book report back to me and stated aloud:

> This is by far the worst report I have ever received in all my years of teaching. I can't determine if you are stupid or just an idiot! Looking at this work, I would be surprised to see you pass high school. I don't think you are going to go anywhere in life!

To this day, I can remember her words clearly and vividly like it was just said yesterday.

At the same time, my older sister, Laurena, was flourishing in her academic endeavors. She was near the top of her class, an honor student, and captain of the varsity soccer team. I kept on hearing from my parents, "How come you can't be more like your sister?" Instead of motivating me to work harder, this caused me to become a little bit rebellious. Remembering being told by my English teacher that I would not succeed, and feeling that I was not meeting my parents' expectations, I had adopted the mentality that I would never live up to the standards of my sister and decided that it was not even worth trying. I began to question the role education would play in my life and if it was something I really even needed. High school for me became an act of just going through the motions. I went to school every day, because my parents expected me to. I thought I could never get out from under the shadow of my sister. I had no future plans, no motivation, and no drive. College was not even a thought in my mind.

High school was the time my parents got divorced. Money became really tight, as my mother struggled to keep food on the table and a roof over our heads. I got a job first at McDonalds, and then at a local Chinese restaurant so I would have money to buy some new clothes, as well as go out and do things with my friends. I knew I would not be happy working at a Chinese restaurant for the rest of my life, but at the time it served the purpose.

When I graduated from high school, my mother gave me an ultimatum. She asked,

Do you want to keep working in fast food all of your life, or do you want to make something better of yourself? I will support whatever you choose to do, but you

have two options: you can either work full time and pay me rent, or you can go to college, which you will have to find a way to pay for, but I will not charge you rent. Now that you are an adult, you need to start making some adult choices.

I knew I did not want to pay rent, so I needed to find a way to finance college. This day would become an apex in my life. I called my father, whom I had only spoken to a few times since I chose to live with my mother after the divorce. I asked him if he would help me pay for school. He said to me, "Ken, you know you are not college material. I am sorry, but I think you will only waste my money, sorry, but no." That night, I went to the Chinese restaurant to work like I did the other six nights a week. My boss, Chen, could tell I was really bothered by something. I told him what had happened that day. He took me to the back of the restaurant, pulled out 2,000 dollars from a safe, and gave it to me, and said:

> Take this money, and register at Ocean County College. I know in my heart that you are a good and smart kid. I know you WILL be successful. Just pay me back when you have an opportunity. I am confident you will do the right thing, and not let me down.

To this day, I cannot believe he did that! It was the first time in a long time I felt someone had faith in me.

I was motivated and focused. I was then faced with a serious choice about what I wanted to do with my life. For the first time, I spent some serious time personally reflecting on where I wanted to be down the road. I began to think about the people in my life I had admired. After what my boss had done for me, I knew I wanted to help people and better serve my community. I wanted to be a person who could make a difference in

somebody's life, like Chen had done for me. I tried to think about who else I looked up to growing up. I realized I always looked up to my best friend's brother, Chris, who was a local Dover Township police officer. I set my goals toward law enforcement.

Fueled by the confidence of my boss and the desire to prove my father wrong, I began to work extremely hard at Ocean County College. I would forgo hanging out with my friends on a weekend and focus all of my energy on school. I would go to the English lab at school and get extra help with my writing assignments. I would sit in the back room of the Chinese restaurant after work, and just keep studying, keeping the goals of a college degree and being a police officer clearly in sight.

Then one year, I took a required mathematics class, not knowing this class would one day change my career path. This professor was inspiring and passionate about mathematics. He helped me find the love for a subject I had lost so many years earlier. As silly as it sounds, I actually looked forward to going to his class every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I began looking at the college course catalog for other classes in mathematics and computer science that he taught. I began taking more and more classes in these two subjects. I eventually changed my major from criminal justice to computer sciences, as I began to really enjoy those classes. I kept my eyes on the goal of one day working in law enforcement, toying with the notion of one day maybe getting promoted to a computer crimes detective unit.

During my sophomore year of college, one of my dreams finally came to fruition. I was hired as a special police officer in Ocean Gate, New Jersey, were I worked full-time in the summer in a patrol capacity, and part-time as the court bailiff in the winter. The beginning of my second summer at the police department, the chief of police came up to

me and gave me my first real leadership offer. He said he was impressed with the way I handled situations and dealt with people. He said, "I think you are a natural leader; how would you like to be in charge of training our new summer officers? You would be in charge of training them, and dealing with some day-to-day operations." Before I could say anything, he said he was confident I was the right person for the job.

I never imagined being in charge of other people, but the confidence given to me by my sergeant gave me the feeling I could do it. Over the next few years, I trained and led the next set of officers that would work in the summer time. I really enjoyed the experience, as I felt I helped mold some of the finest men I had ever worked with into efficient law enforcement officers. I also enjoyed the experience of making decisions that positively affected the day to day operations of the police department.

Unfortunately, life as a police officer was not what it had appeared to be as depicted on network television and in Hollywood movies. After a few years of law enforcement, I began to feel a void. Although I immensely enjoyed the supervisory side of the job, being a police officer was not as rewarding as I was led to believe as a child. It seemed the officers in our departments were arresting the same drunk and drugged-up people over and over again. As the vicious cycle continued, I began to question what type of difference I could make as a police officer. I started to reevaluate my life and my goals. I began to think of careers I could pursue that would be meaningful to me, careers in which I would feel I could really make a difference in someone's life.

I then began to think back to the people besides my parents, my old boss, and my best friend's brother, who had the biggest impact on my life. After much thought, I realized what a powerful influence my college mathematics teacher was. He relit my love

of mathematics that had previously been extinguished in middle school. He was the first teacher I could remember that actually made me enjoy school. I never realized how much power a teacher had in influencing my life in a positive way, but somehow it now all seemed clear to me. It was at this moment that I realized I wanted to leave law enforcement and become a teacher.

I took my Praxis exam in June 2002, received my passing results in July, and was hired as an alternate route algebra teacher in Sayreville, New Jersey two weeks later. The transition into teaching was scary at first. With no prior classroom experience, I felt like I was just handed classroom keys and a textbook, and was told, "Best of luck. Now go teach." It seemed like I tried to read every teacher book on the Barnes and Noble shelves before school started. I familiarized myself with the work of Madeline Hunter, Benjamin Bloom, Lee Canter, and Harry Wong. I ended up utilizing bits and pieces of things I loved from these readings. I also utilized the discipline and management I learned in law enforcement, and infused them with what I had seen in my favorite mathematics teacher in college.

I have been teaching honors eighth grade algebra and problem solving for the past 8 years now. Taking a job as a teacher was one of the best and most rewarding decisions I have ever made. Since teaching, I have been offered two positions in law enforcement, one of which was an agent with the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office computer crimes division. This was a dream job of mine only a few years earlier. I did not even consider either offer. I cannot even begin to say how much I enjoy walking into the classroom everyday. It is such an amazing feeling watching students' eyes light up when they understand a concept that seemed alien to them just a few minutes prior.

How Have People in my Past Influenced me to Become the Leader I am Today?

My boss at the Chinese restaurant, Chen, would be considered a transformational leader. According to James MacGregor Burns "Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (as cited in Couto, 1995, p. 103). This is reinforced by Richard A. Couto (1995) who stated, "A transforming leadership assists a group of people to move from one stage of development to a higher one, and in doing so [to] address and fulfill better a higher human need"(p. 103). Chen helped me to realize that if a person is given the right motivation and resources, he or she can accomplish great things. As a leader, I realize how much of an impact I could make on members of my school community if I prove to them that I believed in them. It can be something as little as me physically saying to teachers how much I think they are doing a great job, or how I know they will do well at a given task. It could also be more complex like finding extra money in the school budget to finance a classroom technology that a teacher has been asking for to improve classroom instruction. When staff members are raised to a higher level, they will raise the school community to a higher level.

The negative comments that my eighth grade English teacher said to me, as well as the disapproving comments made by my family, have stuck with me my entire life. Because of this, I have learned how one statement can demoralize a person. I know first hand how this can lead to a person losing the drive and desire to successfully complete a given task. When someone, student or faculty member, makes a mistake, I do not belittle him, making him feel incompetent or insecure. I focus on turning the negative into a positive. People will be more willing to do things if they feel supported and accepted

despite mistakes, rather than experiencing negativity every time they fail at a given assignment. This positive enthusiasm is a foundation of transformational leadership.

How Has Law Enforcement Impacted Me as a Leader?

My law enforcement training and experience have impacted every facet of my day to day leadership style. Through the intense and structured training I have endured, I subconsciously carry an authoritative presence, setting the tone that I am in charge. My taller than average height and muscle tone from my training have created a large frame, viewed as strength, even being at times intimidating to those who do not know me. I make it clear with my body language and appearance that I will be strict, but fair. Classroom management has been easy for me, due to the foundation I lay the first day of the school year. This same logic is applicable during my daily interactions with faculty and staff.

Law enforcement also trained me to keep a clean and well-kept appearance. The very first day of the school year, I make sure my hair is cut "high and tight," I am cleanly shaven, and I am wearing my best suit with a crisp white shirt and red power tie. Although I do not wear the suit after the first day of school, I still continue wearing the shirt and tie to maintain a level of professionalism. I feel that dressing my best shows I take my job seriously. When others see me take something seriously, they are more likely themselves to take me seriously.

The intensive training has also helped me to keep a level head in situations of varying degrees of stress. Working in a school, there is a need to stay on one's toes, and think on one's feet. Some people fold under pressure or act inappropriately when placed into a confrontation. On the other hand, I have been trained to verbally de-escalate and

defuse problems before they get out of control. For example, there have been many instances where students were going to get into fights in our school. Observing the warning signs of a potential physical altercation, I have been able to separate the aggressors and talk some sense into them before the issue intensified into a situation that would jeopardize the safety of students and staff.

