THE PERCEIVED IMPACT THAT TUTORS HAVE ON URBAN SECONDARY

STUDENTS ATTENDING A COMMUNITY-BASED

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

For urban secondary students, the benefits of attending after-school programs may not be solely academic—rather, their attendance and participation may yield more fundamental development needs. A supportive network of influential and positive mentors can improve urban secondary students learning experience outside of the classroom. Urban secondary students may have access to support and assistance from mentors by attending an after-school program.

This qualitative ethnographic study explored the perceptions of tutors working in an after-school program in a large urban school district. This study attempted to understand of the tutors' motivation for working with students, the support that they provided to the students, and the needs they thought the students have. The data was collected through individual interviews and observations of the tutors during the program. Data was analyzed for common themes to support the research questions.

From the interview questions, a total of twelve themes were generated to answer the three research questions. According to the participants interviewed in this study, the interactions with the tutors in the program served as catalysts that promoted student academic success and social development. While the themes originating from the questioned varied, the underlying conclusion of the interview data from this research study is that students take more of an interest in themselves and their academic ability when someone else takes a genuine interest in them and their academic ability.

DEDICATION

Experience is a brutal way to learn, but God, do you learn. - C. S. Lewis

It has been a journey to come this point. This journey came with excitement, worry, struggle, heartbreak, reinvention of myself and my goals, the threat of walking away from it all multiple times, and bringing it all back together in the end. This journey didn't finish where and when I thought it would, but *it is finished!* Glory be to God for that! This journey would not have been completed without the following people, whom I dedicate this dissertation to:

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My "other half", Valerie Long.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Attaining an education is highly recommended and needed to take advantage of life's opportunities and be successful in life (Bierlein, 1993).This 'general education' is not only necessary for grooming 'well-rounded' students, but also students who will be ready and competitive for employment in the job market after completing their schooling (Pinar, 2004). No matter the industry, one must be thoroughly trained and knowledgeable of their subject or field. The days of a high school diploma being satisfactory enough for a good job are over. Increasingly in today's society, more and more employers are now requiring college and advanced degrees to be eligible for employment. The United States has a national average of 84% of students completing high school, and only 27% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). When examining this data, many questions arise: why are nearly 15% of this nation's high school students not completing high school, why aren't more going to college, and who are these students that are not completing or furthering their education? If an education is the key to success, why does the educational system –both secondary schools and colleges/universities– stifle many Americans', mostly low income Americans', chances of becoming successful?

One reason that education does not equal success in some low income populations could be the growing disconnect between teachers and students inside of urban classrooms (Howard, 2006). The evidence of this disconnect between teachers and students is evident in what is acceptable from students, what is tolerated by teachers,

what is expected of students, and the students' actions, regarding not just academics, but students' social development and behavior as well. Teachers have to be able to effectively present the material they teach, as well as comply with the administrative rules and district/state standards. Teachers have to do the aforementioned things while vying for their students' attention and cooperation during the class as they adjust to the high teacher-student ratios and behavior problems of some of the students in urban secondary environments.

Consider urban students' expectations and actions. They have to make the decision within themselves to either participate in class and/or fit in with peers. For some students, they seek to satisfy both their teachers and their peers while other students choose to satisfy just one of the aforementioned groups. Students who choose to excel academically may be subject to increased scrutiny from their peers. Horvat and Lewis (2003) documented in a study that high achieving students may attempt to downplay or conceal their academic abilities in the presence of lower achieving peers. In some low income urban areas, students may be more likely to choose to fit in with peers rather than taking an active role in their education (Ladson-Billings, 2001). For students who choose to participate in class, the challenge of performing well or mediocre emerges, as well as facing the ridicule from their peers for choosing to do and performing well. Tyson, Darity and Castellino (2005) asserted that under certain conditions, animosity between high and low achieving students may heighten between or within socioeconomic or racial groups. When students see a valid reason to attend school (aside from the fact that it is mandatory) they will want to attend because they look forward to

what they will learn—they find themselves in the curriculum and see the purpose of pursuing an education.

These are just a few of the situations that may occur within students' minds and between teachers and students during the school day. Here, the focus is on a different situational setting: the environment that urban students transition into after the school bell rings, away from the safe, structured environment of a school. This change in environment may give rise to a different disconnect—what teachers hope/expect students will do when they get home, and what the students will actually do when they leave school. Does the support that the students receive at the school stop? Do the families of the students support the students' educational endeavors? What is one way for teachers' expectations and urban students' actions to find common ground? After-school programs.

After-school programs can be considered as organized activities that provide a structured environment, scheduled meetings and adult supervision to help participants develop certain skills and abilities (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). After-school programs are known to provide a plethora of services and activities for participants, including after-school care, academic help, extra-curricular activities, social clubs and sports. After-school programs can also build a bridge between teacher expectations and students' actions after school is dismissed.

Personal Story

As the researcher, I have a personal connection with this research topic. I am a graduate of an urban public secondary school. I also participated in mentoring programs

as a youth, although the programs I was a member of were through my church and a local chapter of a sorority. As a former urban secondary student, I recognize the current students' need for and desire to be a member of after-school mentoring programs. For me, mentoring programs not only expanded my support network of adults who wanted me to succeed, but also exposed me to people, places and ideas that I would have never known on my own.

This research is also important to me because it take place in my community/city. As an educator, mu job is to ensure that as many students are possible have access to a quality education. Just because the student is not in my classroom does not recuse me of serving students who I know need assistance. There are many students in my district that can benefit from supplemental services and mentoring. There are many resources in the community that are waiting to be tapped, and these resources could possibly benefit students and send them on the path to a brighter future.

Another significant and personal aspect of this research is the opportunity to give a voice to those individuals who are not always present in academic research. A main aspect of ethnographic research is to give a voice to those who are not always recognized on a larger scale—those who are often overlooked in the greater scheme of things. This research project serves to share their story. Here in this urban metropolitan area lies a program that takes educated and caring young adults and pairs them with urban students who need assistance. Through this research project, a special focus is granted to this program's unique way of combining tutoring and mentoring for the academic and social betterment of urban secondary students.

Epstein's Theory

Epstein's (1992) theory of overlapping spheres of influence identifies the communities of students as a primary context in which students can learn. This conceptual framework contends that the key to student success includes more than just the school; parent and community involvement are also vital keys to student success. A central principle to this theory is that certain goals, such as student academic success, are of mutual interest to each of the institutions or 'spheres' and are best achieved through their cooperative action and support (Sanders, 1998). Schools need to build connections with families and communities as a means of deepening relationships that support student development and acquiring needed knowledge about students in order to teach responsively (Darling-Hammond, 1997). As the communities build upon their support network for the students, the students may be able to take this positive support and transform it into building their social development skills and improving their academic achievement. Previous studies have also shown that community-based programs have the ability to improve students' academic achievement through social development (Anderson-Butcher, et al, 2008; Anthony, Alter & Jenson, 2009; Heath & McLaughlin, 1994; Warren, 2005).

Epstein first developed her overlapping spheres of influence theory in 1987. She modified it in 1992 to integrate educational, sociological and psychological perspectives on social organizations in addition to the effects families, schools and community environments have on student educational outcomes. She developed her theory by expanding and integrating Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, Leichter's (1974)

educational insights of families as educators, Litwak and Meyer's (1974) sociological perspectives on connections of professional and nonprofessional institutions and individuals, and Seeley's (1981) emphasis on shared responsibility (Epstein, 1992). Epstein's theory aims to explain that certain goals, such as students' academic success, are of mutual interest to each of these (family, school and community) institutions and students can achieve academic success through cooperative action and support from these institutions.

Within Epstein's theory, the central aspect is the student's role in school and family partnerships. The model is "based on the assumption that children's learning, development, and success (broadly defined) are the main reasons for home and school partnerships" (Epstein, 1992, p. 1141). Epstein contends that there are six types of school-family-community involvement important to student learning and development: (1) parenting—helping all families establish home environments that support children as students; (2) communicating—designing and conducting effective forms of communication about school programs and children's progress; (3) volunteering—recruiting and organizing help and support or school functions and activities; (4) learning at home—providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with school work and related activities; (5) decision making—including parents in school decisions; and (6) collaborating with the community—identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen and support school students, and their families (Epstein, 1995).

This theory has plentiful implications on this study. To begin, the after-school program that will be studied for this research project works intricately with two parties, or spheres of influence: the family and the schools. This program combines the influences of both the school and the families in addition to their own. The curriculum utilized by the tutors is distinctly designed according to each individual objective on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)[1]. The tutors are able to connect what the teachers are teaching in school, so they (the tutors) do not contradict the goals that the school has for its students. The program also utilizes the same rule set and expectations for the students, being that: (1) the students are still on school property, and (2) the students are taught about the necessity to respect teachers and authority figures.

Additional ways in which this program encourages collaboration and contiguity within the different spheres of influence are weekly progress reports and communications with the participants' parents. In these reports, drafted by each tutor for each student, the program notes what each student has worked on in the program and his/her progress. These weekly communications between the program and the parents encourages parents to become more involved in their student's academic progress. This communication also synchronizes the importance of academic achievement the students' surrounding spheres of influence: (a) the school, (b) the program, and (c) their families. Effective communication and collaboration between all of the aforementioned groups

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[1] The state of Texas began phasing out the TAKS test and replacing it with STAAR—State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness—in the spring of 2012. During the composition of this research project, TAKS was the only state assessment given to the students.

strengthens the spheres of influence surrounding the students with positive support for their academic achievement and social development.

When school administrators, teachers, and students join the community development table and form authentic and reciprocal partnerships with local community members and organizations, the entire community can help create and implement a strategic plan for increasing the academic success of its students (Price, 2006). While this may be a utopian aspiration, it is still possible for multiple parties to come together to support the education of the youth in the community. For this research project, the overlapping sphere[2] that the researcher will investigate is the tutors' perceived impact on the students attending the after-school SES program.

Statement of the Problem

Many urban students endure non-academic barriers to learning. These barriers or stressors of many students, not just those who attend schools in low income areas, may include, but are not limited to: (a) violence, (b) drugs, (c) economic hardships, (d) domestic conflicts, (e) increased health problems and (f) illiteracy (Romasz, Kantor, & Elias, 2004). These are often outside of urban schools' control as they cannot control the students' home environment. Schools must find ways to address these critical issues, as well as develop assets or protective factors to nullify their effects, if they are to be successful in their academic missions (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler & Midle, 2006; Williams, Davis, Cribbs, Saunders, & Williams, 2002).

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[2] See Appendix A.

While teachers in urban schools have the resources and potential to help students address the non-academic distractions, they cannot eliminate or reduce all these distractions alone (Rothstein, 2004). In order to reduce urban youth's tendency to turn to detrimental or harmful activities that may negatively impact their academic performance, parents, educators, and communities need to take action to redirect urban youth into more positive activities. Many activities implemented by urban communities aim to reduce and prevent the onset of youth violence and related risk factors, such as behavior monitoring and reinforcement, behavior techniques for classroom management, and positive youth development programs (Satcher, 2001). It is important that schools and community organizations begin to and/or continue to provide resources to meet the social and emotional needs of students, just as they provide resources to meet students' academic needs, in order to ensure that students possess the full set of skills required to live safe and productive lives (Romasz, Kantor, & Elias, 2004).

In addition to troubles at home or in their community, a disproportionate number of students in urban school districts are not performing well in school, both in their classes and on standardized tests (Kim & Sunderman, 2005). Underachievement in these areas could lead to students dropping out of school, or taking longer to graduate from school (Mortenson, 2007). Urban youth are in desperate need of intervention before statistics such as these have a lasting impact on their lives, including under-preparedness for jobs and higher education (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Laird, DeBell, Kienzl, & Chapman, 2007). Students must receive academic and social support during their tenure

in school so that they may be successful members of society after their schooling is completed.

Purpose of the Study

        The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic study will be to share the perceptions of the participants who work for a community-based Supplemental Educational Service after-school program, as it pertains to the academic and social development of students attending a secondary school in a large urban district in Texas. At this stage in the research, tutor perceptions or the perceived impact that tutors have on the students will be generally defined as guidance, mentoring, and counseling provided by the tutors affiliated with the students. This study will also support research that positive mentors in connection with academic support outside of school can help students greatly in both their academic performance and social development (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008).

Significance of the Study

        Previous studies on both after-school programs and SES programs are not extensive nor are they generalizable across programs and studies (Burch, Steinberg, & Donovan, 2007; Munoz, Potter, & Ross, 2008; Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue & McLaughlin, 2008; Weitzman, Mijanovich, Silver, & Brazill, 2008). This study will highlight and serve as another example of how tutoring and mentoring low income urban students could be potentially beneficial to their educational attainment and social development. Students in low performing urban schools may not grasp the concepts

taught to them while they are in school, and if the material is not reinforced during non-school hours, may fall behind in their classes.

This study will also highlight several concerns that need to be address with some urban education students. The tutors in this study identify several areas where students may need extra assistance. Through developing working and mentoring relationships with the students, the tutors are able to identify and address the needs of the students as needed.

Research Questions

The central question for this research will be what is the perceived academic and social impact that the tutors have on urban secondary students? Sub-questions include: (1) How do tutors describe their methods of support?; (2) How do tutors describe their perceptions about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?; and (3) How do tutors describe their perception of the advantage of being a tutor and mentor to the students?

Definitions

Academic achievement will be defined by a student's end scores on the TAKS exam (Texas Education Agency).

At-risk settings will be defined by areas in which students are affected by a high number of familial and community stimuli (Gager & Elias, 1997).

Community will be defined as "students' home neighborhood, school neighborhood, school context, and the wider local community of business, civic, cultural, religious, and

other organizations and agencies that influence students' learning and development and that could enhance family and school influences on students" (Epstein, 1992, p. 1146).

Community-based after-school programs will be defined as a program that provides tutoring and mentoring to students who are of low-socioeconomic status. The tutors and mentors of this program travel to the students' community to work with them inside the community.

Culture will be defined as "everything having to do to with human behavior and beliefs", which includes "language, rituals, interactions, life stages and communication styles" (Creswell, 2008, p. 473; LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993, p. 5).

Educationally disadvantaged will be operationalized as students who meet at least one of the following three criteria: the student comes from a poor family, the student scores below the fortieth percentile on standardized tests, or the student lives in a neighborhood where the percentage of high school graduates is low (Great Schools).

Low income will be determined according to the latest available data from the Department of Commerce. Criteria that identify secondary students as low income include, but not limited to: eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch, eligibility for TANF/public assistance funds, and annual income of the individual or family is at or below the national poverty level (ISPCS, 2011).

Perceived outcome will be generally defined as any social and/or academic improvement that students achieve by participating in these programs.

Secondary students will be defined as students in grades 9-12, or students attending high school.

Socioeconomic Status will be based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family) (Demarest, Reisner, Anderson, Humphrey, Farquhar, and Stein (1993).

Social development, or social competence will be defined as the ability to perform adequately in social situations, whether among peers or with adults (Xu, 2005).

Student Investment on the behalf of communities will be defined as the efforts that communities make take on behalf of children and adolescents, particularly those who face multiple risks to educational success (Jordan & Nettles, 2009).

Student Investment on the behalf of students will be defined as exploration, skill development and credential acquisition that renders a wider range of future opportunities more attainable to students.

Successful completion of SES program will be defined as students completing the required number of tutoring hours as allotted by the state.

Supplementary Education Services (SES) are tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services that are in addition to instruction provided during the school day and are of high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible children on the state assessment and to assist them in attaining proficiency in meeting the state's academic achievement standards.

Tutors are individuals who provide academic assistance to students in school. Mentors are individuals who provide social and emotional support to individuals. For this

research project, the after-school program's definition of a tutor combines both the traditional role of a tutor with that of a mentor.

Urban will be defined as an area consisting of core census blocks with a population density of 1000 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Urban areas often have diverse populations, differing in age, gender, race/ethnicity, culture and income.

Organization of Study

Chapter I is an introduction to the study that includes the personal connection to creating this research project, the theoretical framework, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, and definitions. Chapter II provides a review of literature on the academic and social needs of urban secondary students and how community involvement, specifically through after-school programs, has helped urban secondary students academically and socially. Chapter III discusses the research methods and procedures used in the study along with a detailed description of the research location and population. Chapter IV consists of the findings for the central research question and the three research sub-questions. Chapter V provides a discussion of the research results, conclusion of the study and recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As defined by the United States Census Bureau (2008), the term "urban" signifies an area consisting of core census blocks with a population density of 1000 people per square mile. Urban areas often have diverse populations, differing in age, gender, race/ethnicity, culture and income. These areas are typically characterized by large land masses and are surrounded by numerous smaller entities known as "suburbs." Urban areas are also home to corporate headquarters and diversified economies. Over time, the term urban has become synonymous with disparate conditions in metropolitan areas, such as: areas with high social disorganization and the ineffective or unresponsive operation of public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and police departments (Noguera, 2001); high populations of people of color (Obiakor & Beachum, 2005); high populations of low income families and dismal economic conditions (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004); and areas that are high in crime (Haymes, 1995).

Using the U.S. Census' definition, urban areas may contain separate instances or a combination of the aforementioned characteristics; however, these characteristics are not concretely indicative of what every urban area is like. For this research project, the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of urban will be used, as the other terms or phrases that are synonymous with urban do not satisfactorily 'fit' the scope of neither this research project nor the population sample for this project. It would be detrimental to this research project to assume that every participant in the study is of the same ethnicity and faces similar social and economic situations. The common bond of participants in this

study is not their race, culture, or social background; it is their involvement in the community-based after-school program.

Urban Students and Urban Education

Urban environments are a constant stream of diverse people, ideas, and experiences. This stream also feeds a constant barrage of information, misinformation, education, and mis-education (Hill, 2004). Misinformation, mis-education and misguidance in urban students' education and lives could prove to be very detrimental to their futures. It is imperative that educators in urban environments attempt to stabilize this stream of information as much as possible to keep urban students focused.

Education is an institution where its basic problems are caused by –and reveal– other urban issues: poverty, joblessness, racial segregation and class segregation (Anyon, 2005). Although the educational system may be an amalgamation for social issues, schools are the ideal setting to assist urban students in achieving academic competence, increasing classroom engagement, increasing personal valuation, and decreasing emotional stress (Mulvaney-Day, Rappaport, Alegria & Codianne, 2006). Through classroom involvement and participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, urban students have ample opportunities to improve their academic and social development.

Funding Needs of Urban Schools

As it pertains to education, some contend that additional financial resources are necessary for excellence, while others believe that increased revenues are unwarranted because schooling can become more efficient (Bierlein, 1993). As marginalized groups

continue to view education as 'the great equalizer,' schools must continue to use their limited resources to overcome the inequalities faced by marginalized populations (Rodriguez & Conchas, 2009).

Educators in urban environments must be able to teach students using the funds that are allocated to their schools. In the current system, school funding is derived from four sources: the federal level, the state level, the district level and the neighborhood level (Bierlein, 1993). The first three sources of funding are constant depending on their school size; it is the fourth level that presents a problem. The neighborhood level allows for property taxes from homes surrounding the school to fund the school, which has historically resulted in disparities (Lewis, 2004). This funding impact has direct and indirect impacts on students, rendering some schools to be more successful than others (Rothstein, 1996).

In contrast to suburban schools that may be more affluent, urban schools in low income areas are typically under-funded (Warren, 2005). For schools in lower income neighborhoods, or neighborhoods filled with more temporary residents living in apartments as compared to permanent homeowners, their property tax revenue is quite low, due to a poorly educated workforce, limited to low paying employment and consequently lower-valued housing (Vesely & Crampton, 2005). The effects of the disparate funding was evident in the edifices used as schools, the materials used within the schools, and the teacher salaries of those individuals who worked in the schools (Irons, 2002; Kozol, 2005). Also, the usage of technology is an important aspect that is missing, misused or unused at many urban schools (Pinar, 2004). On the contrary,

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schools in neighborhoods with more affluent homeowners and residents generate more property tax revenue, thus increasing the monies available for technology, other resources, extracurricular activities, and teacher salaries.

Academic Needs of Urban Students

Teaching urban students is a task that requires teachers to not only be well-versed within their academic discipline, but also well-versed in the ways they understand and interact with others around them. In addition to serving as a primary instructor, teachers also provide their students with information and guidance about academic or personal decisions, as well as provide emotional support and encouragement (Croninger & Lee, 2001). Also, many urban schools encounter problems when dealing with their diverse student populations. Urban students have different, diverse needs, and teacher education programs do not always inform or prepare teachers to deal with these needs (Miser, 2006). Preparing prospective teachers to work in schools that serve high populations of low-income and/or students of color is a challenge that many urban schools have not been able to overcome (Epps, 2005; Ng & Thomas, 2007). It has been reported that 40-50% of all beginner teachers leave teaching within the first five years of their tenure (Ingersoll, 2003). In some low income schools, the teacher turnover rate is nearly 50% higher that the teacher turnover rate for more affluent suburban schools (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

In today's schools, administrators and teachers face unprecedented challenges to educate an increasingly multicultural and multilingual student body and to address the widening social and economic disparities in the United States (Greenberg, Weissberg,

O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, & Elias, 2003). One reason these problems arise is because teachers and administrators in these schools cannot fully relate to their students. Students may not feel welcome, respected or accepted if they view their teachers as "uncaring" individuals (Valenzuela, 1999). A cultural void between teachers and students may result in missed opportunities for connecting culture and learning.

If teachers in diverse urban environments lack an understanding of their students' culture and lives, they may not be able to teach their students effectively (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978). The cultural barriers that exist may inhibit teachers and administrators from understanding how to work with their diverse students. Cultural barriers, such as language, interpersonal skills, behavior, and socioeconomic status, render many teachers unable to fully understand the ways in which urban students conduct themselves. They are not accustomed to the behavioral patterns that urban students exhibit.

