Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

4-28-2005

Learning for all

Barry Cohen
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd

Recommended Citation

LEARNING FOR ALL

By
Barry Cohen

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
April 15, 2005

Approved by
Professor

Date Approved _____ *April 28, 2005*

ABSTRACT

Barry Cohen
LEARNING FOR ALL
2004-2005
Dr. Robert W. Kern
Master of Arts in School Administration

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that all students acquired similar learned material without considering their socioeconomic background. Through social interaction and technology, the intern provided an environment of equal learning between both groups. Through a case study, both third grade groups identified ones' academic, cultural, economic, and historical backgrounds. In addition, this study demonstrated that the teachers' expectations were vital in the students' learning process. By setting attainable expectations, both groups were exposed to an academic and social learning experience.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following family members who devoted their time and supported me throughout this entire process: Mrs. Ann Beals, my wife Lara, my son Marc and my sister, Natalie. I would also like to thank my mother, Nellie Cohen, who has given me the inspiration to be the best at everything.

In addition, this is dedicated to all the students who were told that they could not learn.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

In today's society, there was a disparity of learned knowledge that occurred within the public school setting. Some educators believed that ones' socioeconomic status determined the student's academic abilities. However, the law stated that children should have an equal opportunity to learn. One reason that contributed to the disparity was the teacher's expectations of his students. This paper contradicted the theory that socioeconomic status had an insignificant role, while supporting the theory that positive expectations promoted more learning within the classroom.

Focus of the Study

In modern education, faculty expectations were based on the school district's socioeconomic status. However, a true educator should instruct all children without considering the school district's financial status. This thesis demonstrated how different socioeconomic groups acquired learned materials equally (Cotton, 2004).

Most of the Waterford Township students lived within their town boundaries and they seldom ventured beyond these boundaries; therefore, they were unfamiliar with other South Jersey towns, such as Lawnside. Based on the intern's observation, the Waterford children did not know the academic, financial, or social culture of other towns. To bridge the gap, the intern facilitated a kinship between the Waterford and Lawnside students through distance learning, computers, and social interaction. The goal of this project was

to demonstrate that all students acquired knowledge equally based on similar expectations of their teachers. In addition, both schools were exposed to each other's social and cultural experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that all students, no matter what their socioeconomic status, could learn the same information. Through a case study and observation, this study identified both districts socially, culturally, and academically. In addition, this study demonstrated that student learning occurred at all socioeconomic financial level. Also, the teacher's expectations impacted the amount of learning that took place within the classroom.

Definitions

Distance Learning: Distance learning was computer technology that connects two parties together for a visual and auditory instruction.

Equal Learning Expectations: Equal Learning Expectations were determined by the study's instructors that all students possessed similar abilities to acquire new information.

Academics: Academics were the vehicle used to stimulate the students and provided a common thread for understanding both groups acquired information.

Social: Social was the way both schools interacted with each other by sharing their ideas and thoughts based on their personal experiences and knowledge.

Culture: Culture included the students' norms, values, language, and way of life that both groups experienced during the study.

Validity: The quality of the data collected, and what the study was trying to measure.

Limitations of the Study

Financial constraints, such as transportation costs, limited both school districts from involving students in greater number of common activities and socializing with each other. Completion of the study was hindered due to our dependency on technology, such as the Internet server, which malfunctioned. Both schools were in session at different times due to district calendars and inclement weather closings. In addition, scheduling conflicts occurred because the instructors had different prep times, standardized testing took place, and the districts' computer technology supervisors were on vacation. Lastly, this study depended greatly on the cooperation and commitment of the school districts' teachers, administrators, and students.

Setting of the Study

Waterford Township School District consisted of a Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade school. It was located in a rural/suburban setting. There were 1,000 students, who were mostly Caucasian, with a small percentage of minority students, such as Hispanics and Blacks (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). The current superintendent indicated that the last eight school budgets have been defeated for numerous reasons. First, school parents forgot to vote. Second, a larger elderly sector voted against the budget due to their fixed incomes. Lastly, there were few ratables; therefore, business income was limited. Even though the community was concerned with their children's education, budgetary increases hindered them because they were a working town. The average home value was $153,000 while the average income range was between $35,000 and $45,000 (Trend, 2005). Two of the three school buildings were built within the last thirty years. Most of the faculty members had a Bachelor of Arts degree while others had

3

a Masters of Arts degree. Overall, turnover was limited because many teachers have been there more than fifteen years (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004).