My on-the-job experience in the area of verbally de-escalating a problem helps me to build a rapport with students. According to Kreisberg:

> Thus, those who utilize nonviolent action gain access to others not through the use of force, but rather through the use of mechanisms of humans that can never be fully closed off. This is a fundamental distinction between power over and power with. (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 67)

Once these students realize I speak with them, instead of at them, I am able to gain a level of trust and respect. "Trust and credibility are the bedrock of leadership" (Kelleher & Van Der Bogert, 2006, p. 231). "Without trust and credibility they have no hope of advancing their agendas and forfeit the opportunity to create cultures of learning" (Kelleher & Van Der Bogert, 2006, p. 231). These students now know they have someone they can go to if they have a problem in the future. This helps to circumvent other future altercations between students.

My law enforcement experience has tremendously impacted my views on educational leadership. "The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an 'ideological' representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline" (Foucault, 1979, p. 194). I strive to create a well-disciplined and well-mannered group of young citizens. I create a learning environment

where character education and citizenship skills are highly valued assets. My students

know what my rules and expectations are from day one. They are also made well aware

what the consequences are for inappropriate behavior and rudeness. Through this

structured environment, students understand that the behaviors I foster in my classroom

are the same behavioral expectations as outside the classroom. They become acquainted

with positive citizenship characteristics, such as saying please and thank you, that will

help them become positive influences to the environment around them. This style of

leadership is synonymous with transforming leadership. James MacGregor Burns stated

"transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human

conduct and ethical aspirations of both leaders and led" (Burns, 1995, p. 101).

Leadership Styles That Define Me as a Leader

Servant, situational, transactional, transformational, and democratic leadership

styles most aptly demonstrate my leadership beliefs and experiences. Coined by Robert

Greenleaf and discussed by Joseph Jaworski, servant leadership encourages leaders to

serve others while staying focused on the organization's goals (Greenleaf, 1998;

Jaworski, 1996). When working with my peers, I encourage trust, empowerment,

listening, and collaboration. I have no problem or hesitation assembling a group of

individuals who are more knowledgeable than I, sitting back, and allowing them

to brainstorm.

James MacGregor Burns (1995) characterized transformational leadership as a

style that enables leaders and followers to help elevate one another to a higher plateau of

morality and motivation. As a teacher I advocate educating our students as to what is

acceptable and unacceptable behavior. We also focus on character education, highlighting

skills that make children into well-mannered citizens. The only way to teach these skills is to lead by example. I am perpetuating my good habits by trying to instill them in others. I also help my students become the most effective and efficient learners possible. This requires me to stay abreast of new innovations in education. In essence, the desire to help my students become the best learners at the same time is driving me to become a better educator.

On the opposite end of transformational leadership on the leadership spectrum is transactional leadership. According to Bass (2003), this system is based on the premise that people are motivated by reward and punishment. The foundation of this leadership style is centered on strict chains of command, with the leader giving orders, and the staff following them without argument. Through my experiences on the police department, I have come to realize there are situations where the leader needs to dictate what needs to be done. If a crisis arises, there may not be time to ask others for their opinions. The leader must scan the environment, and make a judgment call based on his knowledge and expertise, exuding a level of command and confidence.

Democratic leadership focuses on "facilitating and encouraging participation in collaborative shared decision making" (Reitzug & O'Hair, 2002, p. 122). Leaders share the problem with the relevant team members as a group. Together, they generate and evaluate suggestions as they attempt to reach agreement on a solution. The leader's role is much like that of a chairperson. The leader can, but does not have to, influence the group to adopt a solution, and is willing to accept and implement any solution that has the support of the entire group. This style is based on the premise that everyone works together to successfully reach a common goal or work toward the common good.

Democratic leadership focuses on "the common interests of us all rather than the narrow interests of the few" (Cronin, 1995, p. 304). Through my past leadership experiences, and personal values, I will also make leadership decisions always thinking about the impact on our faculty and staff. I will always make decisions focused on serving others.

Vignettes of My Leadership

School Finance Project

My values and beliefs are embedded into every leadership opportunity in which I have engaged. I have mentioned previously my belief in empowering others in my group to have an opportunity to freely and openly voice their opinions and concerns. A group will work more effectively and efficiently if all members of the group feel like they have a fair say into decisions that are being made. Once a decision has been made, the group is more likely to follow through with the decision if they all helped to make the choice. Once a member is vested in a choice, it strongly increases the probability of it being successful.

It is very difficult to be extremely knowledgeable in all subjects and areas. I know enough about myself to understand that I am a jack of many skills, but master to only a few. I also understand that many people have valuable knowledge and experience that can be tapped. For this reason, I am not afraid to utilize the skills and talents of those in our organization. To be truly successful as a leader, it is important to learn the skills and strengths of all those in my organization. It is also important to find out what each team member is passionate about. "Administrators need to recognize and acknowledge their ignorance and then take action" (Murphy, 2007, p. 55). Determining what team members excel at doing, and enjoy doing, are elements to a successful partnership. This is an

important component of democratic leadership, allowing members of the group some choice into which projects they are going to participate. This also gives team members adequate opportunities to participate in important tasks, as well as adding input into decision-making opportunities.

Last spring, I enrolled in a school finance graduate course at Saint Peter's College in Jersey City. We were randomly placed into groups of four students, and given an extensive project to complete. We were instructed to complete a full school budget, meeting a list of strict guidelines. Each group was told to select a "principal" who would take the responsibility of fairly delegating work among group members and themselves. The principal would also be responsible for monitoring the group's progress, and making changes when appropriate. Out of our group of four, I was unanimously chosen to assume this leadership role. I had to ask myself why they chose me. Maybe no one else in the group wanted the responsibility, or maybe they could see the leader in me. I was to find out through some discussion; it was definitely the latter. All members of the group were awed with the first impression I made when introducing myself. I was well-dressed, clean cut, and had a strong handshake; but most of all, I was approachable and always had a smile. Before even being elected the group principal, I started planning within the group on how we should complete the project. It was then decided: I was Principal Londregan.

I had no idea what particular skills my group members possessed. I first established a group dialogue, ascertaining each group member's strengths and weaknesses. Through an open dialogue, we determined what areas each group member had a particular interest in. "Leaders should be good listeners" (Murphy, 2007, p. 55). Through most of our discussion, I took the role of an active listener. I acted as a

facilitator of discussion. Our group members brainstormed and began taking on responsibility for parts of the project. I continually monitored the progress of our group, consistently giving help and support as needed. Over the course of the next few weeks, I consistently evaluated our progress, making adjustments as needed. I made sure I was never overbearing or overly critical of the progress of my teammates. I always strived to create a positive atmosphere, making sure to consistently praise all group members for their work, and to highlight each milestone we reached along the way.

I never suggested that I needed to be an authority figure during the course of our project. Our group worked together as a team, tossing along ideas and collaborating on solutions to our problems. In the end, we were rewarded with a successful budget proposal. We had received feedback from our classmates, as well as our professor, stating how well planned and executed our project was. On a more personal note, I received feedback from our group members as to how effective my leadership skills were. They praised my leadership characteristics, including my positive attitude during even the most stressful of situations. I was told by one group member that he would want the opportunity to teach with me when I become a school principal.

The Workshop

According to Wahba & Bridwell (1976), Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of five basic human needs. He placed self-actualization needs at the upper echelon of his pyramid. Through all of my years of schooling, I have become a firm believer in the affect that learning has in a person's overall happiness.It is a necessary element to meet what Maslow considered self-actualization. All people have a subconscious need to acquire knowledge. My doctorate program, for example, has already made a huge impact

into helping me understand who I really am, and why I firmly assert that all people have a subconscious need to acquire knowledge.

I strongly value the idea that learning should never cease. There are always new ideas and theories that warrant some degree of our attention. Even the most competent and skilled master teachers benefit from the introduction of new ideas. For this reason it is important to present many opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in continuing education programs. This is an important aspect of transforming leadership, as I am helping my colleagues elevate their knowledge and skill base. These opportunities will make for happier and more competent teachers, which will in turn create happier and more knowledgeable students.

Our school hosts a yearly professional development workshop one day each year which all faculty and staff are required to attend. Our principal, Ms. Jakubik, usually focuses each workshop on areas in which she feels her building needs improvement. She brainstorms ideas with the vice principals and then recruits presenters to run the workshops. I had talked with Ms. Jakubik about the many things she wishes she could change and improve about the building. One of the things she wanted to improve was the morale, camaraderie, and trust between the faculty and staff. "Staff development strategies helped to build trust, commitment, and inspiration among the staff, which in turn promoted an atmosphere of respect and civility" (Elsner & Boggs, 2005, p. 41). One of the main problems was that many teachers did not know each other, because they were either new or in different parts of the building. Instead of outsourcing for a presenter, Ms. Jakubik suggested that I develop and implement our yearly fall professional development workshops, focusing on staff cohesiveness.

I was really excited about this opportunity, and I elicited the help of three other teachers. I informed these teachers of the goal of our workshop, and then tentatively listened as they brainstormed many great ideas for possible workshop activities. I acted in a democratic leadership style, with the premise, "You have the answers and I am here to support you" (Kelleher & Van Der Bogert, 2006, p. 236). "Having listened reflectively to your team, it is critical to verbalize the new sense you are making aloud" (Kelleher & Van Der Bogert, 2006, p. 235). After I heard what came to be a common recurring theme, I interjected and reiterated where the group was going. We brainstormed a few ideas and organized a workshop for 160 teachers and staff members. We wanted to focus on activities that would unite them, as well as help teachers meet different colleagues. We organized the 160 teachers into eight teams of 20 teachers. We mixed people from different parts of the building and with varying years of experience together. Every team member was given a colored shirt to represent their team, such as the blue team and red team.

