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The Impact of a Saturday Enrichment Program With a University Partnership in an Urban Elementary School

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RUNNING HEAD: The Impact of a Saturday Enrichment Program

The Impact of A Saturday Enrichment Program With a University Partnership in an Urban Elementary School

BY

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Abstract

The Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP) was an idea conceived by the faculty at a large university in partnership with a surrounding school district that is characterized as urban. The idea of the SEP was to create a whole extra day of learning for students that was a departure from the regular routine of Monday through Friday class. The SEP was designed to be a more relaxed, hands-on, student driven program that followed a Project Based Learning (PBL) philosophy. The teachers were pre-service teachers (PSTs) from the university. This study sought to answer the research question; what are the perceptions of the participants (students, parents, administrators, university faculty, and pre-service teachers) regarding the impact of the SEP? The sub-questions that shaped the analysis were; what were the attitudes of learners toward learning? And how did learners participate in the SEP? Through a secondary analysis of case study research data previously collected by the researcher from 2005-2010, it was found that most participants considered the SEP a quality learning experience. This was shown through observations of regular attendance and participation, as well as, statements made in interviews. One key participant was of the opinion that the SEP could be more rigorous and structured, following the school district's pacing guide. This researcher concluded that the SEP had gone through curriculum changes over the five years of the study and had lessened the PBL focus, but was still a worthy activity for students on a Saturday morning as the program maintained strong student engagement and the learning prepared students to some degree for Monday through Friday curriculum. Recommendations included strengthening the PBL guidelines, inviting the current principal to have more input, and adding rigor to the activities and experiments without losing the enjoyment factor that the students had come to expect.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Context

"If there has ever been a time to improve schools, the time is now" (Scherer, 2010, p. 5). Policymakers, administrators, and teachers are calling for educators to be audacious, do something unique, and make change (Scherer, 2010). Reform must be made a priority. However, this is where the picture gets foggy. What can be done to create reform? If school administrators knew what to do, it would be done. Unfortunately, the problems are too wide spread and the answers are not deep enough to transform the institutions of education as a whole.

Introduction

Located in a mid-western city, the school district at the center of this study has the dynamics of a typical large, urban school district. In 2008, over 27,000 students were enrolled, making it the largest public district in the state (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], 2009). Recently, that number has declined as students transfer to charter or private schools or families move out of the city limits and enroll their children in surrounding school districts. In the 2008-2009 school year enrollment tapered by over 4,000 students when compared to the previous year (School Data Direct, 2007). The district has a proud history, but in recent years has met with many challenges. The chart below (Table 1) outlines the factors that contributed to the district's urban and at- risk status.

Table 1

Urban Descriptors

Descriptor	District Percentage	State Percentage
Attendance Rate	90.3	95.3
Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunches	68.7	43.7
Graduation Rate	45.7	85.0

(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009)

Urban sprawl and the migration of families to the surrounding suburbs had a tremendous impact on the area. The local newspaper (Hunn, 2010) reported the enrollment, for the 2009-2010 school year dropped to 26,000 pupils and left 74 school buildings with space for 15,000 more students. As with most urban districts poverty, violence, high drop out rates, and lower test scores are a constant concern. The demographics of the district are as follows (Table 2).

Table 2

School District Demographics

Ethnicity	Percentage in the District	State Percentage
White	13.7	76.1
Black	81.0	17.8
Hispanic	2.7	3.8
Asian	2.3	1.9
American Indian	.3	.4

(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009)

The school at the focus of this study is located in the city's central corridor. However, it is a magnet school that accepts students from all over the vast district through an application process. A magnet school is an institution that offers specialized courses or curriculum in a particular domain. In this case, the domain is international studies. Students learn about languages and cultures of a myriad of diverse countries by integrating the study of world languages into the elementary curriculum. The school offers five world languages: Chinese, French, German, Russian, and Spanish. Students begin world language studies in preschool with a rotation through each of the five languages. Beginning in third grade, students specialize in a language of their choice. Additionally, each classroom adopts a country of study to continue the international theme into the classroom. Teachers infuse the study of the adopted country into their standards-based curriculum.

Although the school did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2007-2008, its state standardized test scores were among the highest in the district. The school did earn AYP status in the 2008-2009 school year (DESE, 2009). Adequate Yearly Progress is a nationwide

accountability system legislated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make mandated gains on their state assessments (California Department of Education, 2010). According to The United States Department of Education (2010b), NCLB is legislation based on stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, proven educational methods, and more choices for parents. Table 3 (below) reflects the school's state test scores as reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2009).