Lawnside School District consisted of a Kindergarten through eighth grade school, located in a suburban setting. There were four hundred students, who were mostly African-American, with other ethnic groups, such as Hispanics and Caucasian (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). Due to Lawnside's lower socioeconomic status, a majority of the funds were derived from the state (50%); therefore, school budgets were less of a burden on the taxpayers. The average home value was $120,000, while the average income ranged between $25,000 and $35,000 (Trend, 2005). A majority of the faculty members had a Bachelor of Arts degree, while others had a Masters of Arts degree (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). Lastly, the faculty's turnover rate was limited.

Table 1

Educational Level of Districts' Teachers

District	% BA Degrees	% MA Degrees
Waterford	77	23
Lawnside	81	14

Table 2

Districts' Economic Data

District	Average Income Range	Average House Value
Waterford	$35,000 - $45,000	$153,000
Lawnside	$25,000 - $35,000	$120,000

Table 3

Districts' Cultural and Ethnic Backgrounds

District	Caucasian	Black	Others	Letter Factor
Waterford	93%	4%	3%	D, E
Lawnside	2%	99.3%	.5%	B

Significance of the Study

This study exposed the students to different cultural settings. Both school student

populations, although different socioeconomically, realized that they have some

similarities, such as expectations. In addition, this study modeled life because teachers

modeled collaboration as students collaborated in completing the assigned tasks. Finally,

the students formed personal opinions about cultural differences and similarities based on

this primary experience (Cromwell 1997).

Relationship of the Study to the ISSLC Standards

This project dealt with Waterford and Lawnside, two socioeconomically different

school districts. Both students and teachers learned from each other academically,

socially, and culturally through technological and social encounters. The intern wanted to

create a diverse school setting where ideas were shared by all students. The researcher

applied the following ISSLC Standards to ensure these goals: Standard 1: A school

administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by

facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of

learning that is shared and supported by school community. The intern developed a

diverse, learning experience between the two school districts. Standard 2: A school

administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by

advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program

conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. The researcher facilitated a

program in which both school districts learned academic and social skills based on group

discussions that took place during the distance learning seminars.

Organization of the Study

This project included an academic assessment survey and two questionnaires for the

classroom teachers and students. Chapter Two contained the literature review and related

information on the particular topic. Chapter Three stated the design of the study, which

defined the development and design of the research instruments, sampling techniques, a

description of the data collection, and a description of the data analysis plan. Chapter

Four included the research findings. Chapter Five contained the conclusion and any

additional information on the topic.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

According to the *Social Context of Education* (1997), a diverse setting made it difficult for the teachers to meet all the students' needs. In addition, Cromwell (1997) stated that some of the low-income students lagged behind in acquiring the learned knowledge because their family support was hindered by financial needs, and that the teachers lacked the necessary training for instructing both groups.

All students were capable of acquiring learned concepts within the classroom setting. A true educator ensured that his students mastered the daily lessons based on their individual needs (Cotton, 2004). In addition, Cotton believed that teachers developed expectations (goals) that were attainable for their class (Cotton, 2004). These goals were stated and explained to the students so they saw the relevance in their daily lessons. Unfortunately, some teachers felt that their students' socioeconomic status dominated their learning abilities (Kozol, 1991). For example, urban children knew less because their parents were too preoccupied with earning a living to assist with their learning (Kozol, 1991). In this study, Waterford and Lawnside acquired similar learning experiences based on the teachers' instructional strategies.

A learning environment occurred when the following equation was in effect: student's hard work + teacher + parent = a successful student. Principal Philip Moore enacted the above equation in Sacramento, California. Mr. Moore, who worked at T.R. Smedberg

Middle School, held a parent/teacher group conference in order to increase their student achievement (Delisio, 2002). During the meeting, six hundred parents, including 250 Caucasians, 100 Hispanics, 100 African-Americans, and 100 Asian Americans, brainstormed ideas to help raise their children's performance level. One African-American stated that the student work ethic could be improved by parents' role modeling a positive image for their children (Delisio, 2002).