We coordinated activities to help achieve our goal. I did not have to boss the members of our team, reflecting Kreisberg's statement, "Not that we have dominated or been dominated, but rather that we have achieved, or experienced effectiveness with others" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 57). We had the entire faculty participate in a scavenger hunt. We gave the faculty a survey a week prior, and on the day of the workshop, we played Family Feud based on the results of the survey. We also had other problem solving group activities that helped our staff to become more acquainted with each other. We have received positive feedback since the workshop from both administration as well as staff. Many staff members have stated that they have made new friends and

strengthened professional relations since the workshops. We also noticed a more comfortable and relaxed workplace during the days following the workshop.

Acting as a facilitator, I helped our group stay focused and on track to complete the task at hand. I tried not to impede the flow of ideas, allowing thoughts to flow openly and freely. At the same time, I did not sit back lazily, allowing others to make all the decisions. After listening to the views of the group, I gained an understanding of what the consensus of my members was, and ascertained if their ideas met the ultimate needs and goals of our school. This is a paramount aim of servant leadership.

The SmartBoard

A person should never just settle for the way things are or are currently done. Just looking for ways to improve is not enough. One should always look for ways to improve his or her job, making the actions more effective and efficient. "An ethic of care would compel school leaders to work to move visions, hopes, and plans beyond the conceptual stage into practice" (Beck, 1994, p. 82).

A transformational leader is willing to take an idea, and follow through with it. He or she must be willing to take the initiative to suggest and implement new ideas, blazing a trail for others to follow. "Ultimately this will motivate and empower other teachers to follow in your footsteps, and eventually blazing their own trails" (Beck, 1994, p. 92) Effective leaders "provoke teachers into thinking about new and different strategies" (Beck, 1994, p. 92). It is my duty as a teacher to harness my personal strengths, and focus them into improving our school environment. Finding new and innovative instructional techniques is just one important element to an effective and efficient educator and   school leader.

I have a strong foundation in computer technologies, earning my associate's and bachelor's degrees in computer sciences. As a teacher, I have been looking for every opportunity to incorporate technology into my everyday instruction. "Leaders have a desire to make something happen, to change the way things are" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 65). In 2004, I found a workshop that focused on teaching the fundamentals of using a SmartBoard in our daily classroom instruction. None of the schools in our district had SmartBoards, but I was intrigued by the abstract for the workshop. At the workshop, I was amazed at the power and versatility that a SmartBoard would offer to our daily classroom instruction. This was a technology that I knew our school would greatly benefit from. After doing some thorough research, I stumbled upon the Smarter Kids' Grant, which offered approved school districts discounted SmartBoards.

"Leaders are pioneers – people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 67). I presented the idea of applying for the grant to our school principal, Ms. Jakubik. We discussed the positive value of having the SmartBoard in our classrooms. I discussed how teachers would be able to create dynamic, audio, visual, multimedia presentations for a lesson. I elaborated how we would be able to utilize websites, like United Streaming and Brain Pop, to provide exciting content to our students.

Ms. Jakubik was extremely supportive and enthusiastic about the idea. Once given the green light, I helped with all aspects of the SmartBoard acquisition, including helping with the grant paperwork, and finding appropriate vendors that would be able to supply our schools with the necessary equipment. Through all of our hard work, we were able to acquire four SmartBoards for our middle school. I had one installed in my

classroom, and I have been using it every day since. The other three SmartBoards were dispersed throughout our building, based on teacher interest. I then took on the responsibility of training faculty in becoming proficient in this new technology. I have received positive feedback and compliments from faculty, students, and parents who are awed by the power of this new technology. Researching new technologies, filling out grant paperwork, and training staff, are not in my job description, nor are they an expectation of my employment. Leadership can be characterized by "one's willingness to take responsibility and the desire to achieve something for the good of the community" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 60). An effective leader and educator should take the initiative to find ways to improve the instruction of the students and the success of our teachers.

Coaching

One of my core values has always been based on the idea of helping others who are in need. Public service is paramount to a successful society. The opportunity to help people is the main reason why I chose a career in law enforcement, and why I am working in education. To be an effective leader, one must be willing to go above and beyond the call of duty. Extra exertion is extremely important in an educational leadership role. One's job is not just about collecting a paycheck, but more importantly, about making the extra effort to improve the school community.

Caring about others and finding ways to make their life better has always been one of my personal beliefs. Give a person a fish and they eat for a day; teach a person to fish and they eat for a lifetime, is a philosophy I will always stand by. It is like giving a few dollars to charity; it shows one cares, but does not really make things better. The

idea of making decisions in the interest of helping others is the cornerstone of servant leadership.

I have been involved in sports my entire life. I have witnessed many coaches in the past who have utilized every second they had with their athletes working on offensive and defensive drills. The coaches' only focus was for their athletes to have a winning record at the end of the season. I have other views. A coach's job is to help his athletes become successful not only on the court, but also in life.

In the fall of 2004 and 2005, I had the opportunity to volunteer for the Sayreville Public Schools freshmen and eighth grade boys' basketball teams as an assistant coach. During this time, I had an opportunity to work with a diverse group of students, many who came from underprivileged backgrounds. Many of these children were from homes that lacked a positive male role model. Some of these athletes came from homes where there was tension, discord, and abuse. This was an opportunity to make a constructive impact on this special group of young adults. I had expectations that these students could achieve more than just a division championship. "High expectations require more than speeches, and awards assemblies, it depends on deeply rooted beliefs that, if given the opportunity, individuals can actually meet high expectations" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 47).

During our seasons, I helped these young men not only become better athletes, but also to become better students and citizens. I took every opportunity I had to teach these students the morals and values that they were not getting taught at home. I helped many athletes realize that, although the chances of becoming a professional basketball player were slim, there are many opportunities to turn their knowledge of basketball,

coupled with good grades, into an athletic scholarship. "By creating vision, the leader provides a vehicle for people to develop commitment, a common goal around which people can rally, and a way for people to feel successful" (Nadler & Tushman, 1995, p. 109). I initiated and led tutoring sessions to help our athletes become better students. I taught them how to study better and how to ask for help when they were struggling academically.

I have kept in contact with my former athletes, and I have spoken with their teachers. Since our basketball seasons, both the students' teachers and parents have reported many positive changes in how our athletes approached their studies. Many of them have made amazing transformations from being poor academic achievers to honor roll students. Administrators have mentioned that many of our athletes have had decreased numbers of disciplinary actions since our season. I have also been told that these athletes are more respectful toward their parents, and teachers, saying "please," "thank you," "sir," and "ma'am." "I can teach you, but I cannot learn you" (Fuhrman & Lazerson, 2005, p. 278). I did not force these athletes to act appropriately. But I was able to help give them the tools to realize the difference between right and wrong, as well as showing them the benefits and intrinsic rewards of making the right decision. I still keep in contact with our former athletes, making every effort to make sure they stay on track. It means a lot to me to know that I was able to make a difference in someone's life.

Near the end of our first season, a few students had brought up the idea of having a tournament with some of the schools from different parts of the county. I had no experience in organizing, planning, or promoting an event of this magnitude, but I knew it was something that would potentially be very successful. I assembled a group of

coaches I knew had the experience and expertise to organize this event. "Leadership involves accomplishing goals with and through people" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969, p. 89). Without my help or guidance, these individuals seamlessly and without any difficulty were able to organize this event. Some people look down on this style, believing the leader is being lazy or is incompetent. Kreisberg "links power with and empowerment, arguing that empowerment is nurtured through power 'with' relationships" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 64). True leaders are comfortable enough in themselves to know they do not always have to be in the limelight. A servant leader knows the need to allow people to work through (Jaworski, 1996).

Teaching, My Greatest Demonstration of Democratic Servant Leadership

I have basically been in school almost continuously for 25 years. I have had many experiences as a student. As mentioned in my personal reflection, they have ranged from extremely positive to very negative. The bad experiences have helped me to understand what I do not want to do or be as a teacher. Some of the positive experiences have given me a template to follow and improve upon in my everyday instruction.

I have realized that most of the values and beliefs that I have learned from my parents and teachers are reflected in my teaching today. Students should develop a passion for learning. Education should be made fun and exciting. All students should be treated fairly and equally. This is a keystone to democratic leadership. Finally, my job is to make sure the students' needs are being meet. This is the bedrock of servant leadership.

Anthony J. D'Angelo is the Founder of the Collegiate EmPowerment Company and creator of the Inspiration Book Series. He once said, "You don't have to hold a

position in order to be a leader" (D'Angelo, 1995, p. 36). As an eighth grade mathematics teacher, I do not hold an official title many would associate with leading a school. Even though I am not a school administrator, my leadership impacts all levels of our school district. Most directly, I influence and impact my students, as I instill positive values that will one day hopefully make them successful leaders.

Through his inspiring teaching, my college mathematics professor helped me find the love of learning that I had lost so many years earlier. I have developed a passion for lifelong learning. This is a passion that not only helped me to become an apt teacher, but to also become a more effective leader. I have grown to realize the importance that continuing education has on keeping faculty and staff mentally prepared and up-to-date with educational innovations. "Everyone needs professional growth opportunities. All professionals experience situations in which they are not as competent as they would like…all professionals confront problems in their daily work that require new and different strategies" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 48). This mentality filters into my leadership as I not only support, but also advocate, for faculty and staff to become lifelong learners.