Table 3

State Test Scores 2009

Grade Level	Percent Scoring Advanced/Proficient	Percent Scoring Basic/Below Basic
Third Grade	28.6	71.4
Fourth Grade	25.6	74.4
Fifth Grade	21.9	78.1

(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009)

The school's enrollment statistics are outlined in Table 4. The English Language Learner Rate is important to note because the school is a magnet school for international studies. The school draws from a diverse spectrum of cultures and traditions. Many students speak more than one language and come from families that speak at least one language other than English in the home.

Table 4

School Dynamics 2009

Descriptor	School Number/Percentage
Enrollment	414 students
Attendance Rate	94.7%
Students Qualifying For Free or Reduced Price Lunches	62.7%
English Language Lerner (ELL) Rate	27.0%

(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009)

The Study

The Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP) was an idea conceived by the faculty of a large university in the area. The university was looking for another option for the internship phase of its teacher education program. The internship is the practicum field experience before student teaching that requires classroom observations and interactions. Many of the university's pre-service teachers (PSTs) work full time jobs and struggle to attend required courses during regular

school hours. The option to complete a 120 hour, school-based, internship on a Saturday appealed to many of the university's students.

The elementary school that hosted the SEP sets high goals for achievement. Reform for this school has come in many forms. The large, urban district to which this school belongs has partnered with the university to bring about widespread reform. This partnership has developed a wide-range of programs. For this specific study, the focus will fall on the SEP that was developed in the fall semester of 2005. By teaming up with the large university, the school was able to offer to its students an additional full day of instruction.

The SEP offered students smaller class sizes, team-taught by PSTs, utilizing a hands-on approach. The basis of the program created an opportunity to demonstrate Project Based Learning (PBL). The SEP featured curriculum that was appropriate for each grade level and was derived from the state's Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). A GLE is a statement that defines what all students should know and be able to do at the end of a given grade level (Louisiana Department of Education, 2010). However, instruction was delivered in a more constructivist manner, in which students have more autonomy with their subject matter in an informal learning environment. The SEP was completely voluntary and was considered enrichment. This case study delves into the structure, components, and impact of the SEP. Using descriptive research, it will describe and evaluate the curriculum and projects, as well as share feedback from parents, students, administrators, and the university faculty in an effort to provide a rich description of the learning that took place and the attitudes that evolved as a result of this program.

Purpose

This study describes and evaluates an out-of-school program for education reform that was utilized in a large, urban district. The theoretical framework for the program is based on Project Based Learning (PBL), which is grounded in constructivist learning theory (Katz & Chard, 2000). The study also examines a public school and university partnership, a model of collaboration where both parties benefited. In such a partnership, university students benefited from first hand experience while the students in the public school received additional instruction. The study investigated the impact of the program on the school by offering perspectives on this educational reform initiative from those involved, including elementary students, their parents, pre-service teachers, administrators, and university faculty. Most importantly, it calls on educators to embrace reform. The most important thing we do is inspire children. Education should meet the students' needs first.

Research Question

This study sought to answer one two-part research question:

- What are the perceptions of the participants (students, parents, administrators, university faculty, and pre-service teachers) regarding the impact of the Saturday enrichment program?
    - A. What were the attitudes of learners toward learning?
    - B. How did learners participate in the Saturday Enrichment Program?

Significance

Urban education has historically been defined by low expectations, a controlled environment, and unimaginative curriculum (Adams & Adams, 2003). This program sought to change the status quo for urban education to see whether and how students' levels of excitement

for learning and achievement could change. In most cases, Saturday school is used as a consequence for sub-par attendance or discipline referrals. This study endeavored to reveal what can be accomplished if Saturday hours are used in a positive, creative curricular manner. Thus, this study presented a strategy to support student learning.

This study presented and evaluated a model that can be replicated by school districts. The SEP is a framework for creating quality, project-based programs that provide an alternative to the rigorous structure of Monday through Friday classroom instruction. With these ideas, policy makers, educational administrators, principals, university professors, and teachers can create similar programs. Once established, a SEP allows students to explore topics of interest in a more in-depth and creative manner. The students feel ownership of their learning and therefore find the motivation necessary for further success and achievement in school (Buck Institute for Education, 2002). Comprehension of concepts, development of problem solving skills, and student interest take precedence over knowledge of facts, learning skills in isolation, or a fixed curriculum (Newell, 2003). Students can learn actively, using what they know to explore, negotiate, interpret, and create (Buck Institute for Education, 2002).