Teachers should also be learners themselves—meaning they should make a constant effort to understand the cultures and realities of their students to better understand the external factors, whether familial, social, residential, economical, financial, and cultural impediments that may influence or interfere with student achievement. Also, understanding the behavioral patterns of urban students will enable the teachers to alter their reactions to their students. When teachers break down their narrow pedagogical barriers and infuse their classroom content with curricula that is critically engaging and relevant to community needs and realities, students begin to dispel the negative notions that they have against obtaining an education and doing well in school (Moll & Ruiz, 2002). If students don't "get it," "it" being the material being

taught or instructions about behavior, then it is up to the teacher to convey the message or instructions in another way (Pinar, 2004). Although learning pedagogical strategies may be effective for some teachers, many teachers will need to remain flexible enough to improvise while engaging their students.

Many other criteria contribute to the dismal academic performance of students, specifically students in low-income urban areas. Factors ranging from inadequate teacher preparation, teacher inexperience, and teacher reticence to teach in what are perceived to be challenging areas may limit the access of students in high poverty, high minority districts to quality teaching (Skiba, et al., 2008). Belfiore, Auld and Lee (2005) contend that a major contributor to student performance is the delivery of educational services by urban schools to students. They assert that three critical issues should be addressed: (a) the role of how teacher beliefs/behaviors drive curriculum; (b) the real utility of accountability; and (c) poor educational practices encouraging student underachievement as a direct result of the first two issues (Belfiore et al., 2005, p. 856).

Teacher beliefs and behaviors have a major impact on student achievement. Teachers and schools must attempt to create a positive, encouraging and engaging atmosphere for students to learn so that they may be successful in their academic endeavors. However, just as teachers and schools have an obligation to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning, students must take the initiative to want to learn. The beliefs and behaviors of the students, teachers and administrators play a major role in the amount of effort that each group devotes toward and receives from each other in regards to teaching and learning, regardless of actual competencies (Garcia, 2004).

Essentially, especially in the field of education, the teacher's perceptions of their students—what they are capable of in their future after attending school—is directly correlated to their actual outcome. If a teacher doesn't believe the students are able to learn a lesson or pass a test, he/she may not utilize as much effort in designing and delivering the curriculum. On the contrary, if a teacher has the belief that his/her class will satisfactorily perform on a challenging assignment or task, the teacher may utilize more determination in designing and delivering the curriculum. If teachers held a better perception of the learning and achievement capabilities of their students, they would have a more positive teaching experience and the students would have a more positive learning experience, which would thus bring students to the conclusion that would fulfill the purpose of receiving an education: performing well in school in preparation for becoming successful and productive members of society.

Teachers, as well as students, must be cognizant of why accountability is important and how it can be used. Students, as well as teachers, may feel burdened by standardized tests—the students may feel burdened by the pressure to perform well, and the teachers may feel burdened by the pressure to teach all of the material on the standardized assessment, as well as teach all other material required at their particular grade level. The concept of accountability through standardized testing means well, as it serves as a measurement of student achievement, but it must also only drive instruction for what teachers should teach as well as take into account where students begin to better evaluate where they are and how fast they are getting there (Belfiore, Auld & Lee, 2005).

Lastly, educators in low income urban schools should be conscious of the impact that poor educational delivery has on students. Teachers' thoughts show up in what they actually do, so they should be conscious of their attitude and mentality while they are with students, as it may affect the students' academic achievement (Milner, 2006). Negative teacher beliefs and behaviors combined with strenuous assessment guidelines can unconsciously damper teachers' expectations for their students, as well as students' expectations for themselves. Inadequate instructional practices that only require the basic levels of knowledge comprehension by students undercut any real accountability efforts mandated by state and local legislation (Hilliard, 2003). If low income urban schools only offer and expect mediocrity, the chances of surpassing this expectation are slim, thus the need for supplemental educational services that provide extra opportunity and assistance to learn.

Current educational reforms are calling for schools, especially those serving low-income students and students of color, to partner with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Urban students need positive adult figures in their lives to show them the importance of succeeding in their academic endeavors. If urban students view education as an effective means of social and economic improvement, they are more likely to value educational attainment and academic achievement (Sanders, 1998). It is important for them to know that there are alternatives to the dismal surroundings that they may live in, and the way to get to these alternatives is through education.

Non-Academic Needs of Urban Students

Aside from the academic rigors that urban students face, they meet other challenges as well. These challenges may dwell within many areas of the student's life, either within the student, between students, or the environment where the students live (Jenson & Fraser, 2006). It is important to understand the connections between particular background factors and scholastic outcomes among students attending urban schools. This could prove to be very instrumental addressing many of the common issues that many urban students share (Williams, Davis, Cribbs, Saunders, & Williams, 2002). While educational policymakers and district leaders make adjustments to provide quality instruction to their students, academics are not the only issue that needs to be addressed.

Many urban students arrive at school with unmet needs and challenges that inhibit their academic progress. These non-academic barriers to learning include factors that are often outside the school's control, such as aggression, anti-social attitudes, poor peer relations, family conflict and instability, and negative community norms and disorganization (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone, & Kwiatkoski, 2008; Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). Also, social problems, including (but not limited to) lack of adequate housing, financial struggles, malnutrition, social class, and violence, within urban communities are additional factors that can effect the academic achievement of urban students (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Romasz, Kantor, & Elias, 2004; Warren, 2005). A student's social capital can also have a major influence on their life choices, including their friends, activities and social roles as well (Gibbs & Huang, 2003).

Students in urban environments who may endure these non-academic barriers to learning are in need of programming and initiatives from schools and other outlets to help manage the stressors that may affect them (Gager & Elias, 1997). Schools provide some of the basic support for students to cope with some social problems, but for students who live in communities with high populations of residents that are of low socioeconomic status, that support may stop when they walk out of the schoolhouse door. Previous research has posited that social support from non-family individuals can yield positive outcomes in youth's lives (Anthony, Alter, & Jenson, 2009). Some students receive support from family, church and community groups, but current social conditions in urban neighborhoods with a high population of individuals who are of low socioeconomic status have rendered these additional support outlets to only be available to few students (Bierlein, 1993).

Research has shown that additional support outlets that are available through social networking vary by social class (Lareau, 2000). The more limited urban students' resources are, the less access they will have to social support outlets. This limited access in addition to their environment may limit their learning experiences and may lead to lower school achievement and lower self-esteem (Xu, 2005). Therefore, students, parents and schools should seek out community outlets such as churches, community centers and community leaders to create more opportunities for students to receive the support they need (Swaminathan, 2005). One resource that is prevalent in many urban communities is after-school programs.

Secondary Students

While primary and middle schools equip students with basic knowledge, it is in secondary school where the collective education attained will determine their life chances of becoming successful. Secondary schools are intended to serve as the bridge between the end of adolescence and the first years of adulthood. Not only do students learn academic principles, but they are also prepared for life in the real world through electives and other career-prep courses.

Time Investment Outside of School

A typical school day lasts from 8am to 3pm on Monday through Friday. This amounts to 35 hours a week. While this is a significant amount of time, students should not stop learning, achieving, and socially developing with the ringing of the school dismissal bell (Huebner & Mancini, 2003). It is imperative that schools and communities recognize and utilize more effective ways in which students, particularly secondary students, spend their time after school, being that they spend more time out of school than inside of school (Likte, 2009). The gains students make inside the classroom must be continued and reinforced outside of the classroom in order for the students to fully retain what they have learned. Academically, these reinforcements are made through homework- students take home assignments from class to practice or review the material learned inside of class. But how can urban students practice the social development gains that they make in class?

Social learning theorist Albert Bandura (1977) contests that direct or observational reinforcement of social development skills can influence behavior. The

social development gains students make in school could also be reinforced through numerous extracurricular activities and outside community and/or social organizations. The social development gains can be reinforced through extended quality time with parents as well (Williams, et al., 2002). Participation in the aforementioned extracurricular activities can increase the potential for interaction with peers who have similar academic and/or social goals, and these interactions and relationships could spark students' interest in future educational and career pursuits (Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Jordan & Nettles, 2009).

Social Development of Secondary Students

Researchers have posited that students' academic achievement is influenced by social functioning (Ray & Elliott, 2006). While the primary function of schools is to prepare students with vital skills that they will need for success in the future, it has become increasingly clear that social and emotional skills are the prerequisite students require before they are in a position to access academic material presented in the classroom (Romasz, Kantor, & Elias, 2004, p. 92). Attaining the necessary social and emotional skills can greatly assist urban secondary students both in the classroom and in their lives beyond the classroom, but where can urban secondary students learn these social and emotional skills?

Educational Resilience

Despite many internal and external factors in urban students' lives that could possibly inhibit them from obtaining academic success, it is possible for urban students to defy the odds that are against them (Waxman, Gray & Padron, 2003). One way to

build up their immunity to their everyday circumstances is to foster educational

resilience, which according to Wang, Haetel & Walberg (1998), is "the capacity of

students to attain academic and social success in school despite exposure to personal and

environmental adversities" (p. 7). Students can counter these adversities primarily

through four contexts: family, peer group, school and community. From these four

spheres of influence, students can develop and utilize protective factors to decrease the

hardships that may occur in their environments.

Downey (2008) conducted a study to compile recommendations on how to

cultivate academic resilience in the classrooms where students are prone to academic

failure. Downey's twelve recommendations were: (1) Build healthy interpersonal

relationships with students; (2) Set and communicate high, realistic expectations for

academic performance; (3) Use students' strengths to promote positive self-esteem; (4)

Show students that they are personally responsible for their success; (5) Develop a

caring classroom community; (6) Provide opportunities for meaningful participation; (7)

Set clear and consistent expectations for students' behaviors; (8) Use cooperative

learning strategies; (9) Involve students in cross-age tutoring; (10) Teach transferable

life skills; (11) Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities; and (12)

Emphasize effective literacy skills.

The twelve recommendations were clustered into four categories: (a) teacher-

student rapport, (b) classroom climate, (c) instructional strategies, and (d) student skills

(p. 57). Teachers could use the aforementioned recommendations to provide consistent

support to their students who are at risk for academic failure to help students build their

confidence in themselves and in their ability. The classroom environment is integral to the attitudes and outlooks of students. Providing a setting where learning is encouraged and supported can help students achieve to the best of their ability. Instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning projects and cross-age tutoring, can motivate students become more involved and more accountable for not only for their own learning experiences, but their classmates as well. Finally, skills such as communication skills, social and interpersonal skills can assist students both inside and outside the classroom (Downey, 2008).

Community Collaboration

With the daunting task of educating urban students, many of whom are underserved, the public schools need parents and other community leaders to work with them, not just to raise student test scores but, more importantly, to build up a community vision of successful, positive outcomes for urban students (Tagle, 2005). This reintroduces Epstein's (1992) theory of communities and schools coming together for a common purpose: strengthening the morale and achievement of urban students. Bringing this goal to fruition involves the use of a common strategy and commitment from all parties who chose to become involved in educating urban students.

Developing and cultivating relationships between schools, families and communities increase urban students' access to learning-related resources for healthy development and success in school (Anderson-Butcher, et al., 2008). Community involvement in schools utilizes connections between schools, businesses, organizations and institutions in a community in order to benefit the students through effective school

functioning, economic competitiveness and community health and development (Epstein, 1992; Sanders, 2003). Meaningful collaboration with communities, families and schools can assist with holding schools more accountable in educating urban students (Medriatta & Fruchter, 2003). This partnership will be strengthened by the shared vision to assist urban students with the needs that they may have (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone, & Kwiatkoski, 2008; Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006; Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007).

Warren (2005) presented four initiatives that communities could utilize to contribute to school improvement:

> (a) Improve the social context of education so that children come to school better able to learn; (b) Foster parental and community participation in the education of children and the work of schools; (c) Work to transform the culture of schools and the practice of schooling and hold school officials accountable for educational gains; and (d) Help build a political constituency for public education to support the delivery of greater resources to schools and to address in other ways the profound inequalities in public education (p.135-136).

Warren's first tenet involves an aspect of students' lives that will impact them outside of school. Urban students should be informed about the possibilities of education and exposed to the possibilities that an education can take them—despite what their surroundings or backgrounds may be.

Warren's second suggestion mirrors Epstein's theory of community involvement. The more parents and communities become involved and invested in urban students'

education, the more likely they are to succeed (Tagle, 2005). Checking homework, encouraging reading time, recognizing and rewarding academic achievement, and attending school events are examples of how parents can become involved and invested in their students' education. Communities can become invested and involved with the education of urban students by implementing homework help programs, recognizing and rewarding academic achievement, coordinating cultural excursions, and attending school events. The third and fourth principles Warren proposes would involve efforts beyond the local level. The resources and influence from government and other public officials beyond the local level have a direct, if not distant, impact on urban students. The policies and reforms that government officials and school administrators should create should address the basic needs of students to ensure their academic success.

After-School Programs

After-school programs have traditionally served the purpose of furthering the education of students and being a 'safe-haven' or positive place for students to go after school hours to compensate for being home alone after school, or a place to keep students off the streets and away from mischievous behavior (Lauer, et al, 2006; William T. Grant Foundation, 2007). After-school programs in urban areas typically center their focus around three categories: (a) tutoring to either support students in areas where they need assistance; (b) academic subjects to expose them to new or advanced concepts; (c) language arts, to specifically assist students with language and literacy skills (Lauer, et al, 2006). Participation in after-school programs can provide students with opportunities for growth by offering a positive developmental setting that can supply: (a) physical and

psychological safety; (b) appropriate structure; (c) supportive relationships; (d) opportunities to belong; (e) positive social norms and social skill development; (f) support for efficacy and mattering; (g) opportunities for skill building; (h) enhance community and cultural identification and appreciation; and (i) integration of family, school, and community efforts (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese, Macias, 2001; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Jordan & Nettles, 2009).

Purpose of After-School Programs

Being that many urban students of low socioeconomic status live in communities that are high in crime and other forms of violence, it is important for them to see and have positive experiences so that they will not fall into the same patterns of mischievous and deviant behavior, such as teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and school failure and/or dropout (Jordan & Nettles, 2009; Satcher, 2001). Good relationships with teachers and other adults at school can be a major factor in protecting students from threats to and against their safety (Halpern, Barker, & Mollard, 2000; Ryan, Miller-Loessi, & Nieri, 2007). After-school programs can provide urban students of low socioeconomic status with extra exposure to these positive adults, influences and experiences. In addition to adults at school, individuals who work for the after-school programs are often educated individuals who can serve as positive examples and alternatives to the potentially harmful activities that may surround urban students when they return home. These supportive adults may also assist in adolescent development, explain misconduct, and address depressive symptoms for students who battle with these issues (Greenberger, Chen & Beam, 1997).

After-school programs can also provide students with social capital. French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed a theorem to explore the social reproduction of class with the notion that four forms of capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic– are a means for assessing power; additionally, capital can be utilized as an essential resource to improve social status and advance one's position of status within a given context (Lewis, 2004). Students can receive the beneficial elements of social capital through the creation and exchange of positive, caring relationships in which knowledge, guidance and values are shared (Coleman, 1988). Social capital can be transferred through outlets such as family members, community members and other social or professional networks. These relationships may exist in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them (Bourdieu, 2007).

Supporters of community involvement for student well-being contend that many youth, regardless of socioeconomic background, are growing up without the necessary social capital needed for healthy development (Sanders, 2003). Some urban students are at a disadvantage because these students lack the social capital to which more affluent student populations have access. Urban students need to have relationships with adults who are dedicated to their success, and access to individuals within their communities who can serve as mentors who are dedicated to youth success. Supportive networks with responsible adults can help urban students develop socially and academically. If urban students are not exposed to social capital, they will experience a restricted range of opportunities, choices and challenges within their particular social context (Gibbs & Huang, 2003).

Current After-School Programs

There are many types of after-school programs that serve urban students. There are many types of local and nationally-based community organizations for youths, including the YMCA/YWCA, 4-H clubs, Boys and Girls' Club, non-profit, city-owned and privately owned institutions (Newman, Smith & Murphy, 1999; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). After-school programs can also be sponsored by community centers, social institutions, churches and other community organizations. Some community centers serve as after-school programs that provide urban students with a safe place to go after school hours until their parents/guardians come home from work. Some programs focus on athletics, while other programs focus on social development and academics.

The purpose and offering of after-school programs vary according to area and provider. In a study conducted by Sanderson and Richards (2010), the top five after-school programs that youth sought to participate in offered field trips, sports teams, dance lessons, computer training and music instruction. The top five after-school programs offerings that parents sought to enroll their students in were computer training, tutoring, music instruction, arts and crafts, and mentoring. In this study, majority of the students listed "get help with schoolwork" and "learn new things" in addition to "doing something fun" as their motivations for attending the after-school program (p. 436).

Challenges Faced by After-School Programs

One challenge that is unique to urban community based after-school programs is attendance. Many students are eligible to attend these programs, yet they do not (Sanderson & Richards, 2010). There could be a number of factors that contribute to this

fact. Parents may not have the resources to transport their students to these programs, or they are unaware that many of the programs provide transportation to the students who attend; parents may also be under the impression that there is a large cost connected to attending the program, and they may be unaware that costs are minimal or can be altered depending on family income (Larner, et al, 1999; Sanderson & Richards, 2010; Weitzman, Mijanovich, Silver, & Brazill, 2008).

Students, teenage students in particular, may not want to attend after-school programs because they have a bad perception of them, and they do not want their peers to view them differently. Many older students also work after-school to support themselves and their families, so they would be occupied during the time the after-school program is held. Student athletes may have a time conflict as well, as many of their practices take place shortly after school is dismissed (Sanderson & Richards, 2010). Programs, such as the program featured in this research project, are open to many individuals in urban communities. However, many people either do not know about the programs being offered or they choose not to participate in these programs. As Hendrie (2005) stated, there is either a lack of interest among urban families or a lack of options in urban communities.

A solution to this challenge could be to increase the visibility of urban community based after-school programs. Increasing their publicity and recruitment policies and methods could result in an increase in attendance, membership and participation in urban community programs (Munoz, Potter, & Ross, 2008; Weitzman, et al, 2008). Urban community-based after-school programs can increase their visibility in

communities in which they seek to serve by attending school fairs, distributing literature to schools and families, and word-of-mouth. A word-of-mouth strategy could include each participant who is currently attending the program to bring-a-friend on a particular day, and this strategy would hopefully encourage the visiting participants to let their parents and/or guardians know that they are interested in becoming a part of the program.

Another challenge that may impact urban community-based after-school programs is the workers needed to staff these programs (Weitzman, et al, 2008). Many of the programs are in serious need of staff and administrative assistance. There is no legislation in place that determines or mandates the optimal size of staffing for after-school programs, and this gives considerable flexibility for staffing ratios (Burch, Steinberg, & Donovan, 2007). Nonetheless, programs should ensure that their staff provides equal and sufficient supervision and assistance to each student attending the program.

Similar to schools, after-school programs need individuals who are qualified to assist students academically (ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 1998). If they are not qualified and prepared academically, they may assist in other capacities with the students, such as running extra-curricular activities or coordinating the logistics of the program. However, it would be more fiscally feasible if these workers were proficient in both their academic training as well as their ability to work with students during activities. These programs cannot effectively work with the students and give students the individual attention they may need if they are understaffed. A high student-to-staff

ratio may have a detrimental effect on the program's effectiveness. This high ratio could seriously impact the objectives of the after-school program, by limiting the positive impact it has on the students it serves.

Funding

As government funds are mostly limited with usage restrictions, private for-profit programs have the freedom to raise any monetary amount they need to fund their activities. After-school programs that utilize governmental funding or grants to support their operating costs may be at a disadvantage when competing against for-profit programs because they do not have the matching funds of more affluent programs. Simply put, more funding for community-based after-school programs that utilize government funds could provide more or better programming offered by the program. More funding can also make community based after-school programs more attractive and competitive with for-profit after-school programs (Fusarelli, 2007).

For-profit programs often provide more academic services for students because they spend more on each student, but spending more does not actually mean improved academic performance for the students they serve. For some programs, particularly private or for-profit programs that charge more for their services, their operating budgets decrease the number of students that can be helped in that area or district because the costs are so high per student (Fusarelli, 2007). Better financial accountability and updated materials and strategies may equip urban community-based after-school programs to strengthen their productivity and programming for their participants.

After-School Programs and Social Development

One offering that after-school programs and community-based organizations provide is that of social development. The type of social development presented to the youth varies according to provider and objectives of the provider. Social development within the youth usually consists of five tenets: (1) connection to family, community, and peers; (2) competence in academic, social, and vocational areas; (3) caring and compassion; (4) character; and (5) confidence (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Various activities, such as sports, extracurricular, performing and visual arts, leadership development, job/career preparation, volunteerism and religious activities, are often sources of positive social development for youth (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone, & Kwiatkoski, 2008; Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005).

After-School Programs and Community Relations

Having the support of the community is a vital component to the success of after-school programs; and this partnership is crucial to lessening the impact that nonacademic barriers have on urban students (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). Community organizations and after-school programs can serve as the bridge between parents and schools—helping one entity to better understand the other (Warren, 2005). Assembling communities together can also create a collection of social capital—the wealth of knowledge, experience and opportunities—for urban youth who participate in these programs to partake in (Warren, 2005).

Mentoring

Another resource that the community can provide to secondary students is mentors. Mentors are individuals who serve the purpose of providing access to new values, ideas, resources and individuals outside of their normal network (Smink, 1990). Mentoring can also build social capital that assists in the development of the concepts of self in addition to impertinent attitudes and values needed to become successful in the future (Coleman, 1988). For secondary students, this can prove to be beneficial as it creates exposure to potential fields of interest as they complete their secondary schooling. An additional study also found that low income students who participated in a mentoring program improved their aspirations and their outlook on their lives (Lee & Cramond, 1999). Mentoring can also detract secondary students from engaging in activities that could be detrimental to themselves and others (Lauer, et al, 2006).

After-School Programs and Academic Achievement

Another offering of many after-school programs is educational assistance. Many community organizations, churches, for-profit and non-profit organizations have provided academic assistance programs to urban students for a number of years. Most after-school programs combine academic assistance with social enrichment, such as sports, recreational activities and special subjects. The more successful academic assistance programs sponsored by after-school programs have a strong association with area schools (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006; ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 1998).

Tutoring

In today's classrooms, the curriculum that is taught is not always understood at first hearing. Due to ineffective or inadequate methods of instruction, behavior problems of other students, external and internal distractions, the students may not grasp the curriculum being taught (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). With the fast pace of curriculum that has to include many objectives into a short amount of time, there may not always be time for review. There arises the need for additional efforts to assist students in areas where they may fall behind.