The power I hold over my students is demonstrated though "nurturing rather than controlling" (Sernak, 1998, p. 141). I try to empower my students by giving them choices that affect their academic outcome. For instance, if we are working on a specific concept, I give my students options as to how they will be assessed. I ask them if they would prefer a test or a project. We discuss what types of projects I could give so that I can determine their comprehension of an idea. Through this participation, I nurture empowerment. Kreisberg states:

I think the structure of the class like this where the teacher isn't in charge and has all of the power allows more power to take place between students and students and between teacher and students because the issues that come up are so much more real. (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 60)

Teaching is the medium that most clearly defines me as a leader. My beliefs and expectations as a teacher are the same beliefs I will carry over if I choose to become a school administrator. Every student has the ability to excel as a student, if the right learning environment is created. My main goal is to help my students develop lifelong critical thinking and problem solving skills that can be applied outside the classroom setting. "The only really substantial thing education can do is to help us to become lifelong learners" (Littky & Grabelle, 2004, p. 3). My goal is to get my students to truly love to learn. Just like I have found the passion to learn through a past college professor, through my teaching, I try to foster the passion and motivation of my students to become lifelong learners. I try to help my students find the desire to reach higher and go farther than they ever imagined possible. This does not equate to the belief that every student needs to go to college. Although this is the final destination for some students, it is not a required one. My goal is to help all students find what they are truly passionate about and to foster and encourage them to dream big and understand that they can become anything they want to.

I have been voted favorite/most helpful teacher the last two years by the student body. I also have a binder full of letters students have mailed me after they have graduated from the middle school, thanking me for all the things I have done for them. I have had students say to me that they never imagined they were smart enough to go to

college until they had me as a teacher. Others have commented to me that they have always hated math class until they had me as a teacher. A current high school junior, who I had taught my first year, even told me she is going to college to be a mathematics teacher because of the way I inspired her just a few years earlier. I finally feel I am making a positive difference in peoples' lives every day, and it is an amazing feeling!

How Has Rowan University Impacted Me as a Leader?

The notable English writer Aldous Huxley was once quoted as saying "There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self." The last four years I have spent in the doctoral program at Rowan University have had a significant impact on improving my skills as a teacher, learner, and leader. I have gained a richer and deeper understanding of how my school operates, where it needs to change, and most importantly, how to approach implanting this new change. My ability to create and lead a successful change initiative has been fostered by my classes in leadership theory, organizations as cultures, research literature, and changing organizations.

I have not been a person who has spent much time contemplating my life. Dr. Sernak at Rowan University has helped me realize how important personal reflection is toward successfully achieving goals. "The process of reflective thinking is valuable for students wanting to improve their ability to lead others and themselves" (Denstein & Gray, 2001, p. 121). School leaders need to be reflective practitioners. "Good supervision and reflective practices are interchangeable" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 56). Over the past few weeks, I have made it a point to spend free time thinking. I now realize how important this time is to helping me grow into a better and stronger leader. I can continue

to make time for these moments of reflection, as I balance work, graduate school, and family; all of which are vying for large parts of my time.

From the Organizations as Cultures class I have learned it is extremely important to study organizations as cultures and conduct a cultural analysis of an organization in order to be an effective and efficient leader. Every organization is unique and ever-changing. Knowledge is needed of the strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, goals, and values of one's staff. A solid understanding is needed of the stories, ceremonies, and rituals that have shaped the perceptions of staff. One needs to recognize the politics of our school, and that people within our organization are constantly vying for power, resources, and influence. Equally important is an awareness of the hierarchy, structure, and organization of a school. Knowledge of where the school came from and where the school currently is needs to be understood before one can help to direct the school to where I want it to be. This knowledge helps a school leader meet the organization's goal of increasing student enrichment.

I formerly made decisions based solely on espoused values. I would make myself aware of the organization's goals, strategies, and philosophies, and be sure my choices followed suit with these visual cues. I have learned that while espoused beliefs are important to know, following them does not guarantee success. One must know and understand underlying assumptions. These taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and thoughts significantly impact the culture of a school. A working knowledge of these beliefs is necessary to ensure the successful implementation of any plan.

Changing an organization's culture is necessary when certain problems, opportunities, or circumstances present themselves. Unfortunately, 90% of American

companies fail to implement their strategies. This is largely due to poor planning and eventual abandonment. In the past, I would have not put much thought into the culture of the organization that I was planning to make changes in. Since this class, I have learned to carefully spend some time analyzing the current culture before implementing any changes. I must make sure that the change is needed and members of the organization and other constituents can be persuaded to go along with this change.

I have learned to be cognizant of the obstacles that litter the path to successful implementation of my goals. Members of organizations realize that change yields both losses and gains. One must take extra effort to convince those in one's organization the benefits of the new culture will outweigh the losses. Considerations must also be made for people's fears of the unknown, self-interests, habits, dependencies, and need for security. Through proper planning I can determine if a change is needed and how I will go about making these adjustments.

When it comes down to decision-making, I always knew it was important to get the opinions of all members on one's team. After reading Janis Irving's article entitled "Groupthink" (1971) I now realize that people may be afraid to tell me how they really feel, for fear of going against group consensus. I need to establish a climate where it is encouraged to speak one's mind. I need to listen carefully to what people are saying, and be open to listening to ideas that may be against my preconceived notions. In the past when I was in charge of a group, I would have voiced my opinion on what I think should be done before my colleagues gave me their opinion. In retrospect, I have learned that it is a good idea to stay impartial in the beginning, and see what the group comes up with

on its own. When possible, I will also hear the opinions from other people in my organization and see if they have views that are different.

Knowledge gained from this class significantly helps me in my current teaching position. I have learned how to properly do a cultural analysis and how to differentiate between espoused beliefs and underlying beliefs. This will help me to understand what things I need to do in order to implement a new program or initiative. Most importantly, I have gained a firm understanding of organizations as cultures. I now have an idea of how to view an organization's culture through Bolman and Deal's (2003) Four Frames and Schein's (2004) three levels in order to get a better understanding of my organization. Through these lenses, I will patiently and carefully evaluate my school before rushing into any new changes. This will help me to avoid landmines and pitfalls that are typically encountered by hastily forcing new initiatives. In the end, this makes me a more effective and efficient leader.

Before I started the doctoral program at Rowan University, I really had no idea how to go about a change initiative. I imagined I would think of a great idea that would change the world, and I would dive on in head first, implementing it immediately. Then I had Organizations as Cultures with Dr. Campbell where I realized the importance of framing my organization, and learning about its culture. I still had no idea how to go about implementing the change, but I did gain a better understanding as to what obstacles could hinder it, as well as the resources that could help me achieve my goal.

The course Changing Organizations has helped me take my change vision to the next level by helping me understand how I am going to approach my change initiative.

First I learned to realize and understand the difference between Evan's (1996) first order change, which is improving the effectiveness of what we are already doing, and second order change, which alters our norms, beliefs, and perceptions. The depth of the change will determine the strategy that would be used to approach it. To create change that will last long after I am gone, I need to make sure I follow a specific set of steps incorporating stakeholders, creating a vision, and anchoring the change into the culture of the school.

I have realized people seek a state of safety and self-control, being content with the status quo. Because of this, most change initiatives will be faced with resistance. This class has taught me that with the appropriate preparation and planning this resistance can be reduced. I have grown to appreciate Kurt Lewin's (1947) change model, which establishes a mechanism for "unfreezing," "transitioning," and finally "refreezing," moving people away from their norms and toward accepting new ideas. I have also grown to appreciate his theory of force field analysis in which driving forces must be created to be stronger than restraining forces in order to shift equilibrium away from the conventional way of doing things.

"Any change comes down to people: first how you help them face it and then how you help them move with it" (Evans, 1996. p. 55). Dr. Manning has stressed the importance of learning, understanding, and being able to implement all the various change models and being able to mix and match them depending on the situation and the people you are dealing with. Michael Heifetz's (1994) seven step change model seems to be a proactive approach to change. The environment scan is a helpful element during the initial planning of any new idea. This systematic method involving using goals, plans,

actions, reflections, and adjustments is good for situations where in-depth and clear planning is needed.

How My Leadership Impacted my Action Research Project

The faculty and staff of our school building are a valuable resource with varying experience and knowledge. These individuals had perspectives and inputs that I needed to tap into to ensure I fully understand the scope and breadth of the action research project. As a servant leader I was cognizant of the importance of carefully listening to the students in my study, their parents, and all teachers involved. This helped me gain a clear picture of what needed to be done, and the path I needed to follow along the way. Being a servant leader I had the confidence and faith that the teachers instructing our students had the best intentions of helping our students meet their learning goals. By motivating the teachers in our building and helping them to understand their role in properly educating our students, I ensured that not only my action research project would be successful, but ultimately our students, faculty, and staff.

How Did My Action Research Project Impact My Leadership?

The results of the Leadership Practices Inventory suggest the teacher participants in the after school program perceive I have grown in leadership ability. This can be gleaned from the 60% increase in scores from the leadership practices pre-inventory to the post-inventory. The categories of the survey with the most growth suggest I have increased leadership practices which parallel the actions of a transformational leader.

Conclusion

Fullan (1997) stated the following:

Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure

chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of

paper, and work double shifts. He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but

cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency.

(p. 156)

A leader has a very daunting task trying to make large successes with limited

resources. Values and beliefs play a large role in what a leader determines a groups'

destination. The leader is also faced with the overwhelming task of determining a morally

correct path to reach that destination. The experiences from my past have helped to mold

my morals, beliefs, and views on leadership. Through previous life experiences, I have

developed an outlook of leadership that can most aptly be characterized under the

categories of servant, transformational, and democratic leadership. Serving the needs of

others has become more important to me than serving personal needs. A leader should

empower and inspire his staff through shared decision-making, trust, listening, and

collaboration. Under this style of leadership, triumph is reached by "letting teachers make

decisions that they, as principals, had previously made" (Reitzug & O'Hair, 2002, p. 28).