In summary, this study, using descriptive research, evaluated the impact and effectiveness of a SEP in an urban setting as a strategy for school level reform and improvement.

Limitations/Delimitations, Assumptions, Definition of Terms

The study was carried out in one school, in the mid-western United States with support of the principal and in collaboration with university teacher education faculty. This study describes the only school in the district that was a SEP site; other schools were not included in the study. The students that participated in the research were currently enrolled at the school Monday through Friday and it was assumed that the sample selected is representative of the students who

attended the SEP. Further, the assumption was made that all interview responses were truthful and accurately reflected the impact that the SEP made in the lives of those involved. This study would be challenging to replicate, as the circumstances for the SEP are atypical.

Terms to be defined are:

AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress as outlined by the state's department of education. Adequate Yearly Progress is a statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make mandated gains on their state assessments (California Department of Education, 2010).

Failing – Not achieving adequate yearly progress.

Magnet School - An institution that offers specialized courses or curriculum in a particular domain.

Internship - The step in pre-service teachers' studies before student teaching that requires 120 hours of school-based classroom observations and interactions. At the university under study, the internship is the duration of one semester.

Partnership – The collaboration of a public school district and a university, used as a method for educational reform.

Pre-Service Teacher (PST) - A university student, in his or her internship semester, serving as a classroom teacher in the SEP.

Project Based Learning – A form of instruction that allows students to create their own learning opportunities and assessment while constructing their own knowledge and expertise in a curricular area (Katz & Chard, 2000).

Reform – Methods implemented by school administrators, teachers, and educational policy makers to improve student achievement.

Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP) – An out-of-school program conducted on school grounds, created with university collaboration, that featured an informal learning environment for grades K-5. PBL was delivered by pre-service teachers, in their internship semester, with a team teaching approach. The program was voluntary for elementary students.

Students – Children enrolled in the SEP, ages 6-11.

Urban School – A school "located within a greater urban metropolitan area" (Warshauer-Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p.324).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of the literature describing and pertaining to urban education in the United States today. The current state of urban education is a major portion of this literature review. Within the context of urban education, a working definition of the term *urban,* related statistics, testing, daily environment, and teacher retention and attrition are explored. All of the sub-sections falling under the first heading were decided as the literature was reviewed and because of the demographics of the district in which the study takes place. Locating the district within the context of urban education also helps to explain the large grant under which the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP) was conceived. A section that highlights successes in urban education follows. Overall school reform, as well as out of school reform is also introduced and literature in the areas of Project Based Learning (PBL) and other innovative programs are also analyzed in this chapter.

The Current State of Urban Education

Defining Urban

Defining *urban* as a concept is important because many schools now fall under the umbrella of this term for a variety of reasons or descriptors. An *urban* school is located within a greater metropolitan area and, in most cases; approximately 50% of its families' incomes meet the requirements to qualify for free or reduced priced lunch (Warshauer-Freedman & Appleman, 2009). It is critical to discuss the various connotations that the term *urban* brings to mind. Kincheloe, Hayes, Rose, and Anderson (2007) assert that in U.S. society, use of the term *urban* has become synonymous with poverty, nonwhite, violence, narcotics, an absence of traditional

family values, crumbling housing, and failing schools. In the classroom, teachers struggle with these and many other issues that impact student learning. Policy makers have long sought solutions to the problems facing America's urban schools (Bainbridgee, Lasley, & Sundre, 2003). Today's urban schools are faced with what may be considered a unique situation for which there is no historical precedent (Ravitch & Viteritti, 2000). Urban schools have unique factors that differentiate them from their suburban and rural counterparts, such as serving students with poor performance, inadequate school readiness, lack of parental involvement, poor resources, discipline issues, other language learners, and unhealthy living conditions (Sachs, 2004).