Besides community support, learning begins with a top to bottom approach in the public schools. Administrators, who were positive, effective, and facilitative, have created a learning environment within the school building (Ubben, 2004). Most administrators have determined the curriculum that teachers utilized based on two factors, which were standardized tests and the individual needs of the students (Ubben, 2004). For example, twenty-seven urban school districts had improved their reading abilities because their administrators selected the appropriate reading program, Success for All (Cromwell, 1998). The administrators provided the necessary resources for their teachers, such as training, books, and support. Lastly, they assessed the program's effectiveness based on the student's scores and teachers' input (Cromwell, 1997).

In education, one must determine how students acquired learned information (Sousa, 1995). According to Bloom's Taxonomy, there are three levels of obtaining information, which are Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Domains. The Cognitive Domain, which entails five stages, examines how the students mastered the information. The Affective Domain involves learning through emotion. The Psychomotor Domain applies to physical activity into the learning process (Sousa, 1995). Instruction must meet the individual needs of the students; therefore, administrators should implement training that

examines the teacher's delivery of the lesson, such as applying Multiple Intelligence (Ubben, 2004). Howard Gardner, who defined eight different intelligences, demonstrated how these learning styles met the various academic needs of the students. For example, Interpersonal Intelligence was for students who work cooperatively on a task. Hopefully, administrators have applied ISSLC Standard 2 when evaluating the academic success of the students (Ubben, 2004).

A school's function is to foster student academic and social progress. Socially, students must think positively about themselves, known as self-fulfilling prophecy. An administrator should model a positive working environment (Ubben, 2004). One's personality determines the atmosphere of the school. For example, if the administrator portrayed a positive mood, then that emotion extended throughout the entire building (Cotton, 2004). In designing policies, the administrator should concentrate on instilling high expectations for the population (Cotton, 2004). One should, for example, create programs, which communicate high expectations, such as a Wall of Fame for different achievements, including grades, community leaders, or sports. A positive, safe, and learning school environment should be implemented by the administration and his faculty. This can be done by holding assemblies, posting decorative bulletin boards, slogans, and posters. Lastly, the administrator should hire staff and faculty members with similar expectations and beliefs for the educational system (Cotton, 2004).

Most learning, however, occurs within the classroom. In most elementary schools, the teacher was the determining factor for learning (Cotton, 2004). Teachers must invoke a "Pygmalion" atmosphere in the beginning of the school year (Rosenthal, 1968). A Pygmalion effect entails student progress for high expectations placed on the teacher.

Teachers must avoid labeling students based on their socioeconomic or ethnic background because the students can detect negativity from their teacher (Cotton, 2004). Next, teachers should implement goals that meet the students' needs, as well as provide positive feedback during the learning process. In addition, teachers need to incorporate critical thinking skills so the students' minds are challenged (Palonsky, 1986). Also, lessons should be pertinent to student needs and backgrounds, such as relating math problems to money and shopping (Palonsky, 1986). Finally, the teachers must work closely with the parents so that their lessons are reinforced at home. A partnership should exist between the parents and teachers because they determine the child's fate in improving his academic and social skills (Cotton, 2004).

The literature stated that student achievement was attainable with cooperation of the teachers, parents, and school administrators. For this study, the school districts employed ISSLC Standard 4 to ensure that the students worked diligently on the project. In addition, the community members contributed by providing the instructors artifacts which assisted in the academic lessons. For example, Lawnside received pictures from people who participated in the Underground Railroad. Students had different ability levels; therefore, teachers employed various instructional approaches for student learning (Sousa, 1995). Learning begins when the mind has a clean slate, which means no distractions (Sousa, 1995). The learning environment can be conducive to learning when the students feel safe and secure. Only the adults involved can make this sentiment a reality (Ubben, 2004). Both school districts applied the above research during the project's design. Both instructors designed lessons that appealed to their classroom needs, such as the needs of visual learners. Also, the teachers correlated the academic lessons to

the students' personal experiences, such as a discussion about equality, which provided

higher thinking skills. Finally, the school administrators and teachers created a safe

learning environment by discussing the project's academic and social expectations with

their students so they became more comfortable with the thoughts and ideas that were

expressed during the interactions between the two school districts.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

General Description of the Research Design

The Waterford Township School District and the Lawnside School District were located in the same county. However, neither was cognizant of the other's academic, economic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Administrators from both districts wanted to expose the students to a diverse setting. The administrators achieved this goal by designing a learning experience for both groups of students.