Principals "do not need to share all decisions with teachers. They do however, need to

share the critical ones" (Reitzug & O'Hair, 2002, p. 136).

"To educate means preparing children to assume responsible citizen roles in the

world for the sake of a better world" (Kelleher & Van Der Bogert, 2006, p. 200). As a

leader, I do not only influence the students in my classroom, who must listen to me

because they are a captive audience. I have the power to influence my fellow teachers through my positive attitude, caring, and compassion. I am able to keep morale up, maintain a positive school environment, and keep staff members focused on our school goals. I will continue to be a lifelong learner and grow to become a stronger teacher and leader. I will also aid my staff in continuing education endeavors so they can reach self-actualization. Finally, I will continue to empower my students through any means at my disposal, so that they too will find the love of learning that I now have.

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Appendix A
Informed Consent and Survey Cycle I

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Study

Kenneth M. Londregan Teacher of Mathematics at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School South Ridge New Jersey, and Doctoral Candidate at Rowan University Glassboro New Jersey would appreciate your participation in a research study designed to determine student opinions about the after school program your child finished participating in. This information is needed for Mr. Londregan to complete a portion of his dissertation research at Rowan University. All information collected will be used for educational nonprofit purposes only. You are being asked to allow your child to complete an anonymous survey that should take no more than 5 minutes of their time.

While this information could be obtained by interviewing your child, I feel that the survey is the quickest and easiest method for obtaining this information.

I anticipate no risk to you as a result of your child's participation in this study other than the inconvenience of the time to complete the survey. They could, however, experience some discomfort if they have had a negative experience while attending the after- school program, and completing the survey causes them to remember this.

While there may be no immediate benefit to you as a result of your participation in this survey, it is hoped that I may gain valuable information about your child's options towards the after-school program, adding future value to society.

The information that you give on the questionnaire will be recorded in anonymous form. I will not release information that could identify you. All student names will be kept anonymous at all times. Each student will be assigned a random number and will be referenced by that number only. All data will be reported in terms of group results. All completed surveys will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the home of Kenneth M. Londregan and will not be available to anyone not directly involved in this study.
Once the study is completed, I would be glad to give you the results. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please ask me or contact:
    Kenneth M. Londregan
        Teacher of Mathematics
        Theodore Roosevelt Middle School
            3439 Highway 516, South Ridge N.J. 08857
            KLondregan@obps.org
You may also contact my Doctorate Dissertation Committee Chair
            Dr. Robert Campbell
            Professor of Education at Rowan University
            201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro N.J. 08028
        (856)256-4500 ext. 3817
        Campbell@rowan.edu

Your Signature and submission of the survey to the researchers represents your consent to serve as a subject in this research.

Name of guardian: (please print) _____

Signature of guardian: _____ Date: _____

Future Learning Programs at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School

For each question please, mark only one box to describe your opinion

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. After **school** learning programs help a student to earn better grades, than if they did not participate in this program.					
2. After **school** learning programs help a student score higher on standardized tests					

3. I (if a student) or my child/children (if a parent) have previously participated in: *Check all that apply*
- ☐ After school state testing preparation classes at Roosevelt Middle School
- ☐ After school state testing preparation at learning centers such as Sylvan
- ☐ After school tutoring at Middle School
- ☐ After school tutoring at learning center such as Sylvan
- ☐ Remedial Summer School
- ☐ Enrichment Summer School

4. I (if a student) or my child/children (if a parent) would be interested in attending an **after school** enrichment program if it were available on: *Check all that apply*
   ☐ Mondays ☐ Tuesdays ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursdays ☐ Fridays ☐ Not interested in attending any day

5. What best describes your Gender: *Check One*

   ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. What best describes you: *Check One*

   ☐ Parent ☐ 6th grade student ☐ 7th grade student ☐ 8th grade student

7. What is your race / ethnicity? *Check all that apply*

   ☐ Asian ☐ Black/African American ☐ White/Caucasian ☐Hispanic (may be any race)

   ☐Native American ☐Other (please specify: _____)

8. I would best describe myself (if a student) my child (if a parent) as one of the following: *Check One*

☐ High achiever (*Averaging A's or scoring advance proficient on the NJ ASK*)

☐ Medium achiever (*Averaging B's and C's or scoring proficient on the NJ ASK*)

☐ Low achiever (*Averaging D's and F's during the year or scoring below proficient of the NJ ASK*)

☐ Unsure

Thank you again for taking the time to answer this survey. Your help will help us to significantly improve the learning opportunities offered to our students. If you would like to know the results of this study, please feel free to e-mail me

Appendix B

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Interview (Teacher)

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Interview

Kenneth M. Londregan Teacher of Mathematics at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School South Ridge New Jersey, and Doctoral Candidate at Rowan University Glassboro New Jersey would appreciate your participation in a research interview. This information is needed for Mr. Londregan to complete one of his doctorate classes in Education Leadership at Rowan University. All information collected will be used for educational nonprofit purposes only. You are being asked to participate in an interview that will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time.

I anticipate no risk to you as a result of your participation in this study other than the inconvenience of the time to complete the survey.

While there may be no immediate benefit to you as a result of your participation in this study, it is hoped that I may gain valuable information about your options toward our educational practices, adding future value to society.

If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without penalty. The information on you up to that point would be destroyed.

Once the study is completed, I would be glad to give you the results. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please ask me or contact:

> Kenneth M. Londregan
> Teacher of Mathematics
> Theodore Roosevelt Middle School
> > 3439 Highway 516, South Ridge N.J. 08857
> > KLondregan@obps.org

Your Signature and submission of the survey to the researchers represents your consent to serve as a subject in this research.

Name: (please print) _____
       Signature: _____

Appendix C

Interview Script

Warm-up/General Demographic Information

1.   So how was your weekend? Or, how is your week going?
2.   How many years have you been teaching?
3.   How did you get into teaching? Did you always want to be a teacher? If not, what did you want to be?
4.   Have you ever taught anywhere else besides Roosevelt, or in South Ridge?
5.   What subjects have you taught?

Teaching questions

1.   If I were to walk into your classroom, what should I expect to see, what is the typical pacing of your class?
2.   Would you say the class I observed was a typical class as far as instruction goes, or were you doing anything differently than usual?
3.   How closely do you follow your lesson plans? Do you stick to them, or tend to veer off?
4.   How much do your plans change from year to year?
5.   Do you find your lessons cover the same amount of material?
6.   (If the teacher states a difference for question 5) What do you think causes this differentiation? Does it always appear to be the same class that you get ahead or behind in?
7.   What do you think makes a good/strong lesson?
8.   What about a weak lesson? Do you change it for the next class, or just keep it the same?
9.   How much time do you think should be spent with you (the teacher) explaining vs. the student doing or practicing?
10.   How do you assess student understanding?

Curriculum

1.   How much freedom do you have to provide additional instructional time if students do not understand a concept?
2.   Do you feel you have a lot of freedom to teach the material you want to, or do you feel tied to the curriculum?
3.   Do you feel the curriculum you follow does a good job of preparing your students

for standardized tests?

4. What about high school and beyond?
5. What would you do differently if you could change the way students are instructed in your subject area?
6. If you had control over the amount of instruction time your students had in your subject area, would you keep it the same, decrease it, or increase it
7. Would it be better to have the subject more than once a day?

Student information

1. How often, if ever, do you find students that do not seem interested in your lesson or class in general?
2. Do you do anything differently with these students than you do with other students?
3. Do you feel you call on your students evenly, or are some students chosen to answer questions more often than others?
4. How do you pick which students to answer questions?
5. On average, how many students do you have in your classes?
6. What do you think is a good number of students?
7. How much do you think class size impacts the efficiency of instruction/student understanding?
8. Do you have classes where high achieving students are mixed with low achieving students?
9. Do you feel the low achieving students pull down the higher achieving ones, or vice versa?

Appendix D

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study (Student/Parent)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctorate student in the Education Leadership Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Robert Campbell as part of my doctoral dissertation concerning the impact after school programming has on the educational outcomes of students who receive free or reduced lunch.

I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to determine if adding instructional time in the areas of mathematics will have any impact on the student's perception of school, benchmark test scores, and standardized test scores.

The program will run Monday through Thursday from 3:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. The student can attend the program 1, 2, 3, or all four days of the week depending on the student's availability. There will be no cost to participate in this program. Late buses will be provided to take the student home at the end of each day for free. Any data collected from this study will be used for my dissertation only. All student names will be kept anonymous at all times. Each student will be assigned a random number and will be referenced by that number only. All data will be reported in terms of group results.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his/her class. If a participant no longer wishes to participate in the program for any reason, he or she will be allowed to opt out at any time without consequences. At the conclusion of the study a summary of the group results will be made available to all interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 732-606-2227 or you may contact Dr. Robert Campbell at (856) 256-4500 ext.3817. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth M. Londregan
Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to your child's teacher by Feb. 1.

___ I grant permission for my child _____to participate in this study.
___ I do not grant permission for my child _____to participate in this study.

_____ _____
(Parent/Guardian signature   (Date)

Appendix E

Interview with Ms. X

During the interview an M: refers to me, Kenneth Londregan. An X: refers to Ms. X.

M: Ms. X, this is for my graduate school class, it's not for anything with Old Bridge, your name will not be on any school report that anyone will actually see, it will be initials only, this is your informed consent for this interview, do you mind doing a tape recorded interview for my graduate school class?