It is key to the study to identify the problems surrounding urban education and what is being done to correct the issues. Schools located in large metropolitan centers are a vital component of today's society. However, the reputation of urban education systems in our country can be considered bleak at best. Statistics can assert the need for reform. Urban schools educate about 40% of the country's lower income students and about 75% of the country's minority students (Adams & Adams, 2003). Additionally, 31% of U.S. elementary and secondary students go to school in 226 large urban districts (Kincheloe, et al., 2007). There are nearly 16,000 school districts in the United States and almost one-third of all students attend 1.5 percent of them (Furhman, 2002). It has been stated that urban schools act as a barometer that indicate the soundness of not only our entire educational system but also our society as a whole (Adams & Adams, 2003).

What constitutes an urban school? The answer is much broader than one might expect. Typically, use of the term *urban* brings to mind central cities. It can also be used as a code word for *poor* and *minority* (Lapp, Block, Cooper, Flood, Roser, & Tinajero, 2004). For example, in

the state of California, 28.2% of children living in poverty are African American and 24.8% are Hispanic, while only 8.1% are White (Kidsdata, 2010). In Missouri, 62% of Latino children and 60% of African American children live in families with low-income, but only 26% of White children live in families with low-income (Community Action Partnership, 2010). In light of this data, it can be gleaned that a large number of minority children are considered poor. The urban school at the center of this study serves minority children (see Table 2 for the school district demographics). Statistics show that the dynamics of some urban schools, for example, minority students and families with low-income, usually equal lower test scores (see Table 5). Lonigan and Shanahan (2006) state, "The National Assessment of Educational Progress reveals that 37 percent of U.S. fourth graders fail to achieve basic levels of reading achievement. The incidence of reading failure is even higher within low-income families, ethnic minority groups, and English-language learners" (p.1).

Table 5

Percentage of Third Grade Students in the State Scoring Proficient on the Communication Arts State Test 2009

Disaggregation	Percent scoring advanced/proficient
White	56.6
African American	29.7
Latino	37.7
Qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	36.9

(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009)

Anyon (2005) explains:

> Living in poverty is to experience daily crises of food, a place to live, and ways to keep your children safe. All this can be debilitating; and can certainly dampen the enthusiasm, effort, and expectations with which urban children and their families approach K-12 education. (p. 61)

Urban districts contain schools described as places where students are socially or academically at-risk (Adams & Adams, 2003). An at-risk student is one who is identified as a candidate for failure, meaning certain circumstances in that child's life are detrimental to his or her learning. According to Adams & Adams (2003) the United States Census Bureau defines an at-risk student as one who lives in a single parent home, the head of household lacks a high school diploma or advanced degree, the family's income is below poverty level, and family members have no steady full time employment. As a result, the family may be receiving government assistance and lacking adequate health insurance (Adams & Adams, 2003). These descriptions apply to many families in our country today. This information reflects Table 1 presented in chapter one, which lists urban descriptors and the district percentages as compared with the state percentages.

Kincheloe et al. (2007) state that urban schools usually operate in areas with a high population density, cover a large geographic area and serve large enrollments. Some urban schools have a higher rate of ethnic, racial, and religious diversity and serve higher immigrant and linguistically diverse populations (Kincheloe et al., 2007). These schools typically experience factionalized in-fighting on school boards over issues concerning resources and influence that undermined effective business operations and result in higher student, teacher, and administrator mobility (Kincheloe et al., 2007). As Ravitch and Vitteriti (2000) explain,

> In city after city, the reports of corruption, disorder, neglect, and low educational achievement are legion. Urban education is in deep trouble, in part because of inept big-city bureaucracies inherited from the past. But also because the public's expectations for schools are higher now than they were earlier in the century. (p. 3)

Failure

Hirsch (2005) states, "the failures of urban schools are many, deep, and widely known" (p. 5). One of the most significant battles being waged in urban education is the battle of a school that has been labeled failing. Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, the current law requires that test scores increase in every school every year, to meet the requirement that 100 percent of students reach proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics (United States Department of Education, 2010b). If scores do not increase the school does not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is a statewide accountability system mandated by the NCLB Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make mandated gains on their state assessments (California Department of Education, 2010). This plight strikes many schools and it can change the day-to-day routine in drastic ways. Failing schools face consequences such as longer school days and years, replacement of staff, adherence to improvement plans as outlined by the state, or closure (Matheson, 2010).