Both school districts relied on the research data to determine the study's success. The intern used both an action based research model and a case study. The gathered data signified the commitment for a diversified school setting. Two third grade classrooms, a total of fifty students and two teachers, were the participants for obtaining the data.

This was a cooperative effort between both school districts to acquire knowledge for all the students. The administrators met over the summer for the project's design phase. The intern composed an assessment tool based on the summer input. Both instructors designed lessons, which covered the project's goals, such as the historical and cultural history of each district. Also, the instructors and computer technology supervisors arranged scheduling times for the students to learn and to utilize the technology for this project, such as email and distance learning. Finally, the administrators applied for and received grant money for this project from the Camden County Technology Center so

12

the financial expenses, such as food and transportation costs for the social encounter between both school districts, were covered.

<u>Description of the Development and Design</u>

Both quantitative and qualitative research were used to conduct the study. The intern gathered data by composing a questionnaire for all the students and teachers, as well as pre- and post-tests on the lessons. The questionnaires measured the participants' feelings about the study. For example, one of the questions was about the acquired knowledge that was attained before and after the academic lessons. Also, the students rated their social encounters with the other school district. The pre- and post-tests assessed the students' knowledge of the academic, economic, cultural, and social backgrounds of each school district. Two of the questions covered the economic status of both towns. Other questions dealt with each town's historical events, such as Lawnside's Underground Railroad port. In addition, the test covered questions based on the academic lessons, such as African American history, which the Waterford instructor covered with both classes. Lastly, other questions dealt with technology, which was used during this project, such as email and distance learning. See Appendices A, B, and C for research instruments.

Informal observation was completed by the intern and his mentor. It was essential to see how both school districts interacted with one another. For example, Lawnside and Waterford students exchanged ideas based on their academic backgrounds. From emails and the first distant learning lesson, these social interactions allowed the students to share their personal experiences with the daily lessons, which promoted continuous class discussion. Also, it allowed both groups an opportunity to inquire about another person's

culture through questions. For example, what did each town offer students to do for fun, such as go to a movie theater?

<u>Description of Sample and Technique</u>

The population consisted of fifty third grade students. At both schools, the gender was divided evenly. Lawnside's population consisted of 99.3% African-Americans while Waterford's students were 93% Caucasian. At the beginning of the academic unit, the students took a pre-test on the upcoming academic lessons that were to be given based on both towns' academic, economic, cultural, and social backgrounds. In addition, the students completed a Likert Scale Survey, which asked the students their reaction to the study. Lastly, both teachers completed a survey about their involvement in the study. The surveys were returned to the intern after the post-test. For this research, the Action Research model was chosen because it was a process designed to empower all participants in the educational process with the means to improve the practices conducted within the educational experience (McMillan, 2000).

In this study, the intern employed a case study. The planning, communication, and implementation of academic and social interactions between both school districts contributed to producing a diverse school setting. The researcher gathered the post assignment test results from the third grade students. Both school districts stated that they would dissect the results during the summer months. In addition, action research was implemented as both school districts administrators and the intern made improvements for the upcoming school year. Observations occurred during the distance lessons between both school districts.

Data Collection Approach

The researcher designed the study's measuring tools with input from the school districts' administrators and teachers. The pre- and post-tests were designed based on the instructional topics that both instructors were teaching. For example, one of the questions was based on Lawnside's experience with the Underground Railroad. There were fifteen multiple-choice questions on both the pre- and post-tests. The students had to choose the correct answer out of the four given choices. In addition, the tests evaluated the students' knowledge of each town's economic, cultural, and historical history. For example, the students were asked who Thomas Richards was, the man after whom one of the Waterford schools was named.