Tutoring makes it possible to receive individualized instruction from teachers or other individuals knowledgeable about the subject. This individualized instruction allowed for the distinct differences among each student to guide their instruction (Gordon, Morgan, Ponticell, & O'Malley, 2004). Tutors generally help students with basic skills, daily classwork/homework, and learning strategies to learn better in the classroom on their own. Tutoring services may be provided by their primary instructors or via after-school programs that specialize in academic assistance.

Outside tutoring services and programs are not necessarily required to align their instructional activities with the schools that their participants attend (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese, Macias, 2001). With increased accountability warranted by the federal government, accommodations have been made to create federally funded academic assistance programs to students who are in need of extra assistance outside of school. A tutoring program that is offered in schools and funded by the federal government is Supplemental Educational Services.

Supplementary Educational Services' Beginnings in the No Child Left Behind Act

With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001, schools must have met four criteria: (1) more choices for parents, (2) proven education methods, (3) more freedom for states and communities, and (4) stronger accountability for results (No Child Left Behind, 2001). To elaborate on the fourth tenet of the policy, the federal government sought to make schools more accountable by implementing guidelines that forced schools to make sure all students, regardless of background, achieve academic proficiency (No Child Left Behind, 2001). States measured academic proficiency through standardized tests. Title I schools not meeting the standard for adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years are identified as 'in need of improvement' and need to take reactionary methods to improve student achievement or else they would have had to restructure the school (Burch, Steinberg & Donovan, 2007; Kim & Sunderman, 2005).

The NCLB policy detailed that states must utilize various methods to improve student achievement. One of those methods was Supplemental Education Services. Each school district was in charge of designing, offering and conducting supplemental education services to their students. The services offered through this program are only for students who meet certain eligibility criteria: (a) they are enrolled at an underachieving school that has missed Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and (b) are in Stages 2-4 of the School Improvement Program (Fusarelli, 2007). The Supplemental Educational Service program offers tutoring before or after school hours, on weekends, and during the summer, by state-approved providers, including community-based, faith-

based, and private organizations (Burch, Steinberg, & Donovan, 2007; Muñoz, Potter &

Ross, 2008).

Through the supplemental education program, students are able to receive free

tutoring in mathematics, reading, English/Language Arts, and science, which are all

content areas within the core curriculum, as well as content material for standardized

tests. Another aspect of supplemental educational services is that students can receive

individual, one-on-one instruction from qualified service providers outside of the

classroom environment. This one-on-one instruction allows students' individual

differences to guide the instruction presented to them (Gordon, Morgan, Ponticell, &

O'Malley, 2004). The instruction provided by supplemental educational service

providers must be consistent with the instruction and content used by local educational

agencies (the schools) and the State student academic achievement standards (No Child

Left Behind, 2001). Being that the curriculum for supplemental educational service

providers is compliant and approved by local districts that contract with them, this

reduces the risk of students receiving assistance that is completely de-contextualized

from classroom instruction (Deeney, 2008).

Transition from No Child Left Behind to Race to the Top

With the change in presidential administrations, the prime educational

assessment program has changed as well. The new program is named *Race to the Top*.

This program fund,

>…authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
>
>(ARRA), Pub. L. 111-5, provides $4.35 billion for competitive grants to States to

encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education

innovation and reform; implementing ambitious plans in the four education

reform areas described in the ARRA; and achieving significant improvement in

student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement,

closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring

student preparation for success in college and careers. (U.S. Department of

Education)

Through this program, the creators seek to distribute funds and grants to states and

districts that create and implement the aforementioned changes to their respective

educational systems. The goal behind this program is to award districts that have created

effective instructional strategies and could be examples or models for other states and

local school districts throughout the country (U.S. Department of Education). The

second phase of this program hopes to use funding to create high-quality assessments

aligned with an applicant consortium's common set of K-12 standards that are

internationally benchmarked and that build toward college and career readiness by the

time of high school completion (U.S. Department of Education). With the change in

administrations and leadership in the U.S. Department of Education, the SES programs

are still available to be utilized by students throughout the United States.

Benefits of After-School Programs that Provide Supplementary Instruction

Community-based after-school programs that provide supplementary instruction

can be a great benefit to urban students because it not only addresses the academic needs

of students, but their social development needs as well. For many after-school programs,

there are activities and lessons outside of the official curriculum that are geared towards

the social development of the student, such as interpersonal skills, respect for authority,

self-esteem, and hygiene/personal health, among other things. For secondary students,

obtaining knowledge about job-seeking skills and resume building are important

activities outside of official school curriculum that may assist them in their future

endeavors (Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue & McLaughlin, 2008). Urban students, like

all other students, want to have a sense of satisfaction, enthusiasm and intrinsic

motivation, and if these needs are met, there is a higher possibility that they will succeed

in school (Xu, 2005). Addressing the inner concerns of urban students can impact their

academic achievement because their thoughts and attention will not preoccupy or

distract their attention and/or focus on their school work. If urban students' personal

concerns and worries were addressed before they get to school, they would not have to

address or be distracted by them during school (Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue &

McLaughlin, 2008).

After-school programs that provide supplementary instruction can also be a great

support to traditional schooling methods. It is an intervention method that allows the

students to receive instruction on school material outside of school environments from

volunteers, homework hotlines, peer tutors, individual teachers, franchised learning

centers, university clinics, and private professional agencies (Gordon, Morgan, Ponticell,

& O'Malley, 2004). Encouraging learning in a different setting from a different source

can reinforce the material that teachers present to students inside the classroom; it can

also give students a new way of thinking to apply the material they learn to their daily

lives. In order for supplemental instruction to be effective, supplemental instruction providers not only have to provide instruction of school material—they also need to coordinate this instruction with schools, parents and teachers to ensure that the material being taught is beneficial to the student's academic requirements (Deeney, 2008; Lewis, 2004).

Summary

This chapter presented the review of literature for this study. It began with a description and operationalization of "urban", followed by an overview of the academic and non-academic needs of urban students. Next, there was a discussion of secondary students, educational resilience and community collaboration. This chapter ended with a discussion of after-school programs and their connections with social development and academic achievement through mentoring and tutoring.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This research project was conducted as a qualitative ethnographic study that examined the perspectives that tutors who worked for a community-based after-school SES program had about the academic and social well being of urban secondary students. Effectively, ethnographic research serves to describe, analyze and interpret a culture sharing group (Creswell, 2007). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative researchers "study things in their natural settings to [attempt to] make sense and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Wolcott (1994) posited that ethnographic studies analyze data for a description of both the individuals and sites of the cultural-sharing group while analyzing patterns of behavior, beliefs and language in order to reach some conclusions about the meaning learned from studying the people and this site.

The qualitative ethnographic approach was suitable for this study because in this project, the researcher studied the tutors in their natural setting over an extended period of time and collect data via interviews and field work (Creswell, 2009). The field work that the researcher conducted for this study was gathered in the setting where the participants worked and their shared culture and patterns could be studied (Creswell, 2008). Through the use of common ethnographic techniques such as interviewing, document analysis, and field work, the researcher created rich descriptions which captured the beliefs, practices and behaviors of a given group of people (Creswell,

2007). The researcher collected participant meanings with the primary intent of developing themes from the collected data.

The primary purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of how the tutors for this specific after-school program perceived their contributions towards the academic and social well being of the students that they worked with. The specific tutors that participated in this study were the tutors that worked with the 10th grade students. The student group that the tutors worked with was relevant to this study because they had a critical need for supplemental services as an intervention.

Beginning in the 10th grade, students take state assessment tests for English/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. In this state, each student is allowed three chances to take each test in order to advance to the next grade. Students who do not pass these exams may be held in their grade until they do pass (Texas Education Code, 2009). In addition to passing these exams, students must also pass all of their classes in order to receive a high school diploma (Texas Education Agency, 2008). If students have difficulty passing the tests and are required to take these tests until they pass them, they may become discouraged with school enough to cease attending or choose not to further their education in college. In addition to the implications that passing these exams have on the students progressing into the next grade, these exams also have serious implications for the schools as well. The 10th grade is also the grade level in which the district and the state use to determine whether or not a school has met AYP standards. If a school has not met AYP for 3 consecutive years, the school will be subjected to a school improvement plan provided by the district. This entails that the

district makes changes on the school's behalf to improve student performance. If the school does not meet AYP again, they can be closed (Texas Education Agency, 2008).

The intervention of attending the after-school program may thwart the possibility of dropping out of high school and improve students' probability of going to college (Croninger & Lee, 2001). The consequences of not completing high school have become increasingly serious for urban students, as students who drop out of high school face substantially higher unemployment rates, lower lifelong earnings, higher incidence of criminal activity, and a greater likelihood of health problems than students who complete high school or go on to college (Croninger & Lee, 2001).

Description of After-School Site and Surrounding Area

This program and research site was selected based on convenience and availability to the researcher. It is a high school in the eastern sector of a large urban area in Texas. The students who attended the after-school program also attend the high school. In the 2010-2011 school year, this school had a student population of 2,016 students, 1,633 of whom were low income students, 410 were characterized as limited English proficient (LEP), and 1,601 were categorized as "at-risk". The ethnic distribution of the school consisted of 674 African American students, 1293 Hispanic students, 21 Caucasian students, and 16 students identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (Texas Education Agency, 2012). In the 10th grade class, there were 503 students. During the 2010-2011 school year, the 10th grade class had a passing rate of 85% in Reading/Language Arts, a 54% passing rate in Mathematics, a 91% passing rate in Social Studies, and a 54% passing rate in Science (Texas Education Agency, 2012). Also

during 2010, this high school's graduation rate was 49.6%, well below the state standard of 75%. The states' annual dropout rate was 2.4% in 2009-2010, while this school's rate was more than double that at 5.8%.

In the zip code in which the school is located, there was a population of 84,709 individuals. The average household size in this zip code was 3.7, well above the state average of 2.8. The median income for this zip code was $35,667, while the state median income is 49,585. Approximately 34.6 percent of this zip code lived in poverty, double the state percentage of 17.0 percent (U.S. Census, 2010).

The location of the after-school program is in one of the older schools in the district. It is in the eastern edge of a large metropolitan area in North Texas. It's the last high school before crossing out of the large city into the adjacent suburb. The neighborhood immediately surrounding the school has a mixture of older single-unit homes and a new housing subdivision. Some of the homes are fairly small, only featuring 2-3 bedrooms. Off the main road there are some apartments, however most of residential units immediately surrounding the school are homes. Many of the older and many of the newer homes have burglary bars on the windows and doors. A shopping center nearby features many local businesses, but not many large-chain businesses, food providers and gas stations. There's one small grocery store serving the area. A larger chain grocery store in the shopping center is closed. The feeder middle school is less than a mile away from the high school. Its building is also visibly old. It appears to be small, however it is three stories. There are also many portable classrooms behind the middle school.

The high school's welcome and information sign is two-sided; it features English on one side and Spanish on the other side. This is a concession for the demographics of the school, as the school is over 50% Hispanic. The eastern side of the school faces the nearby main street; the front of the school faces a feeder street to the major street. The teachers and the students share a parking lot across the street from the school—teachers on one side and students on another. The feeder street in front of the school is freshly paved, but surrounding streets are in need of repair.

The school features the main school building, portable classrooms outside of the building behind the school, its own track and field, a small practice football field, and a baseball diamond. The track is also new, and nearby residents walk around the track when it's not being used by the students. Both the police for the district and the city can be seen patrolling the school and the surrounding area daily. In the front of the school, immediately facing the feeding street and adjacent to the main street, is a trailer that serves as the Reconnection Center for students who are too old (i.e., being 18 years of age and older) to attend high school but still need credits to receive a high school diploma.

Description of After-School Program

The community-based after-school program that was used for this research project is a SES provider in a large urban school district in north central Texas. This program offers free after-school tutoring sessions at schools classified at Title I schools. This program began in 2004 as a basic after-school tutoring program, and it expanded its reach as a Texas-certified provider of SES in 2006. This program also offers other forms

of academic assistance that is not affiliated with the SES program, including in-school Algebra I tutoring, private tutoring, college preparatory workshops, summer camps and a sportsmanship program.

The primary focus of the program is to assist students with their TAKS math scores, but they can receive assistance in other TAKS subjects and receive assistance with their homework as well. In addition to students receiving assistance with their core content areas, students are able to have meaningful communication with their tutors about current social issues and future aspirations.

Tutoring sessions in this after-school program last for two hours a day, four days a week. The sessions are not mandatory—they are completely voluntary to the students. There is a student-to-tutor ratio of 6:1, thus providing students with ample access to instruction. On average, 100 students attend the program each day and takes place in the lunchroom of the school. Students attending the program receive food and healthy snacks at each session, as well as rewards, such as gift cards and movie passes, on a regular basis to promote positive reinforcement for success. Successful completion of the program carries a reward of a learning tool: a netbook computer, iPod, or iPad. A learning tool is an object (usually technological) that allows students to access materials outside the in-person tutoring sessions to continue their learning.

Qualifications for Attending the After-School Program

There are several qualifications that must be met for this program to come into a school: (1) they must be a public school; (2) they must be a middle or high school; (3) they must be academically failing for at least three consecutive years; and (4) they must

request and/or accept an invitation for the program to come into the school. The program defines success as: (a) an increase in students' raw TAKS scores from the previous year to the current year; (b) students' attitude towards school; and (c) students' grades in their classes. A unique component to this program is that the tutors not only serve as tutors, but they serve as mentors, or "life coaches", to the students as well. It is the program's goal to enable tutors to make personal connections with their students, and through this relationship, the academic support will build students' confidence both academically and personally.

All students who are eligible for tutoring through this program qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch benefits, thus they are of low socioeconomic status. The program accepts students who are failing sections of the TAKS exam or who are passing the TAKS and their classes and want to perform better academically. To attend the program, they must have parental consent and submit an application to the sponsoring school district in order to receive an allotment of hours from the program. This application and allotment of hours helps the district and the state education agency distribute funds to the program.

Profile of the Participants

The researcher focused on tutors for this research project because the students may have a different affinity with the tutors than they have with their teachers, administrators and families. The tutors are current college students attending area colleges and universities with at least 15 college credit hours. These college students commute to the school sites to work with students. They do not have to major in the

specific content areas that they tutor the students in. The tutors are hired specifically to work with students who have not performed well on the standardized tests for the state of Texas.

The after-school program hires the tutors based upon several factors: genuine interest in working with students, general knowledge of the subjects that they will have to tutor the students in, and scheduling availability. The potential tutors must participate in two levels of interviews before being considered for a position as a tutor: (1) they must be evaluated for their personable skills and tested for their proficiency in mathematics, with this level of interviews being conducted by the general recruitment staff; (2) the potential tutors meet with area coordinators and campus directors for particular schools to see if they are a good fit for that particular campus. For potential tutors, if they need to be refreshed in their content knowledge, the program provides intensive training for the tutors. All candidates for tutoring positions are subject to criminal background checks to ensure the safety of the students.

To be in compliance with Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres, many other groups of participants could be interviewed for this research project. These groups could include: students participating in the program, parents of students participating in the program, and administrators and teachers where the after-school program is held. However, students will not participate in the study due to permission restraints. The parents of the students attending the program will not participate in this project due to limited availability and language barriers. The teachers and administrators of the school will not be interviewed due to limited availability.

Description of the Participants

There were six participants in this study. The participants that took part in this study were the regional director, area coordinator, campus director and the tutors that worked for the community-based after-school program. The regional director oversees all of the programs that take place on middle school and high school campuses in this large urban area. The area coordinator oversees programs in a smaller area within the larger urban area. The campus director directly oversees the tutors and students at one particular campus. The participants for this study included four men and two women. Four had complete collegiate coursework, and two were currently enrolled in area colleges.

Selection of the Participants

After receiving IRB approval and permission from the executive director of the after-school program, the researcher sought out the participants for the research study. The regional director, area coordinator and campus director were contacted directly by the researcher to participate in the study. The tutors were selected based upon an open call for participation from the area coordinator responsible for the school where the program takes place. Upon confirming participants interested in participating in the study, the researcher distributed and collected consent forms from the participants.

Interview Profile

In alignment with the overall purpose of this research and the three research questions for this research study, the researcher developed an interview profile to guide the interviews with the directors and tutors from the program. Each of the questions in

the interview profile support one of the supporting research questions for this project. These questions in the interview profile were semi-structured questions, meaning they were open-ended questions that prompted discussion between the researcher and respondent. Depending upon the responses given by the participant, the researcher created more questions throughout the duration of the interview (Creswell, 2008).

To answer the first research question, "How do tutors describe their methods of support?" the following question is placed on the interview profile: How do you support your assigned students throughout the school year? To answer the second research question, "How do tutors describe their perception about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?", the following questions from the interview profile seek to answer this question: (1) Describe the areas in which you think students need the most assistance, (2) What are the tools you think students need to be successful academically? (3) How does your position as a tutor/mentor supplement the academic learning that the students receive in school? (4) What do you think secondary students should be socially before they complete high school? To answer the final research question, "How do tutors describe their perception of the advantage of being a tutor and mentor to the students?", the following questions are in the interview profile: (1) Why do you think mentoring students is important? and (2) Tell me how you approach your position as a tutor who also serves as a mentor to students?

Data Collection

To answer the research questions for this study, the researcher collected the following sources of data: interviews with three tutors, interviews with the regional

director, area coordinator and campus director of the program at this school, and observations of the tutors working with students during the program. As a service to the tutors, the individual interviews either took place on the college campuses where the tutors attend or any location of their convenience. The duration of the audio-recorded interviews ranged from 35-75 minutes. To complement the information gathered from the interviews, the researcher also attended sessions of the after-school program to collect field notes from the tutoring sessions. These field notes allowed the researcher to build a connection between the answers to the interview questions and what actually happens in the program.

Transferability

Transferability has been recommended as the qualitative counterpart for external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, they stated, "If there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator that with the parson seeking to make the application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites ot which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do" (p. 298). This means that as the primary researcher, one may only describe one specific situation and its meaning of a particular situation for the participants in the study, but the reader can apply the findings to situation in which he or she has been involved.

Thematic Analysis

After the individual interviews were complete, the researcher utilized a transcription service to transcribe the interviews. To comply with the ethnographic research design, the researcher also utilized thematic data analysis to analyze data for

emerging themes. Thematic data analysis allows the researcher to make sense of the collected data by distilling how things work and naming the essential concepts of the studied cultural setting. To conduct thematic analysis, the researcher "segments the text, codes them, and formulates a small set of non-overlapping themes" that map the shared patterns of behavior, thinking or talking (Creswell, 2008, p. 484). The researcher did not use a qualitative data analysis program do to this; instead hand analysis was used. Hand analysis of qualitative data involves the researcher reading the data, marking it by hand and highlighting portions of text (Creswell 2008).

Using the interview transcripts, the researcher then examined the transcripts and field notes for common themes, specifically themes that coincided with the aforementioned research questions as well as the literature reviewed. The researcher then developed interpretations from the data that served to form conclusions about the lessons learned from the data. The observations of the tutors served the purpose of determining whether or not the tutors' actions were similar to what they said they did in the interviews. Pseudonyms are used in place of participants' actual names in the final report. The data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the faculty advisor's office for 3 years.

Summary

This chapter presented the methods used in this study. This chapter first provided the justification to use an ethnographic design to effectively fulfill the purpose of this study. It also provided an explanation of why the perceptions of tutors were necessary to complete this research. Secondly, this chapter provided a description of the after-school

site and area, as well as a description of the after-school program that was used for this study. The next component of this chapter established the population of interest, detailing a description of the participants and the selection process for the participants. This section was followed by a review of the research questions and their alignment with the interview profile that was utilized for this study. The last segment of this chapter outlines the procedures for data collection and the thematic analysis used to analyze the collected data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview of the After-School Program

The program studied in this research project is similar to many other after-school programs and SES providers in the United States. The main mission of this particular after-school program is to "motivate and inspire students to achieve excellence." Although this program is held at one particular school in this project, they also take place in many schools within the urban area. The leadership of this program of this program starts with the Regional Director who oversees operations of all schools in this large urban area. The Regional Director is followed by an Area Coordinator that oversees operations for three to four schools. The Area Coordinator is followed by a Campus Director that ensures that each tutoring session is of quality for the students, from curriculum to quizzing our tutors to make sure they know the curriculum to making sure our tutors actually know how to deal with the students that we encounter from day to day. The Campus Director is then followed by the tutors at that particular school who work directly with the students to mentor and tutor the students in math and other subjects as needed. For this research project, the researcher interviewed all three directors affiliated with this school and three of the tutors who work with the students on one particular campus serviced by this after-school program.

Description of After-School Program

The tutors arrive at the school 15-30 minutes before the school dismissal bell to set-up for the program. They sign in at the entrance of the school, pass through the metal

detectors, and proceed to the cafeteria where the program is located. Each tutor and campus director is equipped with a storage tub full of materials and curriculum for the lessons and materials for the meal at the end of each tutoring session. The curriculum is kept in binders organized by the objectives for the state exam. There are also folders for each student with the work they have previously completed so that the student and the tutor can track their academic progress.

Fifteen minutes after the school dismissal bell, the after-school program begins in the school cafeteria. The lunch tables used are collapsible cafeteria-style tables where the seat is attached to the table. There's not much technology available in the lunchroom, so each tutor is prepared with the lessons, worksheets, miniature dry erase boards and markers. In the event that the program has access to and uses the computer lab, many of the computers don't work. On days when there are a small number of students in attendance, the program may relocate to classrooms where more resources are available. On days when attendance is high, the program takes place in the cafeteria. On large attendance days when there may not be enough tutors to maintain the regular 7:1 student-to-tutor ratio, the campus director may call a nearby campus that is also running the same program to borrow a tutor for the day.

Every day of the program, the students enter the program location, sign the attendance, retrieve their folder with their work, and have a seat at the respective tables for their grade. The students are mostly chatty—conversing about the day's events or plans for the weekend. The workers of the program greet students warmly and the students reciprocate the greeting. It does not require much effort to quiet the students

down and get them focused on their work. They appear to know that they're there to work.