It is more prevalent in schools labeled failing by their test scores to hear the word *failure*. Much of the blame for the current woes of urban education has been placed on poor student performance on state-mandated tests (Blanchette, 2009). It is true that many districts have schools in their attendance areas that are not high achieving (Rothman, 2009). However, some urban districts have trouble saying that any school in their attendance area is high achieving. Students perform poorly on standardized tests and schools earn the label as a failing school. A

teacher is told that her students' test scores are not good enough and, therefore, as a teacher she is not good enough (Adams & Adams, 2003). While growth in performance based state assessments should not be the only measure of teacher effectiveness, it remains the best and most objective in the eyes of policy makers (Jerald, Haycock, & Wilkins, 2009).

Most standardized tests use a White, upper-middle-class style of language and text that unfairly discriminates against minorities (Adams & Adams, 2003). This push for standards and accountability has become a call for standardization that is based on mainstreamed ideals (Bryan, 2004), but is misused to judge marginalized populations. Further, legislators and school officials, who determine funding and resources, can use these test results against a school. The reality is that many states are using tests to rank and evaluate individual schools and school districts (Adams & Adams, 2003). In this manner, schools and individual teachers are held accountable for student progress. If a particular school has students who are under-achieving, it can mean the school closes. Teachers face the daily pressure of preparing for mandated state tests and still addressing the unique needs of students and their families (Miron & St. John, 2003). Focusing on one can take away focus from the other (Miron & St. John, 2003). How can you prepare a student for his or her academic future when the student might not have had breakfast, slept on the floor, or is worried about getting the electricity turned back on at home? Just as Maslow (1968) describes in his hierarchy of needs, human needs such as eating and sleeping take precedence over others. If certain basic needs are not met, then other areas cannot function.

Student background can impact student achievement. A child who has no pre-school experience is already at a disadvantage compared to his or her peers who attended a pre-kindergarten program. It has been reported that pre-kindergarten education increases high school

graduation rates, helps children do better on standardized tests, reduces grade repetition, and reduces the number of children receiving a special education diagnoses (Pre-K Now, 2010). Another important factor is early literacy. The National Institute for Literacy (2009) states:

> The building blocks of literacy develop beginning in infancy. Day-to-day activities expose babies and toddlers to sounds, words, speech, and print. Researchers have found strong evidence that children can learn reading and writing in their earliest years, long before they go to school. (p.1)

These early experiences with spoken and written language are the foundation for formal education and some children do not receive the basics. A child needs to hear conversation, be spoken to, read to and have experiences with books. Unfortunately, in many high poverty households these experiences are not happening, putting the child at-risk for failure before he or she experiences the first day of school.

Daily Environment

The daily environment of an urban school needs to be explored to set the stage for the idea that the SEP is a departure from the daily schedule and setting of a regular school day. Because of high stakes, standardized test outcomes both teachers and their students have lost creativity and confidence. NCLB has created an atmosphere of accountability. The manner in which administrators assess teachers is with test score data. An urban classroom is engulfed by control from administration; control over what the teacher says, what the teacher decides to teach, and how he or she teaches it (Adams & Adams, 2003). These schools follow a constrained philosophy of adherence to the rules and conformity. How can a child blossom under this severe weight? The adoption of these tactics has increased as school violence has

increased. Students find it a daily struggle to stay safe within their school's walls while trying to learn irrelevant curriculum and express their creativity (Ellsasser, 2007).

In addition, class sizes in many urban schools are large with overcrowding. While experts disagree on the significance of class size, few can defend the effectiveness of a kindergarten or a bilingual class with 30 or more students (Urban-Palomarez, 2010). Yet, this has become common in some urban schools (Ravitch & Viteritti, 2000). Classrooms may contain very few books or learning materials and other resources. Sometimes even basic resources, like paper and pencils, are not available (Adams & Adams, 2003). Many urban schools contend with old, dilapidated buildings, malfunctioning heating systems, and no air conditioning. Teachers and students spend their days in buildings that have, among other things, mold, cracking ceilings, roaches, and rats in the environment (Adams & Adams, 2003).

Many urban schools have become resegregated, under-funded, and academically weak (Miron & St. John, 2003). Blanchett (2009) asserts that urban school districts have been used by our society to resegregate minorities, namely African Americans, as well as, the economically disadvantaged. These accusations cannot be generalized to all urban institutions. However, some schools are in need of deep reform. The reform mission for urban schools cannot simply be answered by throwing money at the situation, the ideas underlying the movement need to be executed with thought, skill, and expertise (Bainbridge, Lasley, & Sundre, 2003).