Also, the intern designed the teacher and student surveys with the mentor's input. The teacher's survey was a Likert Scale, which rated each question about this experience on this study between one (low) and five (high). For example, one of the questions asked about the students' knowledge after the academic lessons. Also, the survey asked for any additional comments on how to improve this project. The students' survey was also a Likert scale, but they chose from three choices, which were Not at all, A little bit, and A lot. These responses were chosen because it was easier for the students to answer the survey questions. For example, one of the questions was about how much information they acquired about the other school district.

First, the intern measured the pre-test results that were taken in the beginning of the academic unit. At the end of the academic unit, the students took the post-test, which measured their mastery of their district's culture. Then the students answered the surveys, which were based on their entire experience with the other school district. Both teachers

emphasized the importance in completing the surveys honestly, so a true judgment was made on the case study. Once all the data was examined, a valid conclusion was made about the research.

<u>Data Analysis Plan</u>

The information collected by the intern determined the success in creating a school setting for all students. The intern measured the students' pre- and post-test results. These results assessed the students' mastery of the academic knowledge that occurred during the distance learning sessions. The tests demonstrated whether the students knew each town's cultural, economical, historical, and social backgrounds. Also, the teacher and student surveys provided insight about the implementation of this project. The results of this case study determined the future of upcoming meetings between the two socioeconomically different school districts. Also, the research results supported the goals of the project, which included changing teachers' expectations and creating an equal learning environment.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Research Findings

On Friday, August 20, 2004, Lawnside's representatives met with Waterford's people
about the Dual Learning Site project. During the visit, the intern was impressed with
Lawnside's Computer Lab and Distant Learning technologies. In addition, the Waterford
team heard from the Lawnside representatives about their students' learning experiences
with other school districts, such as Voorhees. One Lawnside administrator told the
Waterford administrator that the Lawnside's students had enjoyed their academic and
social experiences due to the teachers' preparation, such as the reading unit on play
mapping from the content. The Lawnside students acted out a chapter from the story that
was covered during the distance learning lessons.

From the meeting, the intern believed that both Waterford and Lawnside should have
a successful rapport for numerous reasons. First, both districts possessed the necessary
resources for the project, such as email and distance learning technology. Second, the
participating teachers had experience working with urban and suburban students;
therefore, they were able to design reasonable goals based on their students' needs, such
as comparing and contrasting both towns' economic backgrounds. Third, Lawnside had
participated in similar projects; therefore, they were able to assist Waterford with the
project's implementation. According to Lawnside's computer technology supervisor,
Lawnside and Clementon school districts worked on an African American project

17

together in 2004. Lawnside students taught the Clementon students about their primary experience on the Underground Railroad. Meanwhile, the Clementon students covered African American achievements. Lastly, both schools' administrators possessed "leadership" traits that ensured the success of the project based on the intern's observation, such as communication, implementation of new programs, and other traits found in the ISSLC Standards.

The study selected two classrooms based on the teachers' skills in technology. Next, the involved teachers, computer technology supervisors, the intern, and mentor developed a distance learning experience. Both teachers designed an academic unit for instruction with the intern's assistance, which correlated African American history with each town's cultural, economic, historical, and social backgrounds.

Afterwards, the intern designed the pre- and post-tests based on the input from the classroom teachers (Appendix A). In December, both classes were given the pre-tests. Based on the teachers' input, the students were distressed because they had difficulty answering the questions. For example, the students mispronounced the answer choices, like distance learning. After evaluating the pre-tests, the intern noticed that the range of correct responses was between three and six questions.

The interaction between both school districts began in January 2005. Fifty third grade students participated in the project. The project consisted of three stages, which were written exchanges, distance learning lessons, and social interaction experiences. During the written interactions, the students asked and answered each other's questions, which primarily covered their social and cultural backgrounds. Some of the questions were: What was your favorite sport, color, or movie? Also, some of the students asked about

18

their families, such as how many brothers and sisters were living in their homes. In addition, some students described their homes. For example, one Lawnside student stated that she lived in a large house near a park. The classroom teachers stated that the students were eager to communicate with their pen pals, based on their observations. Also, the students were shocked that they shared some of the same interests, such as favorite color.