When the program begins, the tutors and the students begin directly with work. The tables for each tutor is different—some tutors prefer to stand at the head of the table, hold their whiteboard, and write the lessons from the worksheet on the whiteboard. Students raise their hands to answer questions or ask questions of the tutor. The students show their tutors any homework that they need to complete or graded class work/homework that has been returned. Tutors assist students with any questions they may have about the homework and explain why they received the grades they did on their graded assignments. After all homework is done, the tutors begin with the curriculum worksheets. They treat the standard objectives comprehensively—meaning they do not proceed onto objective number 3 without mastering objectives 1 and 2. The tutors and students work on curriculum for an hour.

Once the tutoring segment of the program has ended, tutors prepare for the meal at the end of the program day. Meals range from pizza, Subway sandwiches, and other catered meals. Students orderly line up in the food serving line to receive their meal; seconds are offered once every student and tutor has had one serving. During this time, the tutors sit amongst the students to engage them in casual conversation while they eat dinner. Conversations range from what it's like to be in college, advice about what to expect as the students progress in school, current events/trends, and anything else outside of the academic realm.

When the meal is over, tutors clean up with some student participation. The students sign-out and return their student folders to their respective receptacles. The students and program workers exchange their goodbyes as the students board the activity busses to go home. Once the area is clean and all materials are placed back into their storage tubs, the tutors and the campus director briefly debrief the day, discuss logistics and plans for the next day, and depart to their respective destinations.

Staff Selection, Preparation, Professionalism and Support

Two crucial components that contribute to the effectiveness of this program are the selection and preparation processes of the tutors. The program also expects the tutors to display a level of professionalism while working with the students. Also, throughout the school year, the program emphasizes multiple ways to support the tutors as they work with the students, which will be detailed in the Support Section of this chapter.

Staff Selection

Although this is a tutoring program that specifically works on tutoring high school students in math, they don't necessarily look for math or education majors. The directors of the program specifically look for individuals who would be a great fit for the kids and the program. As one tutor noted,

> …I think they kind of look for people with different backgrounds, different
> interests, because maybe the person who is in science and the person who is in
> like apparel and design, those people bring different perspectives and they can
> help kids in different ways than if we only hired education people who they are
> being taught one way. Well, we're hiring everybody who brings so many

different ways of explaining, different perspectives, which is great. And when we get education majors and math people, we really like that; but we don't just look for that because, yeah, we like the wide perspective of people.

Another tutor expressed how having tutors from different majors helped students decide if a specific major could be right for them:

Well, they didn't want a whole bunch of people in there that wanted to be teachers, talking to the kids and trying to talk to them like teachers. They wanted to get a wide slew of majors, in case a kid, you know, thinking about being a history major: "Who's a history major? Oh, Darien's a history major. Well, tell him to come over here and talk to you about being a history major at SMU." You know, it helped, because after they took the TAKS test, we had more so laid-back mentoring days, to where we could help them with class work if they needed it. But if not, we would just talk to them about college and our experiences in college, and that helped them out a lot.

And if somebody was thinking about being a political science [major], I could just, "Oh, well, hey. Camille, come over here. They want to be a political science major, so you can talk to them about that." Or, "Hey, they want to be a psychology major, so come and talk to them." You know, there were people we could pull from, with a wide array of people there's also a wide array or ways of thinking. So a lot of different ideas we can use to help us, ourselves, sharpen ourselves as tutors, and also sharpen our students better.

The directors interview the tutors twice to ensure that they are a good fit for the program and that they are knowledgeable about the content that they will be required to tutor the students with. They heavily reinforce the fact that, the program "is all for the kids." One tutor reflected on her interview experience:

So, the first few questions are like get to know you questions, and then the second kind of influx of questions are scenario questions. I remember when I was being interviewed for the tutor[ing position], my question was "If somebody was blind, how do you describe what a sunset looks like?" So the questions are tailored toward "Here's a scenario – a really difficult, maybe impossible, one – but how are you going to explain it in an understandable way?" Which is exactly what the math problems are to these kids. They don't get it. It's confusing to them. It's this puzzle that they don't understand anything. And you have to explain it in terms where they'll get it. So the interviews are there for us to see how well people explain impossible situations, and can they do that to a high school [student] with a math problem. …I think it's a really great way to get them to really think about "Okay. How do I explain this to somebody who really doesn't understand it, even though I think it's simple and easy?"

Staff Preparation

Once hired, the tutors participate in a training process that further prepares them to teach the curriculum to the students and to prepare them for the demographic of students they will work with. Being that many of the tutors attend area colleges and are from the area/district where the students reside, they are familiar with the schools that

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this program serves in. However, for tutors who are not familiar with the area or with the particular demographic of students that they will work with. The tutors "definitely get put through some things just to make sure that they can deal with the kids." For example, one of the directors noted,

> …before they start, they do come through a training process. They do come and we have a tutor manual also that also shows them certain – church worldliness, maybe show you how to be respectful, a positive environment, these same things so they know what's expected of them. They're like, "Okay, that does make sense." To be a mentor, it makes sense to have a positive environment. So everything is laid out; and if someone is not as good, what you do is you can show by example also.

To show the tutors by example of what to do and what not to do while tutoring the students, they utilize the technique of role-playing:

> I've also heard two ACs or an AC and a CD doing kind of role play in front of tutors. One will play the tutor and the other will play the student, and he'll show the bad way of handling it and the good way of handling it. So, that's good because it lets us know, "Oh, okay. Don't do that." which is helpful.

> Another method of preparing tutors to work with students is simulating tutoring sessions. For example, coordinators and veteran tutors "will get together and we'll do… a mock tutoring session to where it's maybe four or five tutors that are acting like students, …and then the tutor comes and actually tries to do a lesson." According to one of the directors, the participants in the mock tutoring sessions

…actually really cut up in these mock tutoring sessions to make sure that the tutors have patience and are able turn something that's – let's be honest – can be really negative, because some of these kids are crazy and they'll say some crazy things. They're not crazy but they'll say some crazy things. …And so it's bound to happen that somebody's bound to flip a desk maybe or somebody's bound to cuss you out, …[b]ut you have to be able to flip that around and use it to your advantage; and so that's one of the ways that we do that.

The purpose of this type of simulation is to ensure that tutors "know how to deal with [students] and not escalate it, but you know, bring it back to where something can be done and learning can continue." Being that the demographic of students that the tutors will work with sometimes aren't the best-behaved students, the directors will act the way the students do to see if the new tutors can handle what they could possibly encounter:

…what I actually try to do for those tutors, in my training, I will act like a student and I would act like a bad student, a pretty bad student, and the whole goal for me to do that so they can see how students act. Your objective is to get my attention and the person beside me attention also. And so you know before you get into it – and even if you don't do well the first time, that's okay, we can do it another time also.

As another tutor described, the tutoring role-play sessions as beneficial, because it prepares you for what could happen, in the event that it actually does happen:

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Now the way they prepared us was through training. What they would do, they would have one tutor be the tutor… One was a tutor, and the rest of the tutors present were the students. [T]hey wouldn't tell the one standing up, initially, what was going on; it was always training that one tutor. They would tell the tutors to be unruly students. Every student has a role, whether it is a good student, unruly student, loud student, the student that wants to get in your face – they would all play their little roles, and the tutor would try to take charge of the situation. So it was on-the-job training, pretty much, and it was always a simple problem: try to solve for "x" as a simple problem. So they would stand up and teach, and try to teach with these unruly students.

While performing the student-to-tutor simulation, tutors who acted as students placed themselves in the roles of students, some good and some bad, to prepare the new tutors of what could possibly happen in a tutoring session:

Now the situations were always extreme, but they use those extreme situations just to let them know that this probably won't happen: you probably won't be in a group of seven kids, and six of 'em are unruly and one of 'em wants to learn. But in the event that this does take place, you now know what to do. They would let the new tutor do it first, then they would let me do it because I knew how to talk to students in a way that was commanding of them, but not disrespectful of them. Because at all times they told us to respect the students, because they might not be – well, some of them were close to our age, but they might not be adults, but they're still young adults, and there's no reason for us to

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disrespect them in any way. So there was a certain way to talk to students to

correct them, without disrespecting them, like "shut up," or something like that to

say to a student, because they would go off and be ready to fight.

So the training exercises definitely helped, because a lot of the tutors

would go into the schools already with a mindset like, "Okay, I have to be ready.

I can be their friend to an extent, but at the end of the day I'm a tutor, they're a

student. So we have to be professional."

Not only does the training happen when the tutors are hired, but working with the

program provides on-the-job training as well:

I would say it's constant on the job training, because students are unpredictable.

There's no way to really plan, because one day you might have a student that's

really excited, full of energy and then they're really low the next day. Then again

these students have so many different things going on in their lives, so you

always have to be able to kind of adapt.

Another thing that tutors must be prepared for is students who have difficulty

learning the curriculum: "The kids get frustrated all the time and it's just something you

have to deal with when you're teaching them." This aspect of working with youth is very

important, especially those who are working with students in an academic setting:

And sometimes, you know, one tutor may explain it another way and we may be

like, "Okay, you just don't get it, let's go have another tutor explain it to you." Or

you know, we might have another student that gets it explain it, because they can

communicate with each other in ways that I can't communicate with them or

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another tutor can't communicate with the kids. And so you know, you just have

to adapt.

While it may be frustrating at times for the tutors, patience is a quality that many of the

tutors have to possess when working with the students:

Yes, one thing with being a tutor you have to be really patient, because

everybody learns different. Some students are going to pick it up quick. Some

people are going pick it up a little bit slower. Yeah, I would say, in some

scenarios there are some tutors that get frustrated at the students not learning fast

enough and then there are some instances where the student is getting frustrated,

because they're not able to grasp what they're being shown.

Staff Professionalism

Many of the tutors that work for the program are college students, who often get

mistaken as high school students themselves. One tutor explains how the tutors had to

look professional to set themselves apart from the students:

…that's where you make sure that our tutors wear the dress code. They come in

well groomed, shirt tucked in, slacks, dress shoes, or with the young ladies

wearing skirts, stuff like that …because presentation is everything. You want to

make sure that you're coming in as a role model not as -- you don't want to blend

in and look like the student. You can't come in dressed like them.

Another tutor explained that looking professional established their authority with the

students, while still maintaining the caring aspect of a tutor and mentor:

The students would make fun of us… especially me, I'm kind of small, and when

I took down my hair I look smaller. But we wanted to be professional [to show

that] first of all, that we are tutors, not your friends, because if we were just to

show up, regular clothing, we would look like students, especially me, I look like

a student. So I couldn't play that game.

We also wanted to distinguish ourselves as authority. So we all dressed

business-casual; so it would be slacks, company polo, and not sneakers, just so

the students knew we were a person of authority, and we weren't just another kid

there to play, we were there to teach you first.

The students initially treated us like they treated teachers; they feel like

we were going to be just like teachers, and we were just going to talk down to

them and not care about them. But eventually they came to the conclusion that:

Yeah, they're teaching us, but at the end of the day they care about us. And they

are being professional, but at the same time they're being fun with us. So they

stopped making fun of me after a while.

Another part of professionalism for the tutors is being able to alternate between role

model and friend:

Pretty much what we try to prep [the tutors for] is that you're coming in to be a

role model, that's probably biggest expectation that we want. …we don't want

you on the students' level. You have to know when to turn the switch on and off.

There are sometimes when you can come down to their level joking and have a

good time, but at the end of the day it is about business. You want to make sure

these students are getting what they need to pass the TAKS test or accomplish

whatever it is they're trying to accomplish in the classroom, because we're only

given a certain allotment of hours which happens to be about 18 to 20 hours. So

every minute counts when you have these students in the program.

Even while being professional, the tutors still need to have a good personality to get the

students to open up to them:

One of the biggest things is that you need to have a good personality, because

they look at us not as teachers. We're not teachers, okay. And some students

don't pay attention just because you are a teacher, that's just how it is. They look

at us as almost we're in the middle. We're not like students. We got some

authority and we're not the teacher.

Staff Support

Whether things are going good or not so well in the tutoring sessions, the

directors utilize an open-door policy for tutors, and students if need be, to express their

concerns about how the day went. One director mentioned,

Every day we have a meeting when sometimes it's all about just administrative

stuff and clerical duties. And sometimes it's, "Oh, okay. How can we do better or

what happened?" Vent. Where a lot of the times though – I don't remember who I

got this from – but you know every tutor goes around and just describes their day

in one word – well, the tutoring session in one word; and that's good, and you

know everybody can relate, and it's good to kind of get that out of your system.

Even if it's just one word, it's just good. It's kind of like, you know, the tutor exhale; and so that's a real useful tool that we use often.

Keeping lines of communication open always works for another director:

I would say through communication. We also have meetings at the end. And the meetings at the end of our tutoring sessions are designed to ask, "How did things go in your opinion?" to give them an opportunity to speak and tell us what was going on. "Any thoughts of how we can make it better? What did you see?" A lot of tutors don't tell you. They don't speak up, you know. Maybe sometimes you can – we used to write it down and everybody said, "Yeah, that's a good one. Implement that one." But give them at the meeting also the things that we see to make it better, thinks that we notice also. But also give you the same opportunity to talk to us, because what you see, we may not see it.

For another director, communication assists in the event that tutors need to swap out to address student issues:

At any time we can talk about anything, even if it's in the middle of tutoring. If we have to swap tutors because a tutor needs to talk about something that's going on with the student or a student just told them something that we need to address it right there and then, we will. But, we do have – for the most part, everybody has their meetings afterwards, and, "How'd everything go?" And that's when tutors address, "Oh, Johnny here, someone needs to help him out, because I can't devote time that he needs to learn this." "Okay, oh, yeah, no, no, I can help him. I've done that before."

…It becomes a group meeting that everyone [becomes involved in], "Oh,

yeah, no, no, I did that packet. Teach it this way and it works," or, "Yeah, do not

mention this area to the student, because they will go crazy on you," things like

that. So, they support each other, because they're all working with the same

group of kids.

Also, keeping lines of communication open can also help to improve how the

program works:

…I still want to hear from you to say, "Okay, so tell me how were things today?"

"Oh, we need a new system. We need to tutor it a little bit differently." "What do

you think about that? Was it better, was it worse? What struggles do you see?"

So if they can do that, then we're supporting them on how they can help us make

things better and they can make things better. So I think those meetings at the

end of the day that ask them your thoughts and your opinions, how we can

support them [are beneficial]. But if they don't speak up or don't say anything – if

we never ask and say, "This is what we're going to do," and that's it. But I think

that by doing that, that can help you give us support like, "Okay, we're going to

do it this way."

If the students are too much for the tutors to handle on a particular day, the directors

present on-site are always willing to assist:

So I would say more that if things were getting a little out of hand, they can go to

their campus director if he's there and just talk to them and let them know what's

going on; and when he can step in and help the situation – or myself to help the situation.

The tutors utilized the open communication and support from their fellow tutors and the directors as well:

It was really nice because at Samuell, most of the tutors were around my same age. We were all in college, so it was easy and quick to make friends with them because if you make friends with them, and you have a question, maybe they can help you. It was really nice because, if I wasn't sure how to do a problem and help the kid, I could be like, "Hey, Sarah. Can you help this student?" We'd kind of help each other, and that was really nice because I didn't feel alone. I didn't feel like it was just me with these five kids. If I didn't know something, I didn't feel afraid to ask the person who's helping the 12th graders.

So it was a sense of community, and after the students were all gone and everything was cleaned up, we always had time to kind of debrief about the day, and the ACs would be like, "Okay. How did you think today went? What did you like or not like?" Sometimes they'd change up the way that they did it. That also helped me, as a tutor, feel like my opinion counted, not just I'm here to tutor and leave. It was a sense of a Samuell community, and I really liked it.

Overall Research Findings

The overall purpose of this research project is to understand the perceived academic and social impact that tutors have on urban secondary students. To address this and answer the following research questions, the researcher utilized various semi-

structured questions from the interview profile as well as questions that arose throughout the interviews to gain an understanding of how tutors perceived that they benefited students academically and socially. The three research questions for this project generated twelve themes: three for the first research question, six for the second research question, and three for the third research question.

A general consensus among both the directors and the tutors is that the combination of both academic and social support and development goes a long way with the students. As one director noted,

I think it's just really important for tutors to be attentive to the kids, and not just be there because they need the job, or they want the money or the hours. If you get a tutoring job, it's critical for you to be invested in the students, not just in math, but in their lives. If you're there just to tutor the math and let them go home, really they're getting the math out of it, but they need more than that. Students in high school need that person to look up to, and need those positive influences to see that, "Oh, okay. He's in college. I can be in college too." I think that's just really important.

As told by a tutor, a genuine interest in the student is necessary to make any improvement in the students' lives:

…if you teach them, they can take in information and spit it out, that's fine. That's our main job, to be sure they pass TAKS. But if they're not prepared for what happens after they cross that stage, then I feel like I didn't do my job. …So I feel like if we don't mentor them – if we don't take interest in their personal

lives; if we don't, you know, care about them and their lives, then what more are we than just little teachers.

…We're in a more intimate environment, so it just makes sense for us to take interest in the things that they're going through, in my mind anyway. But that's just how I thought about it: If I don't take interest in the things that you're going through in your life, what good am I doing? …I would want someone to take interest in my life if they were sitting in my face talking to me about math for two-and-a-half hours a day.

For one tutor, serving as a tutor opens up the door to mentoring, which helps build a bridge between academics and social development:

I think it's really important because at the end of the day these students think of us as mentors and role models. If you're able to mentor, find out what's going on with this student and tie education back into it. I think you're setting them up for a success, because once you get that diploma or that degree, they can't take it from you. It's something that constantly with you.

These students in the day and age they're in right now, a lot of them are kind of lost. Some of the environment that they've grown up in they're not always seeing positive examples so that's why the two hours or the hour and a half we're out with the students that's why we try to show them a different side. Show them that education it is -- it's not boring. It can be fun, because some of the areas that they grow up in they're trying to get things really quick. So if you're trying to get fast money or I guess start them if you will success is what I want to call it might

go off on another course. So that's where we try to really stress education going

to college. You can fulfill your dreams by education.

As told by one tutor, it's important for the program and all the tutors working for the

program to make sure what they promote is what they give to the students:

…we're not just there sitting around playing, you know. I prided myself working

at Samuell, is kids coming back and saying, "I passed the TAKS, Darien. I

passed the TAKS." I prided myself on that, and the other tutors did as well; we

didn't want to be a program that we talk a good game, but the numbers show we

didn't – we weren't really about it, because we're literally – like I feel like we

were holding their lives in our hands, and we can either help them succeed, or we

can help them fail. And I wasn't the type of person that just wants someone to

fail. So we prided ourselves in helping them.

According to another director, the impact that can possibly be made with the

students cannot be accomplished overnight. It has to be a long-term process, with both

sides fully participating:

So you can see a difference in students were from one year to the next where you

have that impact on the student. So yeah, I can see that those who really

participate, really participate and not just kind of come but really participate, you

can see a big difference in those students.

It may be a tough job, but for one tutor, it's worth it:

I really just realized, "Man, this is hard work, but it's fun. It's giving back to kids

that are in the situation that I was in—that are growing up in a pretty terrible

place in Dallas, that want to learn, but don't necessarily learn like everyone else."

Lastly, according to one director, strong relationships between tutors and students play a

strong role in improving the students academically and socially: "I think [we] upon that

by, you know, helping to build these strong relationships and using these strong

relationships to better the kids academically and socially; and that's why we work."

Summary

As an overall outlook of this research project, the directors and tutors come to a

consensus that providing academic and social support is beneficial for the students. Not

only is a genuine interest in the student imperative to make an impact in the students'

lives, it also helps to build a bridge between academics and social development, which

could put them on a path to becoming a productive young adult in society. Part of

advertising that the students will benefit from the program is living up to your promises,

and the tutors of this program work their hardest to ensure that they are there for their

students in any way possible. It can be a tough job, but the tutors feel that it's worth it.

First Research Question

The first research question for this project is "How do tutors describe their

methods of support?" Three themes emerged from the interview questions asked for this

question: environment, guidance, and preparation for the future.

Environment

One emerging theme that materialized from this research sub-question included the environment that the program provides. The atmosphere the program provides is one factor that contributes to the program's success because "the environment and relationships amongst the staff will carry down to the students." When the environment and the relationships between the tutors and students are good, it "creates an environment conducive to learning." According to one director, the environment that this program provides is simple:

> …we're here to mentor and tutor and have a good time and talk about college and get some learning in your system, and we get some pizza, and we give out some prizes, and we're good. We try to make our environment learning, but it's also fun.

As noted by another director, the casual environment is a welcomed experience after the school day is completed:

> …One of the things that make us stand out [from other after-school programs] is that we're much more… of a casual environment than a classroom. And so if you're happy with everybody and the tutors come in happy and everybody's kind of relaxed, it lends itself to that casual environment which is, you know, a welcomed difference from what the kids are used to from 9:00 AM to 3:55 PM. That's one of our strong points and why the kids come. And so I think the camaraderie helps with the relaxed casual environment because everybody's on

good terms with everybody, and that lends itself to good tutoring because the casual environment is good.

A tutor stated that the caring environment encouraged the students to attend the program and continue coming:

…a lot of the students would tell me – because sometimes after the tutoring was over and while they were eating, I would just talk to the kids. And they would tell me that they feel like no one really cared until they came to talk to us. They felt like if the teachers don't care, why should we? I mean, that's a legitimate point. If the person that's supposed to be teaching you these things doesn't really care, why should you? I mean, that's sad, but it was true. Not to say all the teachers didn't care, but the students just felt like no one cared about them and the things that they went through personally. So if you don't care about me and my life, why should I care what you're saying to me?

That's just how the students felt until they came with us, and they felt like we actually cared, and that's why they would focus, and we would have to tell them a couple of times, but they would do what we said to do. And that's why, because they felt like we actually cared about them. That's why I like the fact that there's a tutoring and mentoring aspect to it, not just spitting information out and sending them home, but we actually take the time out to be sure that these students are mentally ready for the world outside of high school, because you can pass all your classes, get out of high school, and still not be right up here [*points to head*], because you don't feel like anyone cares.