X: No

M: How many years have you been teaching?

X: Three years total, this is my fourth.

M: And how did you get into teaching, did you always want to be a teacher

X: I always wanted to be a teacher from when I was little, I used to play school all the time, and both my parents are teachers, so I used to go into school and visit them.

M: You played school.

X: I did,

M: Did you have the little chalk board and everything

X: I had a chalkboard, and my parents would pretend they were students, me and my sister would be the teachers, and my dad would say he has to go to the bathroom, and he would never come back.

M: That's awesome; your mom was stuck there the entire time.

M: You never taught anywhere besides Old Bridge right?

X: No.

M: Did you do any student teaching?

X: My student teaching was in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and my practicum's were in Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

M: And what were the individual kids you were teaching, age level, were they a different age group?

X: Kindergarten first for my practicum, then kindergarten and fourth for my student teaching.

M: And what was the ability level, special education, regular Ed?

X: They were regular education.

M: What about extra instruction like anything on the side, anything?

X: When I was student teaching, I would do tutoring sessions after school, like an afterschool program, and now I do home instruction and private tutoring.

M: What subjects have you taught anything besides mathematics?

X: Not after college

M: Ok, so everything was math related.

M: Ok, during a typical math instruction with you, if somebody was going to walk in like I did to observe you, what is a typical classroom setting for you, like how do you lay out the foundation of your class?

X: If someone walks in?

M: Like in general, what is the pacing of your class?

X: Oh, the students walk in, they take their do now, while they are doing their do now, I check their homework, I just make sure it is done, after about 5 or 6 minutes we go over the do now, we go over the homework, depending on what the homework is, sometimes we put them on the board, sometimes we just go over them. From there I hand out my

notes that are outlines for them, and them they fill in the rest as we go over it together, from there they do class work in either the textbook, or I give them problems orally, we just repeat the homework, they pack up, and they go.

M: Now is that pacing the pacing you do because you like it, or you feel you have to do it because you feel the school is looking for that pacing structure? If you had control over it, would you do things differently?

X: I wouldn't always do a do now. I like the do now when I'm checking homework because it gives them something to do besides waiting for me, but sometimes that I know will take longer, or if I want to do group work, you know it gets in the way.

M: Then what would you do differently, would you eliminate it all together?

X: I would have on the board as they walk in and see it, sit down and work on your group assignment, or sit down and wait for instructions for me.

M: Now, if I was to run and afterschool program, would it be go to eliminate the do now, and go straight to formalized instruction?

X: Yes.

M: Ok, how close do you usually follow your lesson plans, do you use it as a general guide, and do you deviate from it?

X: In general I follow them 95% of the time though, what I don't necessarily always go by is the pacing, In my lesson plans I say I do a lesson a day, sometimes I take two days to do one lesson or they will have difficulty with the beginning of the notes, so their homework, I shorten it, I only give them certain problems, and then the next day we continue it, sometimes they get it but they are confused so the next day we do

reinforcement of it, flashcards or something like that. The actual lesson is everything being done, but sometimes we do it over one day.

M: Now how do you determine to stretch it, is it from student reactions, like if they are asking a lot of questions, or seem confused?

X: When we are doing the notes to learn the lesson, sometimes we go straight through it, if they are going straight through it, then usually their homework the next day is correct, but if their homework they are getting a lot of it wrong, or if they are getting the same types of questions wrong, I won't necessarily postpone the next lesson, but I will give a few more problems than I had planned, and if they get it right, then we move on, if they still seem confused then we go into the textbook and do more work, or we'll do another mini lesson on it.

M: Now how often does that typically happen when you find yourself, needing an extra day to teach instruction?

X: Depending on the chapter, 50/50 sometimes.

M: And do you find yourself, every year noticing that students struggle on the same sections, or does it change every year?

X: The struggling aspect changes from year to year. How much they listen to what I'm telling them does not. For example, subtracting integers because I just did it. I know I did it, and other 8th grade teachers do it as well, whenever you see a minus whether or not it's simple, change it to a plus or opposite or plus a negative, and then I get, if its 7 minus 8, its easy it negative 1. So then we go through, yes it easy so we can check it, and we know it's right, but when we have these long extended problems and we have distributive property put in there, we sometimes forget, instead of putting that little line through for

plus a negative, or plus a positive, you won't make those silly mistakes, and instead of getting five points off on a test, you will be gaining five points. So they do in their notes, but they will not do it in their class work. Certain students just refuse to do it, then they get it wrong, and then I ask them to tell me what they are supposed to do. Then they tell me correctly what they are supposed to do, but they say they just don't feel like it.

M: Nice, I have the same problem so don't feel bad. I'm dealing with that right now actually, and I'm actually going to do more days of it tomorrow.

X: Me too, I was going to give a quiz, but no, they are just not ready. I am going to do flash card review tomorrow.

M: I actually did a do now quiz today and I wasn't happy with the results, so I am going to re teach it again. I really like the flashcard idea. See, I am always learning from you

X: I'm actually making them tonight.

M: That's what I'm doing after I grade my do now quiz. How much do your plans change from year to year?

X: Not by much because I don't necessarily write how I am saying things, I just have my notes in there, and I write down the topics I am doing, and the homework, and the numbers of the class work. Sometimes the class work depending on how the pacing goes in the class, I might claim I'm going to numbers one through fifteen in class, but then by the time we have time to do it, I realize by the time we get everything out we are only going to get through 3 problems, so I'll select 3 specific problems that cover each of the type that I want them to. But year to year, I don't change them.

M: And do you write notes in your lesson plans, like this did not work today, don't do this next year, what a horrible idea?

X: I don't necessarily, if I don't like it I will write that in, didn't work well, but for the numbers and everything like that after each class if they don't do everything I have planned, I will go to my lesson plans and I will say period 1 did numbers 3, 4, and 5, period 2 only did 1, 5, and 7 and so forth.

M: How often do you do cooperative learning activities in your classroom?

X: The end of each chapter, I try to do at least one. In the middle of the chapters it depends on what we are doing. Basic rote things such as minus a negative, plus a positive, something like that, then not so much unless they are doing the reinforcement of it, then I will put them into groups, and they will have to do things together. When they get more into the geometry, and the area and parameter aspects of things, I do more.

M: So depending on the section you are working on will depend on what you do. And do you find that you do cooperative learning with some classes and not others?

X: Um, I do not do it with all my classes, and this year, it does not have to do with their ability to work in groups, it has to do with the size of the class, and the size of the classroom. I have one class that has 20 kids and its fine. I have one class that has 28 and even if they're are all talking at a regular level, and they are not screaming, it's too loud, and you can't think, and you are not getting work done.

M: Ok, so you are saying classroom size is a huge factor in wither you do cooperative learning and if I was going to do an after school program then I should keep the classroom size down to a minimum.

X: Yes.

M: What would be the optimal classroom size do you think? For two scenarios: one being an actual school day, and two being an after school.

X: After school I would say, teacher for every four or five students in a classroom setting I would say one teacher for every fifteen to twenty students.

M: Ok, going back to the idea of not doing everything for the same classes, do you feel that your lessons often change by class period, do you feel you can't do as much with certain classes because there are too many students in the class, or behavioral issues?

X: Not necessarily because there are too many students, it depends on when I have them. First period I get more accomplished because they all stay with me from homeroom into first period.

M: And they are still waking up.

X: Well, by the time first period starts, everyone finished their do now, so that give me right there an extra five ten minutes to do more with them. Then I have a class that goes to their lockers and then comes to me and they go to their lockers at the beginning of the class period so that gives me right their 5 lesson minutes, and then from lunch to me it takes them about 8 minutes to get to me, so I probably have 10 minutes less for them.

M: I actually have an interesting dissertation topic now because I have the same exact thing in my classroom, I have a first period class where we do so much more, I want to look at standardized testing scores in my period 1 and my period 7 because they are coming from all over the place and see if there is a huge impact, an increase or decrease in scores.

X: I do notice with my notes, usually I finish my notes in all my classes, but sometimes if I don't, I have to eliminate like a word problem because I usually put the word problems on the bottom and by the time if I were to do the last word problem, I would

just rush through and confuse them anyway, or sometimes my first period does much more class work.

M: So you are getting the fundamentals but not the high order thinking?

X: Yes, exactly.

M: What do you think makes a really great lesson and a really strong lesson, like what elements do you think would make a really strong lesson, outstanding, or really poor. What makes a lesson dynamic, and stand out. What do you think every lesson should include, to make it a really strong lesson? Like I saw a class where the teacher just wrote on the board from start to end.

X: Ok, ok, well me personally, even though I teach the same material that lets say a seventh grade teacher taught the year before, my kids say I'm more interesting and it has nothing to do with the material, it has to do with my voice, and the fact that I am loud. Unless they are completely zonked out, they cannot fall asleep in my class because they say that I am too loud. I try not to stay by the board unless I am doing a problem that involves all the steps, I have to be by the board because I am writing all the steps, but if I am going over definitions I'm usually standing at the back, and I'm walking through them. I'm constantly if the kid isn't writing something down kinda as I'm saying it point to where they are supposed to be writing it to get them back on task so even if they are kind of being lazy, if kinda of somehow try to grab them. Um, I think, I can't always do it, but do the same thing, um, the routine is the same, the do now, the notes, the class work, but if you can go from the notes to the class work so they are kinda moving around not necessarily moving seats but just doing something different to kinda get them moving. My calculators can be used for the do no because of NJ ASK review, but with

integers we can't use them so after the do now, after we go over them, someone has to go around and collect the calculators so the then that gets them, and while they are doing that I am passing out the notes, so I don't want to say they have free time or down time, but they don't have to be constantly looking at me because I'm not teaching anything yet, and except for one of my classes, when I say "ok put the date on your notes, they stop talking and they are right back to where they are supposed to be. I have one class that doesn't exactly happen. I have to say maybe probably two or three times, but once I get them I have them.