On March 24, 2005, the first distance learning experience occurred between the school districts. The encounter began with both classes introducing themselves to their pen pals. Next, the Lawnside students read their individual poems. Some of the poems were original. All of the poems covered an aspect of African American history. For example, one student read a poem about Martin Luther King, Jr. The Waterford class performed a play about the African American struggles during the Civil Rights Movement. Both classes were attentive and cooperative during the performances. Both teachers thanked each class for their hard work in preparing for the lesson. Finally, the teachers agreed on another lesson meeting for the first week in April.

On April 5, 2005, Lawnside and Waterford students had another distance learning experience. The Lawnside students read excerpts about the Underground Railroad, which their town witnessed during that time period. Meanwhile, the Waterford students exposed Lawnside to their history by reading facts to them about Waterford. For example, they read about why one of the Waterford schools was named after Thomas Richards. Another child described their geographic location on the map of New Jersey with the teacher's support. Once again, both classes were cooperative and applauded each other's performances. The interaction concluded by both teachers promising a social encounter in May, which made both classes cheer.

After the second interaction concluded, the intern was given an opportunity to ask Waterford students their feelings about what had occurred. All of the students were happy to participate. Many of them were surprised that they shared similar interests. For example, one student stated that his pen pal and he liked the same books. Another student said that they both played football. The intern asked the students about the differences that they noticed, to which one student replied, "We are almost the same."

A few hours later, the Waterford principal informed the researcher that the Lawnside students were excited about the project. The Lawnside administrator stated that the students told him that it was, "neat" that they participated in similar activities. Also, they said they were surprised that they lived only twenty-five minutes away from each other. Lastly, they want to meet their pen pals soon.

Two days later, both teachers administered the post-tests. On the post-test, the students were asked fifteen multiple choice questions about each town's cultural, economic, and historical aspects, which collaborated with Black History Month. According to both classroom teachers, the students completed the test within thirty minutes. The researcher assessed twenty post-tests (ten boys and ten girls), ten from each school district. Twenty provided an acceptable percentage in evaluating the academic portion of the project.

The range of correct responses to the post-test, as demonstrated by Table 4, was between nine and thirteen. Most of the correct responses covered the following topics: historical, economic, and social aspects of both towns. Both school districts had difficulty answering the academic questions on topics covered during the video distance learning, such as, what is storytelling?

Table 4

Post-Test Results

Question	Range of Correct Responses
Q1	13
Q2	12
Q3	12
Q4	10
Q5	5
Q6	9
Q7	10
Q8	13
Q9	10
Q10	12
Q11	9
Q12	9
Q13	13
Q14	13
Q15	10

The project's success was supported by the surveys that had been completed by both the teachers and the students (Please see Appendices B and C). Table 5 illustrated the range of responses to six questions concerning their feelings about the project. Most students stated that they learned more about video conferencing and the other school district. Also, the instructional activities had enhanced the students' knowledge of Black History. The decisive response was that all students rated the project between good and excellent. On the optional comment section, some students wrote that the experience was fun and exciting because they were able to meet new people.

Table 5

Students' Surveys

Question	Not at All	A little	A lot	Excellent	Good
Q1	0	14	36	*	*
Q2	4	26	20	*	*
Q3	1	24	25	*	*
Q4	9	30	11	*	*
Q5	4	20	26	*	*
Q6	*	*	*	24	26

The classroom teachers believed that the both school districts learned from each other. In the beginning, the students were nervous; however, the students became more comfortable with their pen pals when they shared their hobbies. Also, the teachers believed that the post-test scores would have been higher if distractions, such as technology malfunction, had not occurred.

Table 6

Teachers' Surveys

Question	Lawnside Ratings	Waterford Ratings
Q1	4	3
Q2	4	4
Q3	1	2
Q4	2	2
Q5	1	2
Q6	4	4

Based on the data, both groups were able to acquire the learned information equally. Also, the administrators and the intern were successful in forming a relationship between

the schools. Now that the framework was implemented by the school districts, more

learning experiences have been scheduled for upcoming school years.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Conclusion

The project's results were evaluated in April 2005. According to the post-tests, the

students were able to identify the cultural, economic, historical, and social backgrounds

of both towns. There was a fifty percent increase in correct answers from the pre-test to

the post-test. As the above tables illustrated, the range of correct answers increased from

three - six questions to nine - thirteen questions. Also, the surveys provided evidence that

a relationship was formed between the Lawnside and Waterford students. In addition, all

fifty students selected a good or an excellent rating on the project. The students' feedback

suggested that this activity should continue for the upcoming school year.