When hiring tutors for the program, the coordinators seek to ensure they are assembling a staff that will create and continue this environment that the students seem to function and flourish in so well. Part of constructing the environment where students can be productive and flourish is having knowledge of the environment where the students are coming from:

> We have a good mix of tutors that are from the local area, so they know some of the schools that we've been – that we tutor at, and so they can relate to the kids that way. We [also] have our other tutors who lived in an environment that was more privileged, and they had more things, but we definitely, with training, we tell our tutors – I know in the trainings that I had, we gave different scenarios. We spent a couple hours just giving out different scenarios of what has happened at tutoring, and then we'd ask them, "What do you think of this? What do you think of that?"

While this program may be the first time many of the tutors have worked with students, some tutors come into the program with previous experience working with students and, more specifically, students from the particular demographic that the program serves:

> We prefer tutors that have experience working with kids, but it's not a requirement. With working with kids, you just have to put [the tutors] out there and see if they flourish at times. So, we let them know everything up front from the basic rules what to do, what not to do, to – what you could expect, to not only – and we let the tutors know that this isn't – you may hear things that you go home to and cry at night, or you – makes you angry that you may not want do

this. You may not want be around it, and so we definitely do let the tutors know

on the social side that this isn't just academic. This is how you impact the kids in

a different way, and we have to be prepared mentally for that, because we have to

be strong for the kids …I mean, the kids are coming up to support for us.

Other tutors do not have experience working with students from this particular

demographic, but the program prepares them for it:

Right now, what we're doing and that's something that we're working on more so

this year trying to better equip the tutors with the abilities to go into some of

these areas. For instance, we have students that come from SMU and that area is

a lot different than Pleasant Grove. So we do have trainings in place that

introduce them to what some of these experiences that some of these students are

going through.

As one director states, the students enjoy themselves so much at the program, the

tutors don't feel as if they're working: "…because sometimes the kids – the tutors don't

think they're at work. It's just they're having a good time, and they don't realize, wow,

it's been two hours? We just had a good time teaching." Aside from the tutoring that's

free for the students, they also receive food at each session and a learning tool as a way

to signify that they have completed their allotted hours of tutoring (which is a

component of being a SES program). One tutor explained the breakdown of the

incentives the students received for attending tutoring:

So we offer them incentives, where if you study "x" amount of hours, we'll give

you this. You know, you study five hours, you get a free t-shirt. You study ten

hours, we give you a movie pass. Fifteen hours, we give you another movie pass, so that's two movie passes, you could take somebody out. And then you study 20 hours, we give you the learning tool, which could be—we gave out laptops – and that was like a big draw, because a lot of these kids will never be able to own a laptop, if not coming to our program, because how else would they afford it?

So a lot of the kids would see things like that, and they'd be like, "Well, if I just study for 20 hours" – which 20 hours is like – what – two-and-a-half weeks, maybe? Just showing up for two-and-a-half weeks, and we will bank on the fact that they will want to come back after that, because we're going to be helpful.

While the incentives may entice students to join the program, the directors believe the environment encourages students to continue attending the program after they have received the learning tool:

Some kids do come just for the learning tool, but after they stay, a lot of kids don't want to leave. So it's not just the learning tool or it's not just the food. Yes, they do get that, but when they come in, I think they start to enjoy the environment. The environment is better than being at home. The environment is better that being on the street. They enjoy the environment. And once again, we've created that positive environment. I think that's what they really want to be around, so the kids want to come. You know, they want to be there as much as they can. And so I would say that yes, they get to learn too. Some kids want to come just for that, but for other kids, I'll say, "Now you don't want to go home

huh. Good!" You have that situation too. So I would say that it's the

environment, it's that positive environment.

As another tutor commented, the environment of the program provides

consistency, and this evolves into the program being a 'safe-house' for the students:

Some students will open up to you. Some students you do have to kind of dig in a

little deep. A lot of times students will come in and they'll have their barrier up, I

guess maybe just because a lot of the kids that go there are used to having people

kind of come in and out of their lives. A lot of the students generally like to have

structure and a routine, and so by consistently being there and they see you that

allows them to kind of open up a little bit more, because they know you're always

going to be there for them 3:30 to 5:30 or 4:00 to 6:00.

A lot of times that relationship that we built with them just from the

mentoring aspect creates a consistency and the program turns into a safe house,

because a lot of times after school these students are going home by themselves

or they're wandering around the neighborhood, but with our programs they're

able to come in after school on a regular basis, get a little help and we feed them

at the same time for two hours until their parents come home.

Not only does the program provide a positive environment, it also provides a safe

environment. One tutor, who is actually from the area where the school is located,

describes it like this:

…a lot of the students, you know, they want to feel safe… I mean, it's not a nice

neighborhood. It's not a lot of sunshine, and happy faces over by Samuell. And

especially standing there – because our tutoring will last until around 5:45-ish, so they're leaving when it's dark outside. And some of the students, you know, they have to walk home, and they don't feel safe – as they shouldn't. We can't give them rides home. But, no, a lot of the kids, I would just tell them, if I have to come earlier to help you I will, because you don't want to walk home, because I can't ask somebody to do something I wouldn't do. And I, myself, a 24-year-old man, would not walk home by myself in that neighborhood at night. I don't go over there at night in my car, and I'm from there. …So they just need somewhere safe to be, because they don't feel safe, you know, they're not going to want to be there.

It was described as a Compton in Texas, that's how it was described…. The name, I think someone was being funny when they called it Pleasant Grove, because it's not a pleasant place. It's hard to get out of. I'm an SMU student, so when they meet me and I tell them that I grew up from off of Prudent Road and Ray Cloud, they don't believe me, because most of the people in my age group that grew up over there, are rather not here, or in a gang, or six-feet in the ground. …So it's hard for them to see things like that long-term. Like I can do it—I can go to college. I can go to SMU, or any institution of higher learning, because they don't see it. It's just not – it's a bleak area for a kid to grow up in.

Guidance

The second emerging theme from the series of interviews involved guidance for the students. In addition to creating the environment that this program provides, the

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tutors benefit the students by showing a genuine interest in the students that they work with; and through this genuine interest in the students, the tutors offered guidance that could encourage the students they worked with to get on the path to become an educated, responsible, and respectful young adult. As told by one of the directors,

Guidance, guidance. And you know, it's just a simple, really broad term; but in order to really be able to guide students, especially the kids that we deal with – because let's be honest, they come from low SES status so they don't trust anybody, they have problems with authority. You have to be able to kind of break through and get to them. And so even though that's just as simple as guidance, you have to be able to gain the kids' trust and their respect; and that's much easier said than done. But that's all it is. It's all that I think any student needs. It's just that because these kids have so much other stuff on their plate, it's a lot harder to get to them; and other people give up or think that it can't be done when it can. You just have to put in time and effort.

As told by a tutor of the program, sometimes guidance can be interpreted as being 'hard on the kids':

With me, personally, I would say they interacted with me like a big brother, almost. They would see me and get excited, because I was there, even though I was kind of hard on them, they would see me and just light up, because they just enjoy me and my personality… I made them follow directions. I made them do their work. I made them mind their parents. If they came to me and told me that their mother told them to do something and they didn't feel like doing it, I made

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them do it. Just things of that nature, just the things that a mentor would say to the person he's mentoring, you know, pay attention in class, do your homework, things of that nature. They said I was hard on them, and stuff like that.

…I go by that every time I step into a tutoring session, and it works. I mean, I'm a little hard on students, you know. I tell them, "You're going to do what I say. If you don't do what I say, you can leave." But if you trust me and do what I say, you will be successful. And some students are, "Oh, I don't want to hear all that. I don't want to hear all that." …I would tell them, you know, "You don't have to do things the way I do. I'm just telling you, my track record shows that my method works." So if you want to pass TAKS, just come see Darien, you know, do what I say. Go sit with the tutor that I know who you need to be sitting with, because they're good with the way that you learn. And we'll go from there."

Guidance can also steer the students who are headed down negative paths into a more positive direction:

They want to be better. They want to succeed. We've had the few – my favorite kids to work with are the gangbangers, the kids that are all tough, the kids that get into fights, and the hardcore kids. Those are my favorites to work with, because it's a lot of work trying to get through them. [Getting through to them is] harder because you have more negative influences influencing them, and then you have just a couple of us who are just really trying to give them the positive side, but those are the ones that are the most rewarding once you finally get them

to get a light bulb on their head, like, "Yeah, see, this is what I've been talking about this whole time." But, the majority of the kids are open to change and do want to better themselves, but not many people give them the time to show them that way, that path.

Preparation for the Future

Another emerging theme stemming from this research sub-question involved preparing the students for the future. In addition to tutoring the students, the tutors would have talks with the students about their life goals—what they would like to be and what it will take for them to get there. Some students had a sense of what they wanted to do with their lives, and others didn't. As told by one of the directors,

> Some of the kids – all the kids want better for themselves, but I think a big issue with the kids we work with is they don't see how what they're doing now will affect their future; because you know, everybody has this dream of, "I want this nice car or this nice house," to be financially secure, but they don't see how what's going on right now affects what happens five years from now. And so most of the kids want good for themselves, want the best for themselves.
>
> They don't necessarily come in focused. We definitely have a good amount of kids that do, and they literally come because they want to make sure that they pass the TAKS. We have some kids that are serious about that. …Like these kids all are very, very capable and very, very talented. It's just a matter of what you choose to do. Do you want to use that talent for this, which may give you some easy quick money, or for this which you have to work hard, but in the

end, you'll be financially secure, happy about life, and proud of what you've

done?

This director also commented that although a four-year college or university may not be

in all students' futures, high school cannot be their end:

…for a lot of the kids, they see, "Oh, you know, I graduate and then I'm grown

and that's it." I would like to see the kids looking for something else; whether it's

trade school, a four-year university, some other kind of institute, who knows.

But nowadays, high school can be it and so that's their disaster socially.

For one tutor, being prepared for the real world is looking and speaking like an

adult:

I guess just outside of just the education portion probably just the way you carry

yourself out in public, manners, grammar—a lot of our students they write just

like they text. They talk like they text. That will probably be something that

they'll need to work on more—getting prepared for the business world. Just being

more professional. You can't have all these crazy hair styles. You can't have your

pants hanging off your behind and stuff like that. Just getting them groomed

before they get out in the work force.

The younger students generally run and say, "No this is what I do," type

of thing but as—we've had several instances where you work with a group of

kids like when they're young, and as they're going to walk across the stage to

graduate you'll notice the change. They're like, "You were right." We've had

several kids where they have—they used to walk around with baggy clothes and

stuff hanging off and now their shirts are tucked in and they are well groomed, so

I would say more so with the older kids. So we've had some students that leave

the program that will come back to visit and they're like, "You guys were right. I

definitely need to step my game up." So I've seen both sides of the spectrum.

This tutor continued with preparing the students to look and act like an adult and not

doing what they see others do:

You're able to talk to them about reality. A lot of things that our students are

doing now are what they're seeing on T.V. or what they're hearing on the radio.

And a lot of that stuff that's going on is make believe, and so with the mentoring

aspect you can actually -- a lot of times you'll talk to them about some of the

things that they're doing, like "Why are you doing this?" and then they'll kind of

explain to you why – "Well, I saw such and such do it."

For instance with the tattoos and stuff—a lot of the entertainers are

basketball players they're getting tats and stuff, but they're millionaires to when

being that they're a millionaire you can kind of do what you want to do because

you have the money. Now with you coming out of high school or if you choose

to go to college, when you put that tattoo on you you're basically putting yourself

in a category where you can be labeled. You come in for an interview and you've

got tattoos on your neck or running all down your arms, you're going to be placed

in a category where, "Well this person has tattoos, what's going on in their

personal life?" They're not going to want to hire you based on the way you look.

And that's another part from the professionalism, the hair styles, the way you

dress …you want to make sure that you present yourself in a professional manner. I guess it all goes back to first impressions are everything. If somebody sees you with the tattoos or the way you dress, they're going to probably have their own opinions about you and that might keep you from getting a job or getting to where you're trying to go.

Another director echoed the sentiments of students being prepared for the future, both from a realistic perspective of what they should expect, and how to financially support themselves:

When they're in their own little bubble of thinking, "I know everything; this is how it is," then why would you want to do your work? You don't see the reality in it. You don't see the purpose in it. So if you can show that part, share that part, I would say that's one of the biggest things. … [Students must know] the importance of knowing numbers, because when they get into the world, money, budgeting, bills… They don't understand any of that. They think money grows on trees, "Oh, I was just gonna do whatever." If they can understand budgeting or have a small part of budgeting and money, it shows life in a different perspective though because you're not living in the fairy tale like you see on rap video, or you know, everybody's just throwing it away like they got just tons of it. But understand hard work, be grateful for what you get, and real life numbers such as money and budgeting. If they have those life-skills, knowing that if you want something, it will be hard work. When you get something, be grateful for it. And then knowing numbers with budgeting, because they keep you balanced.

A tutor spoke along the same lines of preparing the students for the reality of the adult world:

> In the beginning, a lot of them were completely off. When I say "right in their heads," I mean mature – maturity is a good word to describe it, because a lot of the kids thought they were mature, and they thought, "Oh, yeah, as soon as I get out of here I'll get me this apartment, and get me this car, and I'm just going to work, and everything's going to be good." I was like, yeah, but that's not how it's going to be. It's not that simple.…
>
> We would say these things to them, just so they could understand that life outside of high school was not some fairytale land where everyone gets a job, everyone's smiling and happy, everyone's getting money, people hand out things to you, everyone's smiling – it's not that world. We were getting them prepared for the real world. We were letting them know you need to buckle down and get mature, be about your business, get on your education, get this knowledge while it's free. And a lot of them – some accepted it, some didn't. I hate to say that, but, I mean, you can't force them.

This tutor further explained that this preparation was for the students own good, however, they couldn't force this preparation upon them:

> That's the thing, we didn't want to force them, we didn't want to say, "You have to do" this, this, this, and this, because it's different for everyone, you know, as you grow up. But a lot of them accepted the things that we said and took them into consideration, and they're doing good now – the student I saw

that went to UTEP, she actually had to transfer from one of her schools because she said she was being too distracted. So she went to UTEP, far away from everyone she knew. I told her, I mean, that's an adult decision to make, you know, to just get away from your friends, because you know this college thing is real for you, and you know that it's going to help you in your future. …we try to let them know that the real world is the real world, and not to look at T.V. and things as the real world, because that's not it.

Summary

Although the students primarily attend the after-school program to receive academic assistance in critical subject areas of math and science, they also receive additional support and benefits from attending the program. First, they are kept in a safe, positive, and welcoming environment that is conducive to learning and positive collaboration. This encourages the students to interact with their peers and mentors in a structured, yet casually fun environment. It also exposes them to adults whom they feel care for them. By attending this program, students also receive guidance from their mentors and tutors. This guidance can assist them through their current situations and later in their adolescent years. Lastly, the program benefits the students by preparing them for the future. As high school students, they are not too far removed from adulthood. The mentors help the students to see the difference between how they think their adult lives will turn out versus reality. The three themes presented in this section-environment, guidance and preparation for the future- help to bridge the gaps in the academic and social progress that students should have at the high school level.

Second Research Question

The second research question is "How do tutors describe their perceptions about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?" One director summed up the answer to this question:

> The kids don't know what they need to know, just being straight, just blunt with it. They don't know academically what they need to know and nobody's teaching them what they need to know socially, so I feel like they just need everything. [There] needs to be improvements on all levels.

Academic Impact of Tutoring and Mentoring

Tutoring serves two purposes: to help students get to where they need to be and to refresh what they've already learned. Common themes that emerged from this question included content refreshers and repetition, positive attitude towards education, and increasing student confidence in themselves and their knowledge.

Content Refreshers and Repetition

When concerning the academic support that the tutors give to the students in this program, a director noted,

> …it depends how far back a student is. We've had juniors and seniors who don't know how to multiply, so here we go, we start back with teaching multiplication and memorizing. It's supposed to be a refresher. How our tutoring is supposed to work is majority of the time this is supposed to be something the kids already know.

According to one director, the students in the program seem to have trouble with certain subjects:

> Right now, we're seeing with math and reading, and when it comes to subject level, math in the sense that they see numbers, and at the high school level, when they see numbers and letters together, they are, "What? What is this?" They're not used to that, because at the middle school levels, it's usually word problems, but that's where it comes with a mixture of it where you have – the middle school level is mostly word problems. If kids do not know how to read it or comprehend the problem, then they're going to get it wrong, and so we see a lot of that where kids are reading it and then when you explain what the question is asking, they're like, "Oh," then they can answer it.

In the event that the teacher may not be able to reiterate or repeat lessons in class for the students that don't learn it the first time it's taught in class, the tutors help the students learn what they may have missed:

> We're just reinforcing it or trying to teach it a different way so they remember it very well. We do find ourselves, a lot of the time, teaching it, and half the time the kids are like, "Oh, yeah, the teacher said something like that, but, yeah, Miss, I fell asleep."
>
> But, half of the time, they didn't even know what the question was asking, and so they kind of do process of elimination, and they know two of them are absolutely wrong and two of them are close enough to correct, so they do that. And math is just scary. People think that math is something only for – that

you're born with math, but we try to teach the kids that, no, it's simple. You just

have to practice it, so for sure those are the two subjects. Now that science is

included in TAKS, that also seems to be a little harder for the older kids since it

is tested to graduate, but for sure math and reading.

As one tutor explained, being that the material the students practice in tutoring is based

from what they learn in the classroom, tutoring reinforces what they should have already

learned:

We use a lot of measuring up. They have material that we use for the math

portion of the TAKS test and then also they have TAKS workbooks that the

schools are given and we'll work with that. We'll [also] go to some of the math

department meetings and we'll see what they're instructing to the students and

then we'll get some of that and again reinforce it. Because we don't want to try to

change up too much of what the teachers are showing the students, just so

everything can flow well together.

For one tutor, students come into high school missing content knowledge, and

tutoring helps these students catch up in their classes:

I find that a lot, believe it or not, in freshmen and seniors. Sophomores and

juniors, not so much, but freshmen coming out of middle school really don't

know as much as they need to know, and that's something that I've actually had

a lot of conversations with educators with, about middle school, how important it

is for their high school careers. But seniors, specifically, they are just behind. It's

like they don't care. Like they catch senioritis at the end of junior year, and it just

converts for the whole senior year. We have to pretty much re-teach seniors

everything, because they take the tests around the middle of the spring semester;

if they don't pass it, they got to take it in the spring – I mean, in the summer. If

they don't pass it then, they got to come right back and take it again in the fall.

Although students may get discouraged, one tutor feels it's their job to continue working

with the student until they grasp the material enough to pass:

So we have to like re-teach them every time, because when a student fails a test,

like that, and they know like, "Oh, if I fail this test I'm not getting into

[college]," they get depressed, so they just block out everything dealing with that

test. So we have to re-teach them Objective 1 through 10, every time. And it's

not something that I enjoy doing, but whatever we have to do, we do it, because I

don't want to ever say, "You're a senior, you need to know this." No, it's always,

"Oh, you don't know this? Well, let's go over it again." Because you don't want

to break them down, you want to build them up. You know, don't talk down to

the students and say, "You need to know this. Why don't you know this?" No;

"Let's go over it again, until you understand it."

From a tutor's perspective, the after-school tutoring provided that extra explanation that

the student may have missed in class:

…it was great because if they did not understand how their teacher explain[ed] it,

we could come in with different ways of explaining it that may be tailored to

them more specifically, instead of just the teacher teaching one way to the whole

class. Sometimes I'd have students that would say, "Yeah, I think they taught

this, but I don't really understand it." So then, "Oh, okay. Well, let's find a way

that you get it, you understand it." And that seemed to really help. That was a

good supplement to the teachers, 'cause the teachers can only individualize so

much for their whole classes.

As one director explained it, students needed that extra help because the class sizes are

so large:

We need smaller classroom sizes. I mean, you walk into some of these

classrooms and there's like 30 kids, and half of the time the teachers are trying to

pay attention or trying to get the kids that are rowdy to calm down, and then the

kids that do care about their education are left behind.

As a tutor explained it, large class sizes present a distraction to learning: "when

you have more than 20 kids in a classroom, it's harder for them to learn, because there

are so many distractions. Then, if you don't like the way the teacher teaches, you're

stuck."

Another tutor expanded on large class sizes and the effects it has on student learning:

I've seen it happen quite a bit. And a lot of that sometimes comes down to the

ratios. You have one teacher in there with about 25 students and it's really hard to

give individual attention to one student when you have 25 and you're having the

behavioral issues and then you're only given 45 minutes or maybe an hour and a

half to teach a lesson.

…the students come to our program with the ratios being so small you are

able to give the student a little more individual attention and at the same time

when you're working with them you can actually see that this problem I'd be

asking you to do multiplication and division, but if you can't even add or do

simple multiplication you do have to kind of go back down the stair steps to build

them back up so they can step back up to where their problems are asking them

to be.

One tutor described how tutoring went more in-depth that some of the students' classes

because they were forced to learn one way of doing math:

I would say, now they're probably in a sense forced just because a lot of the

schools are working -- they teach to the test and so their test outweighs

everything else. TAKS, TAKS, TAKS. So it's like, a lot of the schools are trying

to show the students calculator tricks so you're basically just punching in

numbers to a calculator but you're not actually breaking the problem down to

understand how did I get from here to here. In a sense, they're kind of funneled

into one direction of learning.

Tutors also help students develop good study habits and discover what their

learning style is:

I would just say mainly developing good study habits thus far. Because

everybody learns differently—like, myself, I'm a visual learner. I really didn't

discover that until I think it was probably my second year of college. I guess

getting to know yourself and how you function that will ultimately help you out

as far as your ability to learn. That's what I'll probably say. How are you able to

comprehend information, be it if you have to write it down, listen for it or if you

have to visually see it.

...that's generally what we do in all of our sessions. That's why we try to

work in the 1 to 6 student ratio so you're able to give a student more attention. As

a tutor you can examine how that student responds to it -- as far as like they're

learning process do they -- are they understanding by writing it down, hearing

what you're saying or visualizing?