Teacher Retention

The issue of teacher retention is explored because it stood out in the literature, as another serious issue facing urban education and it is also an issue that is experienced by the district at the center of the study. Jerald, Haycock & Wilkins (2009) claim that it is just common sense to match the strongest teachers with the student population that is the farthest behind in an effort to

close the achievement gap that separates low-income and minority children. However, many schools in urban areas find it a challenge to staff qualified teachers in every classroom (Schoon & Sandoval, 2000). The least able teachers are disproportionately assigned to the most vulnerable students (Jerald et al., 2009). Ellsasser (2007) claims that the least-experienced educators teach the least-served student populations. Only 3 out of every 23 new teacher candidates are willing to apply to urban districts (Kincheloe et al., 2007). Of this group only one in ten will be able to face the challenges and become effective educators of urban students (Kincheloe et al., 2007). Early career teachers, who can be considered the most creative of the force, are those most likely to leave or not even apply to teach in an urban school (Quartz, 2003). In high poverty schools, teachers are 50% more likely to leave their position than in low-poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2004). Studies show that many prospective teachers are being lured to positions in the suburbs, where salaries are comparable if not higher, however, class sizes are smaller, behavior disruptions are at a minimum, and learning conditions are generally more appealing (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). Ellsasser states, "Many students in high-poverty, urban public schools spend their academic careers watching a parade of new teachers pass through their classrooms on their way to 'good schools' with 'good students'" (2007, p. 476).

Teaching in an urban setting can be considered less than ideal. It is estimated that, in some districts over 50% of the teachers are teaching in an area in which they do not hold a teacher licensure (Adams & Adams, 2003). They are put where they are needed, not necessarily in the area of their expertise. Imagine this scenario: there are 42 children in the classroom, but the district will report a ratio of 20-1, a ratio that includes support staff and administrators who are not directly working in the classroom with the children (Adams & Adams, 2003). The

current focus of policy-makers is to staff the schools, not necessarily prepare the teachers to succeed and remain teaching in an urban school (Quartz, 2003).

In a study by Warshauer-Freedman and Appleman (2009), results revealed that teachers who stay in high-poverty urban areas do so because of a dedication to the mission and a disposition for hard work. These teachers have had substantive preparation including the practical and the academic art of teaching, as well as, training in reflective researching (Warshauer-Freedman & Appleman, 2009). They feel the firm support of staff and administrators and are given opportunities to be part of a larger network of teachers (Warshauer-Freedman & Appleman, 2009). A study by Halvorsen, Lee, and Andrade (2009) similarly found that successful urban teachers tended to work in environments that offered more support. Other attributes of successful urban teachers include cultural awareness, well-developed interpersonal skills, self-understanding, risk taking, and self-efficacy (Sachs, 2004).

The job of an urban educator is a mission and a calling, not just a profession. You have to hear the call and make a commitment. To the successful urban teacher, no child is beyond reach and no potential is too great to achieve (Taylor, 1998). While the challenges grow greater, the urban educator must seek new, creative ideas to educate a growing population. Successful urban teachers need to master culturally responsive approaches to teaching and learning. They need to respect and connect with students from diverse backgrounds and sincerely believe that every child can learn. These teachers create an engaged, stimulating learning environment for all students, and integrate technology into the classroom seamlessly and appropriately (Taylor, 1998). Of course, these teachers must also help students achieve proficient or advanced scores on the standardized tests that are heaped upon each American classroom in the spring of every year.

Succeeding

Citing literature on success in urban education was essential. The first section created a bleak picture of the schools and districts defined as urban. It is key to point out that there are positives in the arena. Culturally responsive teaching is making its way into many schools that have fumbled with diversity. Presenting a model for teaching that is working is a way to point out that positive change is on the horizon and there is hope for the future of urban education. This also ties in the philosophy of the SEP that lessons should be more active and relevant.