Implications

Both classes were exposed to different socioeconomic lifestyles. In the beginning they

were secluded to their own hometowns. However, they became more cognizant of each

other's culture. Also, the students realized that there were many similarities between the

groups, such as hobbies. In addition, the students have increased their knowledge about

African American history and technology, due to the diligent effort of both school

districts' teachers and administrators. The project's technological activities, such as

distance learning, awarded the Waterford Township School District a grant from the

Camden County Technology Center for financial costs. The project was put into place as a learning model for other teachers to apply for upcoming years.

Based on the reviewed literature and collected data, the project illustrated that the students acquired learned information equally. At the project's conclusion, the intern demonstrated that one's socioeconomic status did not hinder student learning because both groups were able to identify both lifestyles. Additionally, the teachers' expectations contributed to the success of learning that occurred within the classroom setting. The classroom teachers' planning and hard work created a new learning experience for their students.

Learning had taken place between both schools. Lawnside and Waterford students had become more cognizant about each other's lifestyles. The teachers' input provided the administration with the necessary improvements for increasing future student achievement. For example, the teachers stated that scheduling closer distance learning experiences would prevent the students from forgetting the learned information. Next year's program was revised to be conducive to the teachers' instructional needs by allotting more time for the teachers to schedule and plan activities based on all the participants' needs, such as the classroom teachers' instructional strategies.

Organizational Change

Based on the teachers' surveys, the researcher believed that the students' academic test results would have increased if an unexpected matter had not arisen. The original Lawnside teacher for this project was transferred into another grade during the last week in August; therefore, the Lawnside administrators scurried for a replacement. The intern was told that the replacement teacher was coerced into the project in October; therefore,

the teacher's motivation was lacking in the beginning of the project. It was due to this change that the Waterford teacher had a difficult time preparing for the project. Both teachers did not interact until November. In addition, scheduling was a conflict because both school districts operated at different times, and the teachers' prep times were different as well. It was also difficult to coordinate a meeting time with both computer technology supervisors because they had other professional obligations. Finally, the above occurrences provided minimum instructional improvement for both teachers because they were unable to share their ideas due to the project's time constraints.

Leadership Growth

The project's design was effective and efficient for both school districts. For this study, the researcher applied ISSLC Standard 1, a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision that is shared and communicated by the school community. The researcher designed the pre- and post-test with the intent that all the students identified each other's cultural, economic, historical, and social backgrounds. In addition, the intern assisted the school administrators and teachers with the planning and scheduling of the learning sessions. Also, the intern employed Standard 2, a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. The project contributed to the students' growth and development by exposing them to a different society through instruction and technology, such as the distance learning sessions. In addition, the intern was accessible for answering questions, gathering

26

software resources, and completing duties. During this project, the rapport was professional between the participants and the intern. Next, the researcher participated in completing a grant for the project's finances, as per Standard 6, the school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. Finally, the premise of this study supported that all students from any socioeconomic status acquired learned information equally as per Standard 5, a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Further Study

Parents, teachers, and administrators will determine the students' ability to acquire information. As the literature suggested, parents should reinforce the daily lessons and they should instill the value of education upon their children. Teachers should design attainable expectations for all socioeconomic levels. In addition, they need to provide lessons that will motivate students and demonstrate significance and justification. Finally, administrators should provide any assistance for the teacher or parent so they can promote student success, such as providing classroom manipulatives. If the above participants perform their professional responsibilities, then no students will be left behind.

References

Cotton, Kathleen, (2004). *Expectations and student outcomes.*
(School Improve Research Series). NW Educational Laboratory.

Cromwell, Sharon, (1997). The social context of education. *Education World,* 1-5.

Cromwell, Sharon, (1998). What makes success for all so successful?
Educational World, Volume 1, 1-5.

Delisio, Ellen R. (2004). *Races meet separately to address achievement gap.* Retrieved
February 20,2005 from http:// www.education-world.com

Kozol, Jonathan. (1991). *Savage Inequalities.* New York: Crown Publishers.

McMillan, James, H. (2000). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer* (3RD
ed.). Virginia: Virginia Commonwealth University.