With the small student-to-tutor ratio with the program, the tutors were able to cater more

to the students' individual learning styles while reviewing information:

When we tutor, we try to keep the ratio six to one, and that was a pretty good

ratio of tutor-to-students to where there was a big enough group to where there

was enough room for multiple input, but it was a small enough group to where

the tutor could manage it. That way the students could learn. And we also asked

the students, like, "How do you learn? Are you a visual learner? Are you a

hands-on leaner?" We would ask them questions like that just to be sure they

were actually being helped, because what's the point in you sitting in front of me

if you're a visual learner, and I'm making you do all the hands-on work and

you're not getting the material correctly?

In order to cater to the students' different learning styles, the tutors have the

option to utilize different methods of their liking to teach the students:

...A lot of tutors use different methods. A lot of tutors will stand up over them

with a whiteboard and literally teach them. Some tutors would sit down at the

table with them, and write a problem on the whiteboard and pass it around, and see who can solve the problem. A lot of tutors would just call out the problem and have all the students try to solve it themselves, and then turn the papers in: "All right, now tell me why you did this. Tell me why you did this. Explain to the group what this means."

Some tutors use candy, and some tutors would be like, "Whoever gets the problem right, I'll bring them something to eat next tutoring." I remember one tutor, she used a point system, and whoever answered the most points correctly – the most questions correctly would get a certain amount of points. And on Thursday – because that was our last day, Thursdays – Monday through Thursday – whoever had the most points on Thursday, she would bring something to eat that Monday – you know, whatever they wanted. So the students would get competitive, because it's like, you know, "She's going to bring me something to eat, you know." She would always bring enough for everybody, but it would be a little bit more for that one student. And the students loved it. You know, the students would be excited, like I have to answer these questions right to get these points, so I can feel special.

When tutors use their own personalized methods to teach the students, students have the option to work with who they understand the most:

So tutors use different methods to teach the kids. Like what would happen was, you would get the same group of kids almost every time, because the kids will be drawn to a certain style of tutoring. I remember one young lady, she – people will

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come in and they will see, she will be at a table with about ten students by

herself. And there would always be another tutor there, just to be sure they didn't

get too rowdy, but the students just loved the way she taught so much that it

would be like, "If she doesn't come, we're not coming." Because they would just

get attached to the way she taught. They just loved the way she did it. She

wouldn't tell me what she did… It was a secret, but it worked, because all her

kids passed.

Also, with the small student-to-tutor ratios, the tutors are able to utilize more hands-on

learning:

It's lessons and worksheets. We don't really have manipulatives and hands-on

stuff like that. But when I say hands-on, I mean the tutor is like three feet away

from you. We are having a conversation. I have my little portable whiteboard and

my little marker and we're writing and, "Okay, it's your turn. Here, you can have

it and you take the whiteboard and finish the problem." We're still paper-based,

and you know, text-based. It's not so much manipulatives and what have you.

But it's as hands-on as you can get, without having tools and toys and such.

As told by another director, repetition is a key part of the academic support that

students need:

Repetition. Repetition, and they need to be – this is a big one – their parents need

to be involved. Three-fourths of the information they have. They get information

– I've seen it. They'd be in tutoring, they get information, and they're learning it.

Then they go home and all of a sudden, it's back to they forgot everything. But it

does leave a hole because you have to be on a certain level. You can't stay and

work on, let's say, Level 1 where you have to know Level 1-10. So it does make

it difficult because of that. But if there is a way to always put repetition back into

it, if you're at Level 2, "Okay, we're going to do a couple reviews of Level 1 and

then work at Level 2. And you're on Level 3 – [repeat] Level 2 and Level 3."

Maybe something like that where we can weave it back and come forward. Go

back and forth.

> …And the only reason why I say forgot because of the lack of repetition.

Repetition is going to allow you to remember it, to understand it, to get it. "Oh,

yeah; I got that. Oh, yeah; I remember this one." But if you only do it one time

and then you don't see it for one day – just one day with math because math is

like that – one day, you tend to lose it.

Another tutor echoed the director's sentiment on repetition being necessary for the

students to retain what they have learned:

> …we focus a lot on math and with math it's just repetition. Nobody is going to

open a book and just jump right into algebra. Everything is a building block. So

it's just practice, practice, practice. And that's where we try to -- not try, but that's

what we do with the students. We see where their short lining and we give them

more problems. They might get frustrated that they get more problems, but we

explain to them is the only way you're going to be able to conquer I guess your

fear of math is by working with it. You have to have practice it in order to be

successful at it.

Positive Attitude Towards Education

Part of succeeding academically is seeing the value in education. According to one tutor, many students do not see the value in attending school:

Because the kids did not care. The kids just did not – like they would tell me, like, "Darien, if you weren't here" – like, to my face, "Darien, if you leave, all of us are going to flunk."

…Their mindset was: school wasn't important. That was their mindset. Their mindset was to get out of school and work. Like everyone wants to get some money; everyone working two and three jobs, skipping class, that was their mindset. They didn't want anything to do with education, or anything along those lines. They wanted to work and get money, and get out of there. School just wasn't important to them.

As told by another director, the students' outlook on education is not always a pretty or positive picture, especially when finances are involved:

It's not positive. You do have the ten percent of each class that really cares about [school] and wants to do great and has a sibling or has a cousin [who has gone to college] – but, for the most part, we're happy if a kid wants to go to community college at a minimum, because if that comes out of them, then we know that they've thought about it. But, it's not – we do a lot of poking holes and trying to figure out what kids want. Education is important, but so is paying bills …when I go back and look at these kids, it's the same way. The parents never had higher

education, and it's rare that they have a sibling that has – that's older than [them] – that has done it, so it's harder to convince kids of why education is important.

And for a lot of them, by the time they're – usually by junior year, a lot of them are working, and they see the money, and once you see the money, sometimes it's hard to go back and, "Hey, I'm making good money now," and, of course, they don't have mortgages and don't have these huge bills and car payments, so they don't see that. But, a lot of them, once they see the money, it's like, "Eh, I'm doing fine. I'm making money, so what's the point?"

A growing number of students in the program also work jobs to support their families, and one tutor addressed how working can pose a distraction to the students' education:

Independent – some students were just working because they needed the money, and I told a couple of them they needed to quit their jobs because their parents were okay. But some students, their parents couldn't work because they were hurt, or something happened on the job. So it was either work and have a home, or, you know, get put out of your apartment. So some of them had to work to support their families.

The ones that were working just for money, they needed to grow up. But the ones that were working to support this families, they were very mature; they understood that, yes, I should probably be going to school, but realistically school isn't doing anything for me right now. In their minds, getting a 100 on this test is not going to put food on the table. You know, my baby sister needs milk

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for her bottle, and passing science isn't going to help that, if that makes any

sense. Not in the present tense. You know, they all thought for right now, they

didn't think for their future. It was more so: What's happening now? What do I

need to do now to fix now?

Lastly, a tutor shared stories of how students didn't view education in the present as a

solution to the dilemmas or issues of the present:

It was difficult, because, like I said, they thought about the now. I tried to get

them to think about the future. I told them that it's great what you're doing, you

know, you're helping your family out. But six months from now, when you have

to repeat senior year for the second time, you know, how is that helping them

then? Because you're going to be back in the same situation, working these little

six-, seven-hour shifts at these jobs that you're working, when at least with a

high school education you can get something better than that.

So I tried to get them to understand that it's good what you're doing now,

but if you at least get out of high school, at minimum, you'll be able to do more

in the future. …I tried to get them to think more long-term than short-term,

because that's something that they were just brought up to think short-term,

because of where they were from.

Confidence in Themselves and Their Academic Ability

Not only is knowledge a key factor in what every student needs to succeed, but

they also need to be confident in themselves and their scholastic ability. One tutor

explained one reason why students don't believe in themselves and their academic ability:

>…One thing we're talking about right now is a stereotype that a lot of students have, they think that being that I'm from this environment or because I look this way I'm not smart. I'm not going to be able to accomplish certain things that other people accomplish.

As told by another tutor, many of the students lack confidence in themselves in school, and they don't expect to pass:

>I expect every student, no matter what their grade level, GPA, or current status is, I expect them to pass – every student that walks through those doors. And then I'm genuinely upset when they don't.

>…By the time I'm done talking to them they do [expect to pass]. Initially they don't. Initially, "I'm gonna fail this test. I already know. I don't even know why I'm here." "Then why'd you come? Why are you wasting my time? I could be here with somebody else if you're just going to come in here and think you're just going to fail! Why are you here?"

>But, no, I tell them it's confidence – you got to have confidence in your ability to take this test, okay, because, yes, you have to take the test itself, but you have to confidence in the knowledge that I give you, or that I share with you. Because if you're not confident in yourself, taking this test is going to be two times as hard because you're going to continue to second-guess all the answers that you pick. So by the time I'm done tutoring them, the majority of them

believe they're going to pass this test. But I still expect them all to pass it, no matter how bad they feel. I still tell them, "You're going to pass."

This same tutor continued to share his students' reactions to him when they don't pass:

They avoid me. I'll see them in the hallway and they'll run. They avoid me, because they feel like they failed me, and I tell them, "No, you didn't fail me. If you tried your hardest, we're going to work at it harder." Because most of them, like when they see me – when they see us – they never fail by like 45 points, or like 50 points, or they just missed every – it's always one question, or two questions that they fail by.

So I tell them, "Okay, you missed two questions and you failed." "But, yeah, I failed." "It's fine. You missed two questions. We have until May to get you four questions smarter." Because I never want them to be like, "I failed Darien." "You didn't fail Darien," you know, Darien's getting paid regardless. "You just need to work harder, okay, with me. And I'm going to work harder to be sure that the next time you take this test and you come see me, "Darien, I passed." "Good."

Lastly, as one director tells it, tutors have to motivate the students to let them know they have to ability to succeed and that the tutors are there to help:

… [Our job is] to inspire the kids and tell them that, you know, you can succeed. You do have to put some effort out there; but if you work with us, I can show you – because it's always better to show you than just tell you. I can show you, "Hey, this is how you can do this, this, and this to achieve excellence."

Social Impact of Tutoring and Mentoring

When discussing the social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students, three themes emerged from the interviews: decision making skills, responsibility, and social/cultural awareness.

Decision Making

One of the directors of the program feels that when it comes to decision-making, the students are not where they should be:

> …when it comes to making decisions, their decision-maker skills are subpar. And so the decision-making is what kind of leads into what you do socially and what you do academically, because you can choose to go to school and study and focus, because all these kids are capable. We don't deal with any kids that I don't think if they had the right – not the right, just physical-mental tools, but if they had the right people working with them, that they couldn't ace the test, become whatever they want to be.

One tutor described how the students' decision-making skills need to improve their future, not just their present situation:

> I would say [they should be] a mature young adult, that is able to make decisions not solely for themselves, or not solely for the "right now." A young person that is able to look at a situation, and look at how the decision they make for their situation will affect them now and in the future. I would say that's where a student should be when they graduate from high school. They're not all the way there yet. You know, they're getting there. The earlier we get them, the better

they are when they graduate, you know. I'm just being realistic. …They make

emotional decisions, and I would tell them, "You need to think before you act.

The more you think, the less time, or the less silly actions that will take place.**"**

Responsibility

Another director feels that the students need to learn more responsibility as a part

of their social development:

They should be able to handle themselves in situations to where their mentors

and those who are guiding them don't have to be there to tell them what's right or

wrong. By then, they should be able to discern what a good choice and a bad

choice is. …I would expect them to know that – not necessarily know how to be

an independent person per se, they can just go get a job and do it themselves, but

have an idea. This is a breakdown of knowing how to pay bills and how to

financially take care of themselves and savings and investing and things like that.

Our kids are not there when it comes to financial responsibility. Ask the

kids if they know about saving. "What? Yes, whatever. I want these new shoes."

And they're not there. They don't know about investing. Unfortunately, our kids

are not there, not all of them, at least. Majority of them are not. They learn the

hard way. I've talked to several kids, and, "Oh, man, I was so not prepared for

it," and I think, in the long run, it makes them better people. It makes them

stronger people, but they do struggle more than other kids that are prepared.

Cultural and Social Awareness

The last theme that arose from the interviews regarding what students are missing socially involved cultural and social awareness. According to one tutor, students need to learn to be more receptive to those who may be different:

> Well, I think they need to have a world view, an accepting world view; be aware that not everybody is just like them; and because somebody is not just like them, that doesn't mean that person is wrong or that person is different so we shun them. And also, again, like I said, a respect and higher maturity level than – just a control of self and of mind and not just doing whatever you want to do because it's fun.

As told by a director, the world of the students needs to encompass more that what's locally around them:

> I would expect them to know what a newspaper is and read it every once in a while or logging onto a news website and read. I would expect them to know a little bit what's going on not only in their local world, but in their state, in the world, in the country, what other countries go by, not only third-world countries, but other successful countries. …They don't know about what's going on in the world. I mean, it's as simple as just going on Yahoo! and just seeing their little things that they have and just reading on, and they don't.

> They're more distracted with Facebook and MySpace and *Jersey Shore* and all these crazy shows that reality TV is – I know, in our time, reality TV wasn't something – I mean, we watched cartoons, but it wasn't reality TV. It was

TV shows, and now we have reality TV, and we have these bad role models for

kids that, "Oh, you just gotta have money, and you gotta party and have a good

time," and that's what they think adulthood is. And so, I know they know the

reality of this is hard, and you see – I see my parents struggling, and we gotta pay

bills, but then they get sucked into the fantasy world of our movies and our TV

shows that they now portray things as being easy, and it's not.

According to another director, students just need to get a good grasp of what reality is:

I would say seeing reality. I say that because a lot of the students don't live in

reality. They think where they're located, that is reality, and it's not. That's only a

small section of the world, a very small section of the world. They can't see past

that. So if you can break through or at least shed a little light upon them where

they can see more of reality and can see, "Oh, I can obtain certain things," I think

that goes a long way.

Lastly, a part of helping students to be more socially and culturally aware is tapping into

their natural curiosities and blending those into tutoring:

…Once you expose a student to [new things], they want more of it. You have the

few that are naturally, "Oh, what about this? What about that? " and they ask

you a lot of questions, but then you have a few that you have to blend it in during

tutoring, and you have to be like, "Yeah, so, after we're done with this problem,

let's talk about this for two minutes, and then let's go back to more math

problems." And so, majority of them, once they're exposed to it or you just talk

to them about it, they are curious.

Summary

Academically and socially, the tutors and directors feel that the students are in need of several things in order to become successful. Overall, students are receptive to the help and advice they receive from the tutors, but it takes a while for the information they receive to 'sink in' and become practically useful to the students. The information and advice the students receive from the tutors help the students to be more prepared for their futures academically and socially by helping the students get a better grasp of their reality now and a better outlook on their futures. A major component of getting students to listen and respect the opinions and advice given to them by the tutors is the students interacting with the tutors not just as a tutor, but also as a mentor.

Third Research Question

The third research question is "How do tutors describe their perceptions of the advantage of being a tutor and a mentor to the students?" Three themes emerged from the interview questions asked for this question: relating to the students as a mentor, support network, and filling the void of parental influence.

Relating to the Students as a Mentor

When asked how is being a tutor and mentor is beneficial for the students, an overwhelming response from the participants mentioned relating to the students in order to gain their trust to teach them. According to one director, relationship building is one of the keys to improved student outcomes:

> …what we do now is just throughout tutoring, the whole time we have to actually be tutoring them in math; but we intersperse like conversations, whether they're

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short conversations, just to build relationships with the kids because that's what it takes. …It's all about the relationship you build with the student. That is the basis for all the great things or all the bad things that a kid does. If kids have bad relations with people that are supposed to be guiding them and mentoring them, then not too much good is going to come from it. If they have good strong relationships with good strong people that are going places in life, then it's all the better.

I mean I didn't go to Samuell, but I went to a [local] school. I grew up in Oak Cliff, and so on some levels, I can relate to the kids; and using that, you kind of show the kids that, yes, you can get out. Because like I said, they want to achieve the end result, but they don't see how to get there, and I think we're examples of how to get there.

One director noted that the closeness in age helped the tutors relate to the students:

Anybody can teach you the Pythagorean Theorem, but everything else is equally important and shouldn't be skimped on. And so our tutors, they're all college students or college educated. The majority of them are under, I'd say 23, which means that if they're recent college grads, they're also recent high school grads too. [Since] we come from similar generations, we're able to relate on a really basic level, listen to the same music. You know, I can get with Young Jeezy just like some of my students can. And you know, it's crazy and it's funny, but that is a great tool to use to bond with and better the kids, and so I think that our tutors can do the same thing. Similar interests being similar in age definitely helps in

conversations, because the kids know what you're talking about, you know what the kids are talking about, and use that to our advantage to go somewhere and actually open the kids' minds to something that they wouldn't normally get.

Another director mentioned the different type of relationship that the students had with her as opposed to a regular teacher:

They didn't just see me as a regular adult. Being closer to their age, they saw me as a big sister versus just another adult, too. But, usually once I opened up, I mean, I had them wrapped around my finger. They trusted me. They called me by my nickname… and they respected me more.

Another director concluded that caring is the best way to reach students:

Letting the kids know that you care, that, for sure, is the key, because kids – you're a stranger to them, and so you're just like any other adult who is trying to tell them what to do. So, with them, you have to build that relationship. You can't just be a strict tutor. You have to be a mentor.

…having more mentors, having – kids need to see people that look like them succeed, because it's hard to see – if you send a lot of stereotype Highland Park people down their way, the kids can't relate to them. They don't look like them. They don't have their life experiences, so, no, I can never make it to your level, because I'm not like you. So, we need more mentors.

As told by one tutor, relating to the students could be seeing themselves in the students:

Since I was the mean tutor, I got all the rowdy ones. I got the kids that everyone

[else] was like, "Put 'em out." I was like, "No, just send them to me," because I

was that rowdy kid; I was the bad kid, the smart mouth. So I know how to talk to

the rowdy kids. I know how to tell them, "Hey, you can stay here, or you can get

out." Every time a kid was acting up, they would send him to me, because they

knew the kid [would say], "Oh, I don't want to talk to Darien." "Well, you better

sit down."

So I got the rowdy kids. But for the most part, the kids really weren't that

bad. If you got them focused, and you got them doing something that they would

be interested in doing, or something they needed to pass a class, or something

that they knew, "If I don't get this down I'm going to be here for another year,"

they were on it.

As told by another tutor, relating to the students helps the students want to grow up to be

like the tutors:

I think because again the way our program is designed, we use college students

and young professionals and again a lot of our tutors aren't too many years

removed from the seats that these students are sitting in, so the tutors are able to

relate to our students a little bit better. They see a person that's been able to pass

the TAKS test and pass the SAT or ACT to get into college. So we like to use our

tutors and young professionals as academic billboards for success. So they're able

to see somebody that not only looks like them but is close to age with them and is

successful. Yeah, it's able to inspire them a little bit.

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Another tutor echoed the concept of students being inspired by and wanting to be like the tutors:

I don't want to say it was just me that helped the students see that people from where they're from can get out of the area, but I will say that the students seeing young people of color – not necessarily just black people, but young people of color – that came from low-income areas make it to college, I will say that that did help them, because they saw hope, they saw someone that grew up like they grew up, you know, where their mother is struggling with multiple children and can't find a job, that made it out. So they see that and it's like, well, if they can do it, I can do it. That's why I try to let them know: If I can do it, you can. So I think it did help them.

According to one director, being relatable with the student makes students more likely to follow advice and suggestions:

I guess I'll put it this way. Who would you rather listen to, somebody who's your friend who you like, or somebody who'll just come in and say, "This is what you do, A, B, and C. These are the steps." If you say, "These are the steps," and you also have a relationship with them because you mentor and you talk to them about other information, that's the person they want to lean towards because they like you. If I like you, then I'll listen to you. Some of these kids will say, "I don't like my teacher," for whatever reason. They've got weird reasons, they do. But whatever reason, they don't want to listen because I don't like you. But when they do like you, oh man, that's where that comes – it's so important.

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For the tutors who work with the students, being relatable to the students can be very effective:

My first day of tutoring, I just tried to be really nice to the kids and try and get to know them before I started teaching them math and trying to get them to pay attention. That seemed to help because when I acted interested in the songs they liked or their after-school activities and got them to talk with me, then they seemed more willing to listen to me when I would try and get them to do things, and they seemed more attentive to the actual tutoring. That also helped build relationships with them, so when I saw them in the pizza line, we could joke with each other and not just have a tutoring-only relationship, which was really cool. So, I guess I just tried to approach it like I want to be on the same level as these kids and get to know them before I try and be like their teacher and get them to do things.

…because those kids are in high school, and they're crazy, so they're not going to listen to who they don't want to listen to. But I found that if I could make some kind of a connection – whether it was, hey, we like the same band, or, hey, I have those same shoes, or your earrings are really cute – it seemed like they would warm up to me faster and warm up to me at all, and then listen to me. It made tutoring easier because high school kids are crazy, and sometimes I can't handle crazy. But it just made it better.

This same tutor mentioned that mentoring can assist the students with the peer pressure and doing the right thing:

I think, in high school, mentoring in a positive way is very important for them to see – you know, not all those kids are doing the right thing all the time, and if they get in the wrong crowd, then they need somebody to show them that you can still be successful and you don't have to be doing these wrong things just because everybody around you is. I remember being in high school and all that peer pressure and stress of just trying to fit in. You just want to fit in, especially at that age, and that's why I think it's so important to affect them in the middle of that, not after.

As told by another director for the program, the tutors' general interest in the students helps them to open up about themselves and their futures:

… [The students] get a chance to interact with these people and they can show you, kind of give you a direction of, "Hey, you can do it. I was in your same shoes." Or, "Hey, I didn't come from the same shoes; but if you do a certain track, I can show you how this can be done." …by finding out about them and showing a genuine interest in the student, that draws a lot of students to you. You laugh with them, you talk to them about real stuff, real things that's going on in their lives. You show them different outcomes or things you did… by developing a relationship with the students from a certain level though. It doesn't go past a certain level. But [we have to] show a genuine interest in the students. They all want to be heard; which some of the kids though can't be heard, you know, at home. They all want to talk. So as soon as you get them talking, you know, *[Snaps fingers]* got 'em.