M: Gotcha, it's funny because I have my two student teachers with me right now, and they tell me from my class periods that I joke around more with one class and not the other because once I get them off focus, or off task they don't go back at all.

M: As far as the school curriculum goes, do you feel you have enough time to provide additional instruction?

X: No, not at all. Um, I do feel that I have more than I did when I first started. When I first started I didn't know how long anything would take, so I wanted to make sure I didn't rush and skip things. But especially last year, the pacing guide was changed, and, thought last year I realized I was going quicker than some other teachers so this year, I am going a little bit slower, and I will be able to do a little bit more hands on activities in a sense, but again my classroom doesn't really allow me to do too much group work, but if I have a good say project that will take them a week long to do, but it's very beneficial when they move out or go to college they will have the knowledge of something for the real world, I don't feel I can do that. If I want to take the time to do a project, 2 days max.

M: Ok, so that doesn't really give you the time to delve into something significantly, but just to scrape the surface of it.

X: Right, not at all. It would be, like, or for example we are going to try to get the financial literacy person to come in, we can all definitely use a full two weeks and just do financial literacy, checking accounts going shopping, if you get paid this much, when do you have to pay these bills, and we can really go into it, but you can have them try to buy a house. If you are married and your partner makes this much money, where can you afford to live for the size, everything like that, now what I do is basically say this is how much you get paid, this is how often you get paid, these are the bills you have to do, how are you going to pay it.

M: So you are watering it down significantly and streamlining it, and trimming.

X: Yeah, and then I get the questions, well what if I don't make this much, well what if I have a part time job, or, well what if I don't want to go to the movies, what if I want to do this instead, and I am like, well you can't. You don't have the option. But if we had the full two weeks, even if, I know I'm streamlining it, but a month, or if we had block scheduling even then we could do it.

M: Gotcha, pretty cool.

M: Do you feel the curriculum goes a good job preparing the students for standardized tests? NJ ASK8

X: I think so.

M: What about for high school and for life?

X: There are certain things that I don't really feel they need for life. A box and whisker plot will most likely never be used by most students. Um, I do feel they always say when

are you ever doing to solve for x in the real world, and no, you don't solve for x, but you do solve for other things, you just don't call them variables. You know um, so I think maybe we could word if differently than solving for a variable they would realize that it is important. Like you have a wedding and you need to save up 35000 dollars, you have three years to do it, you have these expenses, and how much did you save each month. You are solving for x.

M: Gotcha, so you are doing it, and not even realizing it.

X: Yes, they don't realize that it is the same thing, so if we could somehow put that into in, I mean the books do put one or two word problems in there like that, but it's not worded the right way.

M: Is that currently one of your personal real life problems?

X: Yes, one of my friends just got engaged, and I am the maid of honor, so, but no, I am saving money, and October is my deadline.

M: Nice, are you actually going to meet that deadline.

X: Next October,

M: Good because you are in October right now Ms. X., so I didn't think you were going to make it.

X: I'll be solving for x

M: Hopefully you solve it right

M: Um, if you had control over the instructional time in a school day for math, you would make it longer shorter, like right now our periods are 45 minutes.

X: I would make it longer, in a time frame. I wouldn't necessarily say you need more hours in a week, um, I know in LAL the scores have gone up in the past few years, and

that's when they changed it to two periods a day, um, and I feel with math we do a lot of rote, we do a lot of just starting it and we don't do a lot of what does it mean, how do you do it. We just go through the steps, then we solve, then we move on.

M: So we are not doing the high order thinking, the bloom taxonomy.

X: I think we should do, which is funny because I am taking my grad course this semester which is on scheduling.

M: Ok, so go show off.

X: I like the every other day block schedule where they would have math Monday and Wednesday, with social students, and then Science and LAL on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and then every other Friday it rotates. So you are getting technically the same amount of time in, but it is in a longer period so you can accomplish more. So, Monday the chances of what the remember doing for the Wednesday are so much more because they did it for so long.

M: Ok, gotcha. What about doing as you mentioned, English was a single block class and they made it double, what about making math a double if they could do that, I mean I don't know how they would do it, or if it was feasible, but do you think if they had a double math that they would actually benefit from it.

X: I think it would only benefit some kids and it would turn some kids off.

M: Why, because it would be too long to have math back to back?

X: Some kids are just, aren't good with numbers, and it has nothing to do with their teachers, it has nothing to do with them, just their brain just doesn't function, or it doesn't work that way, and I think too much math would be just too much for them. If they had like a science slash math class and then a math and a Science, like your lab was kinda

your math and science together, because the math is involved with the science aspect, I think that would be better. The kids that are good in math, the kids that are scared in math or kind of shy away from it, they would just be more scared of it.

M: So you can also do what about like hands on activities in the second math class

X: Yes, like the fun projects and problem solving, and projects, like a few weeks of the wedding problem. Where they are interacting and talking and they don't necessarily need to do in their head 12 times 7.

M: And you are actually doing the practical applications of the mathematical knowledge. I like that, I like that a lot.

M: As far as students in your class, you mentioned some kids don't like numbers and don't really like the subject very often. Do you feel in a typical class usually seems to be like anti math. Like I did my classroom observation with you, and I noticed there were two students, in these two seats actually Ethan and Dakota, and every time I see them, they didn't seem happy to be here to say the least.

X: Um, actually with those two particular students, Dakota is extremely smart in math, I mean I think he has a 104 average. I think he is not paying attention, but when I walk over to him he has everything written down, and when I call on him, he knows exactly what he is doing. I just think, I almost think he is bored, and probably didn't take the standardized test seriously, and that's why he is not in the higher class.

M: So he is not being challenged then.

X: That's what I think but he is not being a behavioral issue at all so, he is actually good to put a talkative kid next to. Ethan is now doing much better I think because Dakota was so smart in it he almost felt that he was stupid.

M: Or he was cheating off him

X: No because he is still failing. I checked that one. Now Ethan is actually much more vibrant and he participates more in class 50/50 isn't right, but if he is trying and he gets it wrong, then he is able to tell me why he got it wrong such as the subtracting, again, if he got it wrong I can say are these the same signs or are these the opposite signs, and he will say, oh these are opposite, oh I added by mistake. He is more vocal with himself. His grade was an f within the first few weeks, and he has since pulled it up to a C. We will see how he does on actual tests; I mean his last test he did really well on.

M: Well he has a good teacher, so I am confident he will do alright.

M: Do you do anything different with those students that don't seem to pay attention, like did you initially pair a student that is struggling next to a more vocal student, or did it end up working out that way.

X: No, I put him as close to me as I could.

M: To keep an eye on him.

X: I kinda purposively split them up, because I thought they were silently goofing off, and Dakota just didn't have to pay attention because he just gets it, and that's why Ethan was doing bad, which it could be, I don't know, when my back is turned I don't know what they are doing.

M: Yeah when I was doing my observation they were making clown faces behind you back, I'm just joking.

X: You know what, it wouldn't doubt me , um because that class I sat on something and four boys in my class pointed out that I had a stain on my butt, so that's why my jacket is on. And it was only the boys that noticed that one.

M: Maybe the girls just didn't want to say anything.

X: No, they were like, let me see, let me see, and then they said, oh, it's all the way down the right side.

M: Getting back on track, with him, you moved him because.

X: I thought he was goofing off or deliberately not paying attention because the person he was sitting next to as really smart.

M: Is that why you usually move kids, because they are not paying attention?

X: Sometimes I move them because they are not paying attention, sometimes I move them because I feel bad that they are in the back, and then especially because they get comfortable with who they are sitting next to. They may not be friends when they begin the school year, they eventually become friends. Um, I also notice that some kids don't naturally goof off, like I have one kid Alan.

M: Alan sat right there right?

X: Yes he sat there, I changed him in front of me, because in front of me, he doesn't not say boo. He is constantly now on top of things, he is the first one to finish; he is vocal but not too vocal. Like some kids just call things out whether they are right or wrong and say well I participated, but not him at all.

M: That's one of the things I noticed during my observations with you is that him and the kid next to him would be talking.

X: Yeah I caught them talking, and about a week after you came in to observe me, I moved them. Well I moved him not permanently, but they somehow thought that what I did was permanent, and so they have just kept on sitting there.

M: That's funny, outstanding.

M: What is your average class size this year?

X: Average I would say is 24; I have one of 28 and one of 20 though.

M: Do you feel you have more students in your algebra course 1 then you have in your pre-algebra classes, or less, or no difference?

X: One class of my enhanced groups, one has less, one has twenty, and my pre-algebra I think I have 24 in all three, and my 8th period which is my other enhanced class, I have 28. So if they could take 4 of them and put them in the other class, then I would have 24 and 24 and it would be perfect.

M: Would you do cooperative learning then if you had 24?

X: Yes because with my pre-algebra I have more than enough room, and with my 20 kids its almost quite in here still when they were doing the game for the review, but my 28, and they weren't being bad, but I had to constantly say we have to start whispering now, we can't talk at the regular level, and that's not fair.

M: Would it be safe to assume, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, I'm just making and assumption that the honors class does have more students and because of that you are not doing cooperative learning group activities, or as many fun things than you lower or medium achieving students?

M: When you mix kids of different levels like in the pre-algebra class.

X: Like the kids that have ICS.

M: Yeah, do you feel that having the higher kids with the lower kid's pulls up the lower kids?