New Jersey Department of Education. *School report card.* Retrieved March 1, 2005
from http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc04

Palonsky, Stuart B. (1986). *900 shows a year.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rosenthal, Robert, (1968). Teacher expectations study. *Teacher Expectations,* 1, *1-5.*

Sousa, David A. (1995). *How the brain learns.* Virginia: The National Association of
Secondary School Principals.

Trend Multiple Listing Service. *Home sales report.* Retrieved March 1, 2005
from http://www.trendmls.com

Ubben, Gerald C. (2004). *The principal* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Appendix A
Pre/Post-Test

1. Who was the famous female conductor of the Underground Railroad?
    a) Sally Ride
    b) Rosa Parks
    c) Harriet Tubman
    d) Jennifer Lopez
2. What are pen pals?
    a) *Two students communicate with each other*
    b) Two lessons taught by a teacher
    c) Two pigs share their pen
    d) Two students answer a question together
3. Which computer software would be used to write letters?
    a) Power Point
    b) Excel
    c) Scanner
    d) Email
4. Which computer hardware would be used to communicate through camera and telephone?
    a) Scanner
    b) Central Processing Unit
    c) Cell Phone
    d) Distance Learning
5. Who was Thomas Richards?
    a) A policeman
    b) A dancer
    c) An iron worker
    d) A judge
6. Which ethnic group represents the largest population in Lawnside?
    a) Asian
    b) African American
    c) Indian
    d) Caucasian
7. What is Lawnside known for?
    a) An Underground Railroad stop
    b) The capital of New Jersey
    c) A slave town
    d) A demonstration at the library

8. Who led the Civil Rights Movement?
   a) Vanessa Williams
   b) Bill Cosby
   c) Emmett Smith
   d) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

9. Which African American refused to sit in the back of the bus?
   a) Diana Ross
   b) George Washington Carver
   c) Rosa Parks
   d) James Meredith

10. Which ethnic group represents the largest population in Waterford?
   a) African American
   b) Indian
   c) Asian
   d) Caucasian

11. What is a scrapbook?
   a) A book filled with scraps
   b) A book based on memorable events and projects
   c) A yearbook
   d) A school policy book

12. What is storytelling?
   a) A teacher reads a story
   b) A class acts out a story
   c) A student tells a story
   d) A principal tells a story

13. How would you describe the majority of Lawnside residents?
   a) Workers
   b) Employers
   c) Unemployed
   d) Students

14. How would you describe the majority of Waterford residents?
   a) Workers
   b) Employers
   c) Unemployed
   d) Students

15. Both Waterford and Lawnside are communities in _____ County.
   a) Winslow
   b) Hammonton
   c) Camden
   d) Burlington

Appendix B
Students' Survey

32

Waterford Township Public Schools District
Distance Learning Project
Student Survey

For each question, please circle the correct response that you feel is appropriate based on your experiences.

1. How much did you learn about the other school district?
   a) Nothing at all   b) A little bit   c) A lot

2. How much did you learn about video conferencing?
   a) Nothing at all   b) A little bit   c) A lot

3. How did the activities improve your knowledge of Black History?
   a) Nothing at all   b) A little bit   c) A lot

4. How much did you learn about emails?
   a) Nothing at all   b) A little bit   c) A lot

5. How knowledgeable are you about Black History?
   a) Nothing at all   b) A little bit   c) A lot

6. How would you rate this experience with the other school district?
   a) Excellent   b) Good   c) Okay   d) Poor

7. Should your school do something like this again? Yes   No

Comments:_____

_____

_____

Appendix C
Teachers' Survey

34

Waterford Township Public Schools District
Distance Learning Project
Teacher Survey

For each question, please circle the correct response that you feel is appropriate based on your experiences (A one means low and a five means high).

1. How much did you learn about the other school district?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

2. How much did you learn about video conferencing?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

3. How did the activities enhance your instructional strategies regarding Black History?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

4. In your opinion, how much do you think this activity enhanced student knowledge of Black History?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

5. Did this activity enhance your knowledge of Black History?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

6. How would you rate this experience with the other school district?
   Low 1   2   3   4   5 High

7. How would you improve upon this project? Please be specific!

_____
_____
_____
_____