For one tutor, getting to know the students and their interests helped the tutors connect their interests back into their education:

> …you kind of look at yourself as that big brother if you will or big brother or big sister because the students are so young and they tend to kind of like just flock to you just because you're bigger then them, that's kind of how I saw it. When you develop the relationship with the kids, it becomes more so, I guess, personal in a sense to where like they kind of share what's going on in their life, sports, classroom activities that they're doing.

> So with that mentoring aspect you're allowed to talk a little bit more about what's going on in their life and you kind of link that back into the education aspect. Once they tell you what their goals and aspirations are you can tie that back into their educational realm, like if you want to reach these goals this is how the education will help you achieve that goal.

Support Network

According to one director, the support that the tutors give the students substitutes and supplements the support that they are and/or maybe lacking elsewhere in their lives:

> …they don't have that home-base that I think some of us had and some of us didn't have. Some of us were lucky enough to survive and do good without; but I see a lot of our students don't have that. …they don't have just that home-base, that identity.

As told by one tutor, tutors show their support to the students by being a consistent presence in the students' lives:

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We try to make sure that we're consistent with the students. We are able to keep a tutor there and the student is able to interact and respond to them, we generally like to keep them well grounded in the campus. We don't want to try to move [the tutor] off to somewhere else. You have to reinvent the wheel again, because those students are attracted to that person or that group of people.

Another director mentioned that support from the tutors to the students can come in many forms:

I mean, just because we cover so many different bases, I think that we can reach more students, because we're not just a tutoring [program]. We try to mentor. We try to be friends. We go to pep rallies. We go to football games. The kids see us outside of the tutoring classroom, and so we provide different things that they may need or lack somewhere else.

Learning can be fun, but at the same time, if they need to talk to someone that they don't feel comfortable with, we're also there. We've had a few kids who don't have anything to eat at home, and so sometimes they've come to us just because they're hungry …so I think on just different levels we can just be there, be a shoulder to cry on for the students. We're there to teach them. We're there to support them, feed them.

One tutor suggested other forms of support, both inside and outside of school, just to make the students feel as if they were special and cared for:

Well, we went to their graduations; that was one thing we did. When they did graduate from high school, we told them: "If you need anything, contact us." We

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would help them out, be it a reference letter, or help with school work in college. While they were still in school we would do random pop-ups to where we would just go up there, and if the after school was over with, we would just go up there and see the students, check on them, talk to their teachers, see if they needed help with anything that we could help them with really quick."

But anything we could do, that was okay in the eyes of the teachers and the staff at the school, we did. …we would just surprise them, try to make them feel like somebody thinks you're special, you know, just pop in and be like, "Hey, here's my favorite pen, you can have it." You know, just little stuff, you know, but it would make the students smile, and just make them happy, like, "Oh, Darien's here, what's gonna happen today?"

The students loved it, because they felt like: "Here's this young college student that's taking time out of his life to check on me and be sure I'm okay." Because a lot of the students, "Oh, how much do you get paid? How much do you get paid?" I would tell them like my paycheck doesn't matter… it wasn't about the money, it was about helping them out, because what's the point of me making all this money if there are people that need help, and I can't help them.

One tutor described how students wouldn't 'ask' for a mentor, but their behavior silently implies that they in fact need a mentor:

A lot of them I could tell they had a supporting family, just by the way that they were composed and the way that – you know, you can tell when somebody has a higher confidence level. But then there are some kids who definitely – they just

seemed lost and like they were just looking for somebody to look up to. They wouldn't tell you, "Hey, I need a role model." But you can just tell that they do by the way that they interact with you.

One tutor described an occurrence when the tutoring had to stop and the counseling had to start:

So some days we did have to have those one-on-one conversations for the entire tutoring session… I remember one young lady, every day she would come in just mad every day – just mad every day, and nobody wanted to work with her. So they would sit her with me, because she was just mad. If you said one wrong word to her, she would snap, get up, yell. So one day she snapped, and I got right in her face. I said, "Come with me, because we're not doing this anymore." And we just talked for the entire tutoring session, and I just found out everything else happening at home, the way people were treating her at school.

So eventually we got her help. We got her to put away her pride and go talk to the school counselor. By the end of the year she was fine; she was smiling, like legitimately smiling – not smiling when she was beating somebody up. But she was like happy. She thanked us for making her put away her pride and just go talk to somebody about it. Because I told her, I was like, "You can come in here every day with your little stank attitude, and I can put you out every day. But what good is that going to do? You're just going to come here tomorrow, be mad again, you know, and I'm not going to fight you, because

you're bigger than me. So you're going to have to do something, because this ain't going to work, you know." And we just talked it up.

She would still come and talk to me, because she didn't trust anybody else – but she would still come and talk to me about things; some things I didn't necessarily want to hear, but being a mentor I knew I might not want to hear it, but if someone trusts me enough to say it, then I'll take it in, and take it for what it is, because a lot of these kids go through some things that if I went through them, personally, I probably would have gone crazy and be in someone's insane asylum. Because the things that they go through at home, at school, on the way home from school, peer pressure, some of the things are ridiculous. When I see some of these kids, I just hug 'em. Like, "I don't see how you deal with this every day. It's ridiculous."

So if a problem student ever wanted to talk to me: "Allison, come tend to my group, I have to go talk to Bianca. She's dealing with something today." Because I don't want these students to graduate from high school crazy. So not everyone needed me to become ghetto Dr. Phil, but some students did. …But I'm glad I did it, because I know if I was in that situation, I would want someone to care enough about me to listen to me and have unbiased advice.

Even when tutors had to counsel the students with their situations, they had to be cautious that their advice was actually helpful to the student:

That was another thing. It's one thing to listen to somebody and hear everything they say, and be like, "Oh, well, it's okay." You know, and just pat 'em on the

back and say, "Oh, well, you did everything" – no. We would give them unbiased advice, or things that they knew they needed to do. I'm not going to sit and listen to you tell me about all these crazy things that are going on in your life, and say, "Oh, well, you're not doing anything to deserve things like that." No, if you're going around beating up people, and then people are coming back and getting you, maybe you should stop beating up people. Then maybe they'll leave you alone.

Lastly, when students' situations are beyond the tutors' and the program's reach, they do not hesitate to involve outside authorities:

We talk about anything at any time, and then we'll address it, and if we need to take it to the school level or the school needs to get involved, which we've done that before. We've even gotten CPS involved, that's what we do. We do let the kids know, and I tell the tutors to let the kids know, "What you're about to tell me, you need to make sure that what you're telling me is something that I can tell someone else, like someone like a police officer or something like that." And there's been times where a few kids won't say anything, completely understand.

We always encourage our coordinators and directors to make contacts with the counselors and go try to get resources from there and just say, "Hey, …we work with the kids after school, and I know you guys are not here, but is there anything that we can do better if something happens or do you guys have a contact list of organizations that can help the kids?" We also try to get resources from the school so we can be prepared to give the student an answer right there

and then instead of trying to find the answer later on and then sometimes you end

up losing that child and not seeing them, or they transfer or they drop out.

Fill Void of Parental Influence

A majority of participants interviewed for this project mentioned that tutors often

fill the void of parental influence due to parent disinterest or parent unavailability. One

tutor commented that even with the limited time they spend with the students, the tutor

still try to lead the kids in the right direction and hope that it gets reinforced in the home:

We're only allowed to work with these students two hours out of the day and

again the students can come and go as they please, so in order to change their

mind set it will have to be reinforced at the home. That's where everything is

starting. At the home, a lot of times you're a product of your environment. So if

the parents are allowing that student to kind of go about their ways, that's

ultimately who is responsible for it. What's the saying, you can lead a horse to

water, but you can't make them drink? They have to buy into it themselves. We

try. We definitely do. We do have a few students that they'll -- where they turn

that switch on and go about the right path. But then there's some that you just

have to let them go down that path and they're going to get their bumps and

bruises. At some point eventually see the light or they won't see the light.

To one director, parents need to have more of a stronger impact in their children's lives:

And then we have some kids that their parents haven't really put that into them

that you need to do better or you want to get out of this place, and you know, pull

yourself out as well as your family and friends, and so they don't necessarily see

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the importance. …But a lot of the blame needs to go to parents, and I feel like the majority of our students, their parents aren't in their lives nearly as much as they should be. They're not nearly as strong an influence on these kids' lives as they should be.

…I'm not a parent, so I can't really – you know, I don't want to make any real serious judgment calls, but I just know the parents haven't taught the kids what I think the kids should know being an educator myself. And it's like I should not have to teach you some of these basic things that I'm teaching you. I'm really supposed to come in here and teach you math; and I have no problem doing extra, but I'm going to notice that somebody else has been slacking off in your life if I have to do this.

…But for a lot of these kids, I feel like their parents have let them down yet the blame is going on the public school system, and it's basic things like manners, respect; things that you need to know because you can't go out and get in a fight every day with every person that walks up to you once you're grown.

Another director expressed that parents need to be more of a parent when it comes to making the students take interest in their education:

…when I've gone to parent conferences, you see parents that are like, "Well, they don't wanna come to school. What do you want me to do?" And in my mind, I'm like, "You're the parent. How do you – no. You are the parent. You're the adult. Put your foot down."

Whether parents are unavailable due to lack of interest or lack of availability, the students still miss out on an important adult influence, and that's where the tutors step in:

> And a lot of our kids… are from low-income [areas], and so they live in low-income homes, and they don't have that parental influence. Their parents work two jobs. In some of the cases, you have parents that are just not interested, but majority of them are, and they have other responsibilities. They have other siblings. Parents have two jobs, so the kids have to pick the slack up for the parenting. In some cases, our kids are the parents, too, at the house. But, yeah, that's what happens while working with the demographics that we [work with], you see that more at the high school level.
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> …It has to be a partnership between the school and the parents. As time goes by, I've noticed that education is put more as a burden on the schools than it is on the parents, and the parents drop off their kids, and they expect the school to do what they have to do, and then we'll just pick them up after school. …Parents are not around as much. You have a lot of – and again, you have the good parents that work two jobs. They have no other choice, but then you have a lot of like single-parent homes where because of divorce and/or crimes and one parent is not available, and so you have one parent trying to do both roles, and so you need the help. You need the family support. You need someone to come in and help out the parent or their family that may not have that experience of college or minimum two-year college or even trade school. …We just need

people that are willing to give time to the kids and set that example there, mentors that look like the kids and just fill in the gap for some of the physical family members that are not there.

Another director mentioned the lack of parental involvement in their students' education:

A lot of students do come from single-family homes. [We] try to call the parents and tell them that so-and-so has not been coming to tutoring. We are located here at these times. And even some of the parents are like, "Okay, so," or, "I'll tell them," and they never get the message. So that just shows that the interest in their education is not even at home.

So if it's not at home, a lot of students figure – it's almost like this. If your parents care and they force you to do it, you better do it because you're forced to do it. If they don't force you to do it, why should I do it? Even at home I don't have to do it. So it's like everything is on the kid and how could a kid know unless they just have a certain drive or more like a God-given drive that says, "Go do this," and will do it.

One tutor mentioned how parents should be able to help their students, even if they don't know what the student is doing:

I think the biggest part is that it all starts at the home. Even if a parent isn't – if they're not knowledgeable of the subject matter that the student is working with math or whatever just making sure that student is getting the reps. Because a lot of the stuff they're working on like reading math it's all repetition. You get better at your craft the more you practice it. So when they go home they need to still

crack open a book, read for 30 minutes or work on some problems for 30

minutes. That's definitely what helped me out a lot when I was their age.

For one director, being a mentor and a tutor means giving out tough love too:

You have to be a friend, as well as their tutor, as well as sometimes you have to

be – you have to act as their parent sometimes, because they don't get that

guidance from home. And so, if the kids know that you're genuine with them and

you care about them, that's usually all it takes for them to start respecting you

and doing that.

For one tutor, filling in that parental void includes performing actions that the

students may not like:

I remember one day, oh, my goodness, we pulled up to tutoring, and there were a

good 50 students outside – just outside, walking. They were going to fight,

because they knew if they fought on school property they'd get a ticket. Because

they knew, if we fight on school property, that's a $500 fine to our parents –

everyone's that present. So they would walk off campus to fight.

So, me and my ignorant self pulled up to the crowd and started picking

out people: "Jose. Kim. Michael. Come on, all you – come on." I just picked out

my students. "I'm not about to let you do this. Nope." So I would just pick out

my students. "Nah, nope. I see you hiding behind her. Yeah, come on. Oh, no,

move – come on." I would make my students come back, because I don't want

them in that. And they get embarrassed, and they're like, "You can't be

embarrassing me like that, Darien." "You don't know what they're fighting for. You don't know what they got to fight with or who else is coming to the fight." Lastly, one director summed up filling in the parental void with the importance of mentor-student relationships:

> I think the relationship between students and parents, child and parent should be stronger. But I think we do a good job at helping out and picking up some of the slack. Even if it's just a very small percent portion of the slack that is, you know, mentor-student relationships; I think we do a good job. And I think that the key is building that relationship and using it to better the kids.

Summary

The last research question delved into the added benefits that the students participating in the after-school program receive from the workers who are both a tutor and a mentor. Relating to the students as a mentor helps to strengthen bonds between the students and the tutors. When this relationship is strong, the students are more apt to be more receptive to the advice and guidance that the tutors offer them. Being both a tutor and a mentor also helps to expand the support network for the student. Not only do they have someone to hold them accountable for their academic studies, but also their social development. The students also had the tutors for support if they were dealing with situations that necessitated discussing it with a responsible adult. Lastly, having a tutor who also has a mentor could help fill the void of parental influence. If parents are unavailable or inaccessible to address situations that occur in the students' lives, the

tutors and mentors are one source of support that can help substitute the absence or unavailability of the parent.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the findings for the purpose of the research and the three research questions. Overall, the tutors felt that the students seemed to benefit from the instruction and assistance that the tutors provided to the students. The students asked questions more, they asked for advice, and they were receptive to the advice that the tutors gave to them. According to the tutors, the students seemed to be pleased with attending the program, not only because of the learning tools and incentives that they received from consistent attendance of the program, but also because of the environment that the program provided.

For the first research question, three themes emerged: environment, guidance and preparation for the future. The environment of the program provided a safe, casual, and educational environment that is different from a classroom but still conducive to learning. The guidance that the students received helped them focus their priorities and manage their time, resources and energy wisely. The tutors also prepared the students for the future by helping them to know the difference between what they see portrayed by the media versus reality.

Three themes emerged from each portion of the second research question. The first section of the research question involved the academic impacts of tutoring and mentoring, and the three themes that emerged from this question were receiving content refreshers and repetition, having a positive attitude towards education, and increasing

confidence in themselves and their knowledge. If students possessed these three qualities, they could possibly improve their academic performance, improve their study habits, and place more value into their education and their futures. Socially, the tutors felt that that the students could benefit from improved decision making skills, increased responsibility and social/cultural awareness. Being responsible adolescents who are able to make decisions on their own and who are socially and culturally aware of the world around them could prepare them to live independently when they enter adulthood.

Lastly, the third research question for this research project discovered the perceived advantages and benefits of being a both a tutor and a mentor to the students. The three themes that emerged from this research question included relating to the students as a mentor, providing an expanded support network and filling the void of parental influence. Building relationships with the students provided a positive role model to inspire the students to better themselves. These mentor-student relationships provided the students with an additional person who is there to support them throughout their high school and adolescent years. These relationships could also assist in areas where students may not have anyone to reach out to in the event that they endure a troubling situation. Lastly, these mentor-student relationships could help fill any parental voids that may be present due to preoccupied parents or uninvolved parents.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic study was to examine the perceived impact that tutoring and mentoring from tutors who work for a community-based Supplemental Educational Service after-school program in a large urban district in Texas has on the academic and social development of students attending an urban secondary school.

Relation to Theoretical Framework

Epstein (1992) theorized that the communities in which students reside are the main contexts where students learn. Multiple spheres of influence within the community—parents, families, schools and community organizations—can influence a student's direction in life and their academic performance. It is the connections between these different spheres of influence that strengthen the potential positive impact that students can receive. In order for these connections to be effective, the spheres of influence have to have mutual goals when it pertains to the success of the students. While the main spheres in Epstein's research include families, schools and community organizations, this research only delves into the impact of one of these spheres: the community. Through using Epstein's framework, the research questions and interview profile sought to explore the motivations and methods utilized by the tutors in this after-school program to help the students academically and socially.

Research Questions

       This research project sought to study the perceived academic and social impact that the tutors have on urban secondary students. Research questions for this research project included: (1) How do tutors describe their methods of support?; (2) How do tutors describe their perceptions about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?; and (3) How do tutors describe their perceptions of the advantage of being a tutor and a mentor to the students?

Research Population

       There were six participants in this study: the regional director, who oversees all of the programs that take place on middle school and high school campuses in this large urban area; the area coordinator, who oversees several campus programs in a smaller geographical area within the large urban area; the campus director, who directly oversees the tutors at one particular campus; and the tutors that work for the community-based after-school program on one particular campus.

Interview Profile

       The interview profile consisted of seven open-ended, semi-structured questions and was used with the purpose of answering the central research question and the three sub-research questions. These questions were designed to be open-ended to allow the research participants to fully share their responses in a detailed way. The researcher also asked questions that arose from their responses during the interviews. The shortest interview was 38 minutes long; the longest interview was 76 minutes long.

Discussion of Results

This study provided a detailed description about the culture and success of a community-based after-school program that supports urban secondary students academically and socially. Epstein's (1992) theory provided the structure of inquiry into the different methods that one particular sphere of influence, the tutors, utilize when working with their students. Although one sphere can have a significant impact on the students, it cannot do all the tasks required to raise, educate, and socially develop urban secondary students. This research project only viewed one of the various spheres that Epstein theorized about, thus it provided only a basic understanding of how the different spheres interact and affect each other.

Woven into the discussion of each research question were a specific set of themes that emerged from the research participants' responses during their interviews. To answer the research questions for this project, the researcher utilized various semi-structured questions from the interview profile as well as questions that arose throughout the interviews to gain an understanding of the tutors' perceptions of how they benefited students academically and socially.

Overall Research Findings

The central purpose for this research project was to understand the perceived academic and social impact that tutors have on urban secondary students. A general consensus among both the directors and the tutors is that the combination of both academic and social support and development was generally beneficial for the students. The social support from the tutors to the students—showing a genuine interest in the

student as an individual and in their life—positively influenced the students' academic ability. The social development process cannot be not completed overnight- it is a continuous process that happens over time. Being that it takes time, it also takes dedication from the tutors and others who work with the students, and continuous attendance from the students in the program. Likte (2009) highlighted the importance of students utilizing more effective ways in which secondary students spend their time after school, being that they spend more time out of school than inside of school. Also, Xu (2005) postulated that urban students want to have a sense of satisfaction, enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation, and if these needs are met, there is a higher possibility that they will succeed in school. Through attending this program, students had a positive and constructive way to spend time after school that was academically and socially beneficial to them.

First Research Question

The first research question for this project was, "How do tutors describe their methods of support?" Three themes emerged from the interview questions asked for this question: environment, guidance, and preparation for the future. The program provided a safe, welcoming and positive environment that interested the students and kept them coming. A majority of the participants mentioned that students who come to and participate in the program didn't want to leave. It was the blend of a casual, fun atmosphere combined with tangible accountability and instruction that made the environment likeable to the students.

In today's overcrowded classrooms, it is hard for teachers to give each student specialized, individual attention to their academic and social needs. The small, intimate student-to-tutor ratios within this program allowed for tutors to genuinely get to know their students while showing students they cared about them and their education. According to Sanders and Harvey (2002), low-income and students of color should be educated in an environment that is challenging, responsive to their learning and emotional needs and supportive to their learning. This after school program addressed the three aspects of an educational environment that Sanders and Harvey researched.

As it related to guidance, tutors and directors could tell that many of the students needed direction, although students didn't necessarily ask for it. Students needed assistance to see what their life goals are and how they could get there. In order for tutors to appropriately guide the students, the students had to trust the tutors. Students didn't want to be led by anyone they did not trust. This referred back to the genuine aspect of the tutors working for the program. According to Croninger and Lee (2001), educators provide guidance and encouragement to their students in addition to subject area they instruct. Guidance and encouragement are two key factors to prepare students for academic and social success.

For some students, there's college after high school. For many other students, there's the real world. A common consensus among the tutors and directors was that many of the students were not prepared and/or ready for their futures in the real world. They were not prepared for the increased responsibilities, namely financial, that occur after high school. How to make money, how to budget money, and how to spend money

wisely were some of the lessons that the tutors and directors felt the students needed to learn before leaving high school. According to Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue and McLaughlin (2008), secondary students need to obtain knowledge about job-seeking skills, resume building, and any other skills outside of the official school curriculum that can assist them in their future endeavors. When schools are pre-occupied with preparing for standardized assessments and core curricula, an outside learning environment can still provide these crucial life skills.

Second Research Question

The second research question for this project was: "How do tutors describe their perceptions about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?" When the tutors were asked for their perceptions on the academic impact of tutoring and mentoring, three themes emerged from the interviews: students needed more content refreshers/repetition, a more positive attitude towards education, and an increased confidence in themselves and their academic ability. Being that the material used in the program is closely aligned with both what students did in the classroom and the TAKS test, this program allowed students to refresh and practice what they learned in class through tutoring.

Also, if students did not understand the lesson in the first time, the tutors could re-teach or reinforce the lesson in different ways to adjust to the students' different learning styles. Pinar (2004) supports the notion that educators should be able to adjust their instructional methods in order to reach students who do not grasp the lesson as it is taught the first time. Also, Gordon, Morgan, Ponticell, and O'Malley (2004) asserted

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that the small ratio of tutoring allows room for students' individual differences to guide the instruction presented to them. Tutoring also fills in the gap in students' knowledge base if they come into a grade without mastering the content knowledge required from the previous grade. With the small student-to-tutor ratios, the students had more opportunities to ask and answer questions during tutoring sessions.