Family Involvement

Despite all of the pitfalls, success can be achieved. Urban schools must concentrate on raising academic achievement, particularly of those students who have been performing poorly (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). School improvement programs can be implemented at any level (Kilgore 2005). Villani (2004) explains the importance of creating a learning community. This requires establishing relationships among teachers, students, parents, and administrators who come together to work on shared values, purposes, and commitments (Villani, 2004). In a study by Goodman, Sutton, and Harkavay (1995) urban families participated in a series of school-based workshops. "Research suggests that family involvement works; urban children whose families participate in the programs showed improved academic achievement and the greater the intensity of involvement the better the outcome," according to Goodman, Sutton, and Harkavay (1995, p. 695). Parents must be involved on every level (Villani, 2004). For a variety of reasons families have become less dependable as sources of support, guidance, and discipline (Ravitch & Viteritti, 2000). Schools must welcome families with open arms and reach out to families with no exceptions. The bottom line is obvious; parents need to be involved

(McAdams, 2000). Therefore, school communities must be empowered to stay positive and achieve at all costs (McAdams, 2000).

Another important way to reach out to families is by acknowledging the informal learning that occurs in the homes and communities of students is worthy and creditable; if built upon, the achievement gap between marginalized and mainstream students could be reduced (Banks, Au, Ball, Bell, Gordon, Gutierrez, Heath, Lee, C., Lee, Y., Mahiri, Nasir, Valdes, & Zhou, 2007). Banks et. al., (2007) state:

> Families and communities have the primary responsibility for the physical, personal, social and emotional development of youth and the active support of their academic and personal development in a context that is trustworthy. In such a division of labor, schools provide the *formal education* and communities provide *supplementary education*. (p. 20)

Schools need to acknowledge that learning which occurs in the home is enriching and important. Educators should encourage families to draw upon the resources they have available to support their children and to take advantage of school resources. If there is respect for the school at home and respect for the home at school, optimal learning can be achieved. Schools are more able to successfully address barriers to learning and teaching and promote positive development when they are integral to their community (Griffin & Steen, 2010).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

The classrooms of today are called to serve a diverse spectrum of children (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Current reform efforts focus teacher professional development on meeting the needs of a diverse population, issues of school choice, and teacher accountability (Ravitch & Viteritti, 1996). Urban educators need to be trained to address the disparities that exist between their culture and that of their students (Brown, 2003). It is critical that all teachers understand

the unique and special perspectives of the African American experience (Ladson-Billings, 2000). This sentiment rings true for all cultures that are represented in a given classroom. Indeed, globalization and worldwide immigration have increased exponentially the racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of the American classroom (Banks, et al., 2007). A teacher must become familiar with and embrace the ethnicities represented in his or her classroom in order to teach in a culturally responsive manner.

Diversity provides rich opportunities to create learning environments that enrich instruction by identifying, drawing upon, and creatively using the cultural and linguistic capital students bring to school from their home and community; the academic achievement of marginalized students is enhanced, and the education of all students is improved (Banks, et al., 2007). Ladson-Billings (2009) reminds readers that effective culturally responsive teachers view their craft as an art, not a technical skill. In a study by Brown (2003), 13 successful urban teachers from around the country weighed in on the use of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM). One of the teachers established a need for a certain type of classroom environment, described as cooperative and businesslike, with reasonable expectations for academic performance (Brown, 2003). In this classroom, expectations are clearly stated and the necessary tools are provided to ensure that students meet these expectations (Brown, 2003).

Another important aspect to creating an environment focused on CRCM is to make meaningful connections with students. Teachers must let their students know that they are interested and committed. Another educator explained how he initiated and cultivated out-of-class conversations with his students to get to know them personally (Brown, 2003). This sentiment is echoed in another article by Brown (1999), where students preferred “teachers who displayed caring bonds and attitudes toward them, and teachers who establish community and

family-type classroom environments" (p.131). While establishing these important relationships, a culturally responsive teacher must also act with assertiveness and establish authority in the classroom (Brown, 2003). Garrett (2009) states African American children expect an authority figure to exert authority, therefore, these children often ignore indirect commands, rather, a direct, explicit, and a controlling kind of discourse is considered more appropriate than a suggestion of a directive or a gentle reminder of the option to follow the rules. These are examples of politeness formulas that are not effective in CRCM (Garrett, 2009). Some other strategies used in CRCM include enforcing rules, setting clear behavioral expectations, and contacting caregivers as a means of facilitating support from the home (Brown, 2003). Overall, educators need to respond to challenges and opportunities wrought by increasing diversity in ways consistent with their democratic ideologies and declarations (Banks, et al., 2007).