X: I feel it does if a child has their own motivation to do well. Some kids really do struggle but they try and if they are with the brighter kids they do perform better. Do they get the A's, not necessarily, but they get the high 70, which is good for them. (Teacher walked in to ask X: a question about grading with our new computerized grade book, I did not turn off the recorder because it is digital and I wanted to keep it as one file. I am not typing the conversation because this teacher did not sign or give consent to be recorded).

M: Ok so we are talking about the low achieving high achieving students, and you were saying that self motivation…

X: Yes if they have it in them to try , and they are with the smarter kids, they will ask those kids for help and they will really listen, they will take it in, for them, I feel its beneficial, if you have a kids who is, who just says we are never going to use this, or has the hyper activity issues or something I mean I had someone with IEPS where they were allowed to just call things out, if you have low functioning kids to begin with and they have all these distractions, and not only that, but it takes, its more discipline than teaching, and it depends on your ICS teacher, it depends on the other teacher in the room. I had one teacher, she did not handle it well at all, and I did everything.

M: Was that the one you had last year?

X: Yes and the years before that, I never handled it, those kids were taken out by the special Ed teacher, dealt with in the hall, and if they came back in, they did not say a word, so it depends on the help that you have.

M: So is that why she is not here anymore?

X: I don't know, I said nothing to anybody in administration about her.

M: Is she still in district?

X: She is not. I don't know if she was rehired and she said no, or is she, I don't know.

M: Well you know you are such a great teacher, it is hard to stand next to you, and I wouldn't want to stand next to you too, being such a bright and shiny star. It's hard to compete.

X: She couldn't even keep them quite.

M: To summarize and summarize this, I'm sure you know that my dissertation that I am going to go with is probably trying to create an after school program, cause we have for the lower achieving students. How are the students selected anyway, I'm kinda curious, are they the kids that are below proficient, or proficient.

X: I think it also has to do with their income level, because they don't have to pay for it. It is, based on their standardized test scored. It has nothing to do with from what I am told because I have never been asked, teacher recommendations. The ones that are in basic skills are obviously in it becomes of their standardized test scores. Parents have to obviously agree to it though. I did it the first year it was started though, and that was based on income. Solely income and test scores. I mean if they were doing well but they didn't have any money, they didn't come to the program. It was more of like a free tutoring session, but last year I did it and I saw some kids in there that I knew for a fact were well off money wise. So I am assuming that the program was run differently or.

M: Was the program for all achievement levels or low achievement levels, like low proficient, or below proficient?

X: No, they were all below.

M: So if I wanted to start an actual program for the middle of the road kid, or even the above proficient kids, what do you think I should do in that program. I mean class sizes first of all you said 1-5 kids would be optimal, what do you think would be the max for an after school setting to maximize?

X: It depends on what you are doing. If you are doing it for an extra help session or just to reinforce, you can do like 8-10, and still if you are doing that, and the kids are well behaved, if you are going to do a selection through them, then you can do 10. But if it is going to be more of, I know this is what you have been doing in class, so now we are going to figure out how your parents use it at work. Or how you would use it if you were going to save for a vacation? I always use saving for vacations because I love to go on vacations. Every example of mine is like if you want to go here, how much can you save, because I always do it. Um, so if you are going to do things like that, you can probably have like 15 because you are going, the first two days after school you can explain what you are doing, and then put them in groups of 5, like three groups of 5, or whatever you want to do, then really all you are doing is monitoring it.

M: And rotating between the three groups.

X: Yeah, and it doesn't really matter if they are doing something necessarily, well I don't want to say doing something wrong, but they are not getting graded, so they will have, they will try things more.

M: They will be more open to failure maybe, or maybe more willing to.

X: More willing to put something in there. Or not being like I don't want to do that because I know I can't do that.

M: Gotcha.

X: They will actually try, like it's not like I'm being graded, so let's see if this works.

M: As far as the instruction of that particular program, don't do the rote stuff we are doing every day in class, but transition purely to the fun, well I don't want to say fun, but more hands on stuff and more real life applications and what not.

X: Yeah.

M: How many days a week would be good for something like that? I don't want to give the kids math every day, and overwhelm them, and have them hate math.

X: I would say at least twice a week. I think once a week would not be enough, because says it's on a Monday, or any day of the week, say it's every Tuesday, you know you are going to talk about what you are going to be doing for the next three weeks say, you know, give them examples, show them on the computer, like what a final project could look like, something like that , then by the time you see them the next Tuesday, you are going to have to review it again, but if it is like Tuesday Thursday, or Monday Thursday, something like yeah, Monday Thursday would probably work best.

M: It's pretty funny actually because for my research class last spring, I had to do a survey with the kids which Popavich let me do, gave me approval to do, and the kids actually said two days too, so it's pretty funny that the kids and the teachers are both saying the same exact thing. I was thinking that it would be the kids being like oh one day a week and the teachers being like four, but it actually both sides seeing things equally.

X: And spread apart, not like Monday Tuesday.

M: Yeah the kids all said Tuesday Thursday because they didn't want to go in the beginning of the week because they didn't want to be bothered, and Friday is the end of the week so they don't want to be bothered.

X: I'm only saying Monday Thursday because over the weekend you tend to forget more than you would through the amount of days in a school week.

M: Good argument.

X: Um, and it's a fun class, you're not getting graded on it, so if you come in and you're tired, you're tired.

M: I didn't even think about that, and you are going to even out the amount of days of spacing between each lesson.

X: Yeah they will have Tuesday Wednesday, Thursday they stay, then Friday Saturday Sunday, Monday they stay.

M: What a great idea, I really like that.

X: Me too.

M: If this program became something more than me must doing it for my doctorate program, how do you think teacher selection should be, like volunteers, or how would you pick and choose who taught the program the most effective way?

X: Umm, well it depends on if they are getting paid. I would say if they are not getting paid that you just first come first serve. If they are willing to do it, then you just take them. Unless they are non tenured they are probably not going to volunteer just because there are other things they can do that are not paid, and of course I'm the sucker the is currently doing dance and not getting paid.

M: You don't get paid at all for that.

X: I thought I was. I thought you did which is why I took it. Darcy never told me you don't get paid.

M: Dedicated, I appreciate that.

X: This is why I am making stricter guidelines for it this year.

M: What like having to have an A+ average in your class?

X: Not an A+ average, you are going to need a 70 or above, homework can never be missed, so I am going to stay after on Thursdays, they will have to hand it to me on Thursdays, if they have one missed homework from last Friday to that Thursday, or that Wednesday because I want it Thursday morning, then they can't stay. If their average is below a 70, I don't care if it's a 69.9 it's not a 70 yet, unless the teacher doesn't do it by the tenths, they can't stay. And they are going to have a classroom behavior thing that has to be checked off too, and if they are disruptive, or they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, then they can't stay.

M: So it will be 2 kids by the end of the program?

X: Well I teach 1 kid this year that I had in dance last year that will be disqualified for all of them. First of all, for me, because she knows that I am in charge she is an angel in my class now, because I said to the mother the kids don't know yet but there is going to be checklist that the kids will have to abide by, so she is great for me now. I think it will not only get the scum of the scum out, because you are truly scum, then you can't do this. You won't be able to not be rude. If this particular student is like well math is just not her strongpoint, but yet today she was the only one who understood what she was doing. Interesting. And she was able to give me, well, you would use this when this happens and it if you weren't good at math, you wouldn't know that. So, that's one of them. The

other one is that I really do have good kids and it's like I have a lot of honors kids in it, that are staying in it and I want them to realize and I don't want the parents to realize that it is the bad girls club, cause that what it has always been.

M: Yeah the reputation of being the dance club has been the kids that

X: Exactly like the losers that's cant do anything, and I am going to try to get, I already asked Patty Horsely if we could share basketball games with the cheerleaders and perform, but the kids don't know yet because I don't know if they would be ready.

M: Or be scared.

X: I don't know if they would be scared, because how many kids really go to these games. I mean a middle school game at 4:00.

M: That's true.

X: But I don't know if there is going to be a talent show this year and I am not allowed to perform with them, and not allowed to compete with them at the middle school level.

M: Ok interesting

X: And probably if I competed I would have to get paid , and second of all I don't want to stay after more than once a week, and if we competed I would want to stay at least three times a week.

M: Yeah because you don't want to make a fool out of yourself.

X: So, it's one of my ways I am trying to get them. Especially because I am a math teacher, I am a stickler for that stuff.

M: Actually the question I thought of right now is, if I do this program two days a week, do you think there would be a lot of kids that couldn't go because of after school activities. Like your dance thing.

X: Well it's going to be on Thursday's, but if they are able to do the basketball games, then it would be other days also, see that the think, I don't know how its going to work because a lot of the girls on the dance team, the good ones, take dance class that starts at 4 o'clock 3 days a week at a studio, so I need to see really.

M: So I might have to do this, once a have the list of kids, send a survey out to see what days they are available, then coordinate the days around that. Another complication.

X: You could also do say you have 30 kids that want to do it, and you know there are a couple of groups that want Monday Wednesday, and groups that want Tuesday Thursday you can do it like the kids would only stay twice a week, but the teacher would be there 4 days a week. And you know, they don't have to commit, and if they don't show up they are kicked out, but they are telling you they don't have any other extracurricular activities on this day, obviously doctor's appointments and all the crap will sometimes come up.

M: Now do you think that it would be unfair to offer aces points for those kids that attend the program?

X: No.

M: Because they are doing math, it could be like a math club.

X: Dance team gets it, they get aces.

M: What do they get three for that?

X: It depends, most kids get one, if they are a captain they get three, if they are a co captain they get two. Well that's what I did, its 1-3.

M: Alright Ms. X., I appreciate it very much, you are phenomenal, thank you, thank you, thank you.