Participating in the after-school program studied in this research project encouraged the students to have a more positive attitude about education. When students saw the importance of what they learned in school and how what they did in school will help them to go where they want to go, they would be able to refine and prepare themselves for their futures. The tutors also helped students who didn't see education as a solution to their current issues by showing them various pathways that an education could take a student to. Mulvaney-Day, Rappaport, Alegria & Codianne (2006) postulated in their research that schools are a great place to assist students in their academic competence, classroom participation, and personal appraisal of themselves. While the tutors feel that the students lack in these academic areas, continuing to be in the school environment for extended hours of time can assist them in the skills mentioned by Mulvaney-Day et. al.

Lastly, the tutors helped the students build confidence in themselves and their academic ability. One of the tutors mentioned that the students would tell him they didn't think they were going to pass. Students believed they wouldn't pass based on the environment in which they grew up and the sheer lack of confidence in their own academic ability. When the tutors began to have more faith in the academic ability of the

students, the students began to have more faith in their own academic ability, and it showed in their academic performance. Moll and Ruiz (2002) researched the effects that positively engaging the students and relating to their culture can transform the students' sometimes negative attitudes toward education into a positive attitude.

Aside from the tutors' perceptions about the academic impact of tutoring and mentoring, the tutors felt that there were three areas within the students' social development could be impacted through tutoring and mentoring. The first social skill tutors felt the students needed to improve upon were their decision-making skills. The tutors asserted that the students made decisions for the short term but not the long term. The tutors of the program also mentioned that the students make emotional decisions instead of logical decisions. Students failed to realize that hasty decision-making may inflict serious consequences upon their lives.

The next ability that the tutors felt the students need to improve upon is their level of responsibility. The tutors felt that the students should know how to care for themselves without an adult being present and walking them through what is right and what is wrong and what they should and shouldn't do. They also needed to improve upon their fiscal responsibility, especially since many of the students had jobs to support their families. They needed to be responsible enough to know that the money they made must go towards necessities or their savings and not always towards what they want to buy right now.

Lastly, the tutors felt the students needed to improve upon their cultural and social awareness. Everyone in the world doesn't think or act the same, so students

should be able to recognize and acknowledge differences, even if they disagree, without passing bias or judgment on another's opinion. The tutors commented that many of the students were only familiar with the world around them, as for many of the students, what they saw is only what they knew. If they had imagined or thought about leaving their neighborhoods, they had no idea on how to do so. Also, their view of the world outside of their neighborhood wasn't always what they saw on TV shows. All it would take for a student to learn about current events around their city, state, country, and world is simply reading a newspaper or doing a web search. When the tutors sparked the students' interest in other things, students welcomed the exposure—the skill they needed was tapping into their natural curiosities and sparking new interests on their own.

Third Research Question

The third research question is, "How do tutors describe their perceptions of the advantage of being a tutor and a mentor to the students?" Three themes emerged from the interview questions asked for this question: relating to the students as a mentor, support network, and filling the void of parental influence.

The program rejoiced in the relationships that the tutors built with the students. When the students began to notice that the tutors cared about their well-being, they responded to the tutors better and obliged to the tutors' advice. The tutors would relate to the students with the things they have in common through music or other similar interests that they may share. It helped to start and continue conversations with the students during their tutoring sessions, and it also helped to steer the students interests

back into their education and explain how their education is important in conjunction with their interests.

The relatable and caring aspect helped the students become more comfortable during the tutoring sessions. The mentor-student relationships also helped when the students saw someone they could relate to succeeding in life; it encouraged them to want to succeed and they had an example of someone they could aspire to be like when they grow older. It also helped the tutors see where the students were coming from because at least two of the tutors used to be in the same position of the student that they were currently helping. The tutors knew what the consequences of the students' actions could be as they've been in their shoes before. The mentoring relationship between the tutors and the students was efficient because the students saw the tutors differently from how they viewed their regular classroom teachers. The students had a different level of trust and respect for the tutors, and this enabled the tutors to have the impact that they had with the students. According to Jenson and Fraser (2006), students arrive at school with external challenges that may occur within students' lives, between students, or within the environment where the students are. Having a mentor whom the student feels comfortable discussing and working out their issues and difficult situations can prove to be beneficial to the student academically and socially.

The role of a mentor/tutor also expanded the students' support network. In the event that the students didn't have a supportive network in their home lives, the tutors could step in, thereby providing the student with a supportive relationship. Anthony, Alter and Jenson (2009) posited that social support from non-family members can yield

positive outcomes in adolescents' lives. Support goes beyond simply having a conversation. The tutors were also present and visible at other school events, such as sporting events, pep rallies and graduations to show continual support to the students outside of the classroom and the after-school program. Aside from being present at school events and helpful during tutoring sessions, the tutors also stopped tutoring and began counseling when necessary—walking students through tough situations that they found themselves in.

According to Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue and McLaughlin (2008), if students' personal concerns and worries were addressed before they get to school, they would not have to address or be distracted by them during school. Being that some students had to deal with issues that carried over into school, the tutors were an extra resource and go-to person to guide them through their issues. As Gager and Elias (1997) studied, students need programming from schools and other institutions to help manage the stressors that may affect them. Being that the students were comfortable with the tutors, they felt as if they could tell the tutors things in confidence; however, if the tutors needed to get outside resources and authorities involved, they would. By showing the students that they wanted to be there and they were not present because they were paid to be, the tutors solidified themselves in the students' support networks.

Lastly, the tutor/mentor relationship helped fill the void of parental influence. For some of the students, the parents weren't as influential in the lives of their children as they should have been. Parents should be the individuals who teach their children the majority of their social development skills. When students didn't learn the basic skills of

manners and respect at home, they either had to be taught by someone else or they failed to learn these skills at all. The parents may not teach the students the skills they needed to know because they worked multiple jobs to support the family or had other obligations and/or consequences that kept them from spending more time with their children, which decreased the amount of time they had to teach their children the social skills they needed to know. Once students reached a certain age, some parents let the students govern themselves in addition to taking care of younger siblings or other familial responsibilities. Parents also need to assume more of a role in the parenting of their children. The school cannot do all of the parenting and teaching for the students—it needs to occur in the home as well. Learning must not stop when the students get home. They should continue to practice what they have learned throughout the school day at home to help retain their new knowledge.

If parents or relatives of students don't have advanced secondary experience or further education after completing secondary school, they can still send the students to programs that will give the students exposure to collegiate life and academics. Students may not seek this knowledge or experience on their own, so the parent should encourage them to seek to do better for themselves. When the child and the parent become complacent with the school doing the bare minimum just to get by, it may be difficult for another adult to come in and tell the student what to do.

Lastly, the tutors filled the parental void by keeping them from engaging in risky behavior. When students knowingly became involved in risky activities, someone had to keep them from engaging in bad behavior. Sometimes when enforcing the rules and

preventing the students from participating in detrimental behaviors and activities, the

adult with them at the time may have to use extreme measures, even embarrassing the

students if need be, to prevent them from doing the wrong thing.

Recommendations for Practice

While all after-school programs have their own set format of what they choose to

provide for the students they serve, this after-school program can serve as another model

that works for students. The findings from this research project only scratch the surface

of the tutors' perspectives of what they think about the students' needs and how to

address them. The tutors employed by this program shared their approaches and

strategies for working with the urban secondary youth they engage and influence. Based

upon the input and comments of the directors and tutors of this program, there are

several recommendations for practice for after-school programs that service urban

secondary students: get to know the students personally, know what the students needs

are, and be an example of what the students are expected to be.

Recommendation One: Get to Know the Students Academically and Personally

As indicated through this study, the students responded to and interacted with the

tutors better when the tutors showed a genuine interest in the students' lives and

interests. Attempting to establish a bond through similarities such as music, sports and

current events opens up pathways to extended communication. Through opening lines of

communication, the students that attend this program may feel more comfortable sharing

their thoughts and feelings with the tutors. Teenagers may be wary of new people

coming into their lives, and talking about neutral subjects helps to build familiarity with

the tutors and other adult workers of after-school programs. Also, in instances where students may not see the connection between school and their future plans, knowing the students personal goals and aspirations helps students understand how they can apply what they are learning in school to their future endeavors.

Recommendation Two: Know the Students' Needs

It is important that researchers, educators, and teachers understand urban students' needs and work to address them to the best of their ability. To make a change in the students' academic achievement and social development, educators, parents and community leaders must start at the root of the problems that may be within or around the student. Many of the issues that students face have nothing to do with academics; however, they evolve into non-academic barriers to learning which can impede upon their academic progress (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone & Kwiatkoski, 2008). Without dealing with the problems or insecurities within or the external stimuli around students first, many of the efforts that schools, families, and communities attempt to make may not have as significant of an impact within the student if their individual needs are not met.

Students also need clarity in what they're taught before they fully understand it, and with today's larger classroom sizes, students may not have the opportunity in class to ask their teacher questions. Being that this after-school program utilizes a small student-to-tutor ratio, it gives the students more opportunities to ask questions of the tutors during tutoring sessions that they may not have asked in their regular class. Employing small student-to-tutor ratios is an effective method because it makes students

feel more comfortable asking questions because they are asking in front of fewer students. When students are in large classrooms, they are sometimes afraid to ask questions in front of their peers because they fear being laughed at. Reducing the size of the learning group reduces the hesitation that students have to speak up.

Recommendation Three: Be an Example of What the Students are Expected to Be

Urban students should have the opportunity to interact with individuals who have achieved academically and could possibly inspire to them do the same. Not only can the tutors serve as an inspiration to the students, they can also assist with social development and addressing behavioral, emotional or personal issues (Greenberger, Chen & Beam, 1997). This is why the program utilizes college students screened through several interviews to ensure that they will be a good fit for the program and for the students at that particular campus. While it may be simplistic to tell a student what they should and should not do, it is more difficult to actually be a living example of what the students should be. By utilizing this method, the tutors can portray the same values within their own lives that they encourage the students to abide by. It could possibly make the tutors more credible role models in the eyes of the students and the students more likely to want to follow in the tutors' footsteps.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many ways in which communities and after-school programs can contribute to the academic and social well-being of urban students. Utilizing a holistic approach that infuses the resources of multiple community influences together will not only make great use of the students' time, but also serve the purpose to improve their

chances for success after their schooling is completed. Although this study only looks into one aspect of the potential impact that community-based after-school programs can provide, there are numerous potential projects that can stem from this research project to further explore and measure the potential benefits that after-school programs can provide. To add to the existing knowledge base, future research that could follow this research project include: a secondary data analysis of the academic performance of the students who participate in the after-school program, or a qualitative examination of student perspectives toward their education and social well-being and what impact (if any) this after-school program has toward their outlooks on education and their futures.

Recommendation One: Perform a secondary data analysis of the academic performance of the students participating in the after-school program studied in this research project.

       While merely attending this after-school program may be a great experience for the students, if one of its intentions is to provide academic support, it should be documented if this intention is actually coming to fruition. This potential research project could analyze the academic performance of the students participating in the after-school program by seeking to accomplish three objectives: (1) Investigating the relationship between tutoring hours and their final score on the standardized assessment; (2) Examining the relationship between the number of tutoring hours and change in assessment test score (if any); and (3) Assessing their standardized test scores before entering the program and after attending the program on a consistent basis for one full school year.

Recommendation Two: A qualitative examination of student perspectives toward their education and social well-being and what impact (if any) this after-school program has toward their outlooks on education and their futures.

Often, research focuses on what teachers and administrators can or should do to help students succeed. This potential research project could further delve into the potential benefits that this program provides by attempting to develop an understanding of the students' views toward education in general, their own education, their perceptions of themselves, and their needs as a student. This potential project could examine student perspectives by seeking to accomplish four questions: (1) How do students perceive themselves, their academic ability and their social well-being?; (2) Why do students think it is important to have a positive image of themselves?; (3) How do students think attending the after-school program will help them to grow as an individual and as a student?; and (4) What did the students get from the after-school program that they didn't receive from their school?

Limitations

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the findings from this research project cannot be applied to any other after-school program. Here are the more noteworthy limitations of this research project.

The tutors involved with the after-school program researched in this study may have worked for different campuses within the larger after-school program. Being that this after-school program operates on different campuses, differences in the campuses worked changes the repertoire that tutors build with the students. Instead of tutoring the

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same students every school year, the tutor may be assigned to a different school and must adjust to a completely new set of students at a new school, as opposed to another tutor who works at the same school with students returning to the program for the second year in a row.

Another limitation from this research study is that the tutors have all worked for different lengths of time for this particular after-school program. Working for different lengths of time influences the level of comfort that tutors may have while working with students. For instance, a tutor who has tutored for 3 years may have more experience than a first-time tutor, thus they may be able to adjust to students academic/social needs quicker and they may address any potential behavioral issues more efficiently. More experienced tutors may have more knowledge on the learning styles of secondary students as well as classroom management. Newer tutors could possibly be at a disadvantage because they are learning about the students for the first time as they work through the school year.

Conclusions

While some pressure may be placed on the teachers who are under-prepared and under-preparing students, the students must bear some responsibility in their own educational achievement. If what is provided for them is not enough, they can seek out additional academic sources to bring them up to a level where they feel productive and competitive with other students on their grade level. There are resources out there that are waiting to be used in urban communities. In most urban areas, many community centers, churches and non-profit organizations provide academic support for students

whose schools do not provide adequate educational materials and instruction. Children and parents of lower socioeconomic statuses that are subjected to inadequate schooling the most should not acknowledge defeat and disregard or remain unaware of the educational supplements that are available.

Additionally, social support is needed for students throughout the duration of their tenure through school. Social support could be in the form of developing skills to create, expand and articulate their opinions about their world and the world around them. Their world also needs to surpass their immediate surroundings, as in this increasingly globalized society, it is becoming more and more imperative that individuals are knowledgeable current events locally, nationally and internationally. Social support also teaches and encourages students to become more responsible, mature individuals who can properly interact with diverse groups of people in diverse situations.

After-school programs can fill in the gap for students who need (or want) extra assistance academically and socially beyond what they receive in school. The smaller, more intimate environments of after-school programs allow students to not get lost in the shuffle of the school day. They can have the opportunity to have an accountable adult in their corner to support them socially and assist them academically. Students who attend after-school programs also have the opportunity to be surrounded with other like-minded peers who seek to improve themselves socially and academically through the program as well.

As today's current urban students may contain the future leaders of urban areas, it is important that they are prepared for the future—which could include college, work,

and having families of their own. One group should not leave it up to the other groups to take the initiative to prepare urban students for their futures. It must be a cyclical and collaborative effort among all.

This study serves as an example that combined mentoring and tutoring can be beneficial to urban secondary students. The perceptions that the participants detailed are just a snippet of the many issues that face urban secondary students, and their suggestions and actions of how to address these issues could spark an improvement within the field of urban education. This research project confirms what the literature has already asserted—this research differs from the literature by placing real-life individuals enduring real-life issues with real-life workers who use real-life strategies to address these issues.

A change is evident in the students who regularly participated in this community-based after-school program. Not only was their improvement in their test scores, tutors reported that students had a better understanding of what is expected of them as a student their age. They also had a redeveloped outlook on life as they were exposed to new ideas and possibilities. For students who had internal issues that needed outside resources to address them, the workers of the program were able to get the students the help they needed to improve who they were mentally so they could focus and perform better academically and socially.

After-school programs, such as the one studied for this research project, are a necessity in urban areas. These programs provide a safe-haven for students to escape the harsh and potentially dangerous environment around them. These programs provide

caring and responsible adults who are only interested in improving the academic and social well being of the students. These programs could enhance the students' interests in education and other future endeavors. The impact may not be widespread, hence the need for communities to initiate and embrace the opportunity to build positive learning and mentoring environments for their students.

Summary

This ethnographic qualitative study explored the potential impact that academic and social development has on low income secondary students. The theoretical framework proposed that numerous influences have the potential to impact student success. The spheres of influence studied in this research project were the school and the community. The literature implied that external situations influenced current academic performance, self-perceptions, and future career choices.

Although it is true that all of the students are participants of the program and all of the tutors are employed by the program, the students are able to receive different things from the program and the tutors are able to provide different things and forms of support to the participants of the program. The small intimate setting of this program allows for tutors to discover and address what each student needs academically and socially, and it also allows for students to voice and receive what they need academically and socially.

The training process that the tutors go through serves to prepare the tutors for the situations and the commentary that they may encounter while working with the students. This training process also enables them to remain flexible while still delivering

curriculum without allowing distractions to disrupt the learning process. According to

the six participants interviewed in this study, the interactions with the tutors in the

program served as catalysts that promoted student academic success and social

development. While themes varied from environment to filling in parental void, the

underlying conclusion of the interview data in this research study is that students take

more of an interest in themselves and their academic ability when someone else takes a

genuine interest in them and their academic ability.

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Diagram of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence
Adapted from Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence

Parents & Family

Teachers
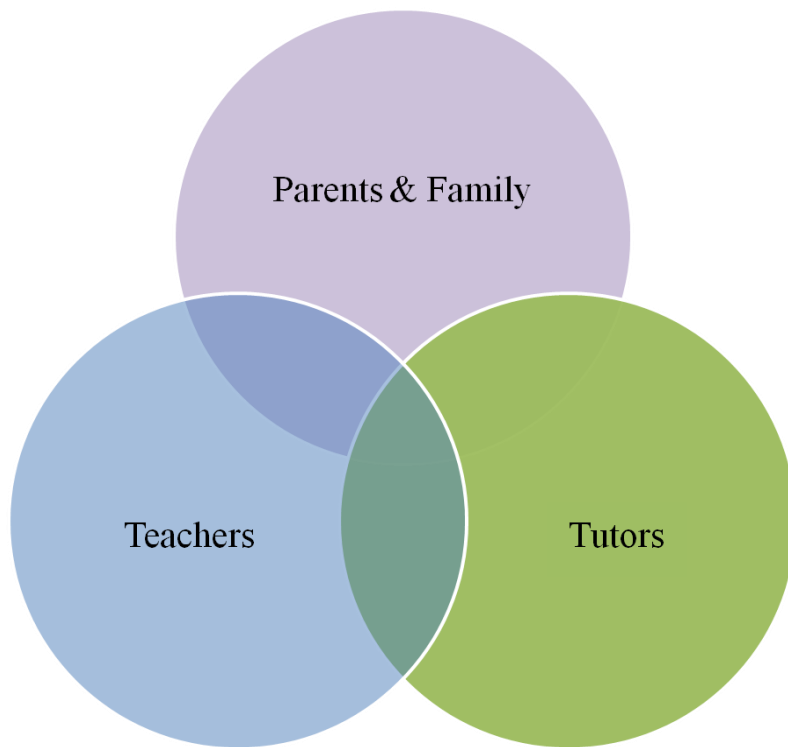
Tutors

APPENDIX B

Research Question and Interview Question Alignment

The central question for this research will be what is the perceived academic and social impact that the tutors have on urban secondary students?

Research Question	Interview Question
How do tutors describe their methods of support?	• *How do you support your assigned students throughout the school year?*
How do tutors describe their perceptions about the academic and social impact of tutoring and mentoring urban secondary students?	• *Describe the areas in which you think students need the most assistance.* • *What are the tools you think students need to be successful academically?* • *How does your position as a tutor/mentor supplement the academic learning that the students receive in school?* • *What do you think secondary students should be socially before they complete high school?*
How do tutors describe their perceptions of the advantages of being a tutor and a mentor to the students?	• *Why do you think mentoring students is important?* • *Tell me how you approach your position as a tutor who also serves as a mentor to students?*

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

The Perceived Impact that Tutors have on Urban Secondary Students Attending a
Community-Based After-School Program in the State of Texas

Introduction
The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as
to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this
study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the tutors working in
the Group Excellence supplemental tutoring after-school program. The purpose of this
study is to explore the perceptions of tutors working in an after-school program to
develop an understanding of the tutors' motivation for working with students, the
support that they provide to the students, and the needs they think the students have. You
were selected to be a possible participant because you work at W. W. Samuell High
School, the site of this study.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in individual
interviews, as well as observations at the program site. This study will last for a total of 4
weeks. You will first participate in an individual interview, which should last no longer
than an hour. The individual interviews will be audio recorded. Lastly, you will be
observed in your work setting.

What are the risks involved in this study?
The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily
encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, the results
from this study will support research that positive mentors in connection with academic
support outside of school can help students greatly in both their academic performance
and social development. It could also support the need for more programs such as this.

Do I have to participate?
No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw
at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University or
Group Excellence being affected.

Will I be compensated?
You will receive a gift card in the amount of $20 for your participation in this study. Disbursement will occur at the end of the study in June 2011. Choosing not to continue or complete the study will result in no compensation.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
This study is confidential, and the records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Jessica G. Long (Primary Investigator) and Dr. Chance W. Lewis will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and Jessica G. Long (Primary Investigator) and only Dr. Chance W. Lewis will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for three years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Jessica G. Long jglong@tamu.edu, or Dr. Chance W. Lewis at chance.lewis@tamu.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?
This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Signature
Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant: _____   Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____   Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Profile

I. General Tutor Perspectives

    a. Tell me how you approach your position as a tutor who also serves as a mentor to students?

    b. Describe the areas in which you think students need the most assistance.

II. Tutor Perspectives toward Educational Development

    a. What are the tools you think students need to be successful academically?

    b. How does your position as a tutor/mentor supplement the academic learning that the students receive in school?

III. Tutor Perspectives toward Social Development

    a. Why do you think mentoring students is important?

    b. How do you support your assigned students throughout the school year?

    c. What do you think secondary students should be socially before they complete high school?

APPENDIX E

Observational Profile

Date of Observation:
Duration of Observation:
Number of research participants present:
Description of Physical Setting:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Description of Events/Activities during Observation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflective Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F

IRB Approval

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

Human Subjects Protection Program

Institutional Review Board

DATE:	20-Jun-2011
MEMORANDUM	
TO:	LONG, JESSICA G 77843-4232
FROM:	Office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Board
SUBJECT:	Initial Review
Protocol Number:	2011-0076
Title:	The Perceived Impact that Tutors have on Urban Secondary Students Attending a Community-Based After-School Program in the State of Texas
Review Category:	Exempt from IRB Review

It has been determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and no further review is required. However, any amendment or modification to the protocol must be reported to the IRB and reviewed before being implemented to ensure the protocol still meets the criteria for exemption.

This determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:

(http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm)

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Provisions:

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.