Beyond the aspect of classroom management and behavior, curriculum should be addressed in culturally responsive teaching. Lenski (2005) calls for the need for democracy in the classroom. Children are allowed to direct their own learning and taught how to be responsible for that direction (Lenski, 2005). It is important to make the learning authentic as well. This may be achieved by using characters and situations that link the objectives back to what is familiar and comfortable in a student's life. Diverse young learners bring with their racial and ethnic identities a host of strengths related to adaptive skills, identity confidence, extended family support, and experiential bases (Banks, et al., 2007). Using a strength-based approach allows all to achieve. In a study by Edwards & Kuhlman (2007), a pre-service teacher reflected in her notes that linking home culture and academics brought about more interest and therefore, more success. Modifying course content to highlight students' strengths and needs is a way to differentiate instruction so more students can be increasingly autonomous and therefore, achieve

at higher levels. Ladson-Billings (2000) explains that community access and involvement, trust between teachers and parents, and concern and caring for students were all hallmarks of schools that put the needs of diverse learners first. Banks et al. (2007) found that "to facilitate life-long, life-wide, and life-deep learning for students from diverse groups, educators should draw upon the cultural capital these students bring to school from their homes and communities" (p. 15). In other words, educators should "recognize the range of experiences and knowledge that students accumulate across the routines of their everyday lives" (Banks, et al., 2007, p. 25).

Out of School Programs

Presenting the literature on out-of-school programs makes a strong argument for the SEP and the purpose of the study. Banks et al., (2007) assert most of the learning that occurs across the life span happens in informal leaning environments. Heath and McLaughlin (1993) found that many successful children who faced tough community, home, and school situations credited a neighborhood based agency or program as a way to overcome the odds and be successful. Informal settings provide space for all learners to engage with ideas, bringing their own prior knowledge and experience to the table (Bell, Lewenstein, Shouse, & Feder, 2009). Vadeboncoeur (2006) explains:

> The increasing attention to and funding of programs that engage youth outside of the formal institution of schooling was motivated by a number of overlapping concerns, including a desire to improve school achievement, a commitment to youth safety, and an interest in enrichment programs that offer opportunities to explore the arts and science, coupled with occasions for social and emotional development. (p. 239)

By showing the many forms of out–of-school programming (after-school, summer school) it becomes very apparent that there is a severe lack of literature focusing on the model of a SEP.

A similar program cannot be found in the literature at this time. Most of the relevant literature was found concerning after-school programs which immediately identified the need for these models to be effective and not just a time filler to write on a school's improvement plan. Other options such as summer school and Saturday school were also explored.

With the introduction of No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001 and the effects of high stakes testing, many school districts across the country have searched for any option to increase instructional time for their students. Combine this trend with recent statistics and the course is clear. Instructional time is precious. On a daily basis, at least 8 million children and youth are left alone and unsupervised after the school bell rings (Safe Youth, 2008). Additionally, more than 28 million school-age children have parents who work outside the home (After-School Programs, 2000). In some cases, there are as many as 15 million "latch-key children" that return to an empty home to be cared for by older siblings or neighbors (After-School Programs, 2000). Alston (2010) reports the total number of latch key kids may be between five and seven million children between five and 13 years old. The Children's Defense Fund estimated the number at close to 16 million children (Alston, 2010). With this in mind many communities and schools have opted for extending the school day, incorporating summer programs, or, in some cases, developing Saturday sessions.

These programs are usually focused on test scores and academic interests. Other programming has the goal of general youth development, helping young people explore new talents and interpersonal skills (Granger & Kane, 2004). No matter the mission, the benefits include keeping children of all ages safe and out of trouble, as well as, developing self-confidence (After-School Programs, 2000). It may seem that the school day is long enough and today's children already have enough on their plates, but current statistics paint a different

picture. On average, children spend about 20% of their non-sleeping hours in school (After school Alliance, 2007b). Combine the length of the school day with the length of the school year, typically 180 days per year, and there is plenty of down time.

After-School

The after-school hours are the time when 49% of children under age 18 are more likely to use drugs and 37% are more likely to become teenaged parents than those students who spend one-to-four hours per week in extracurricular activities (Safe Youth, 2008). In fact, juveniles are at the highest risk of being the victim of a violent crime in the four hours at the end of the school day (National Report Series, 1999). This is when most juveniles are left to fend for themselves. Heath & McLaughlin (1993) state, "Failed schools, street violence, and helpless parents have made youth organizations the only safe place for many inner-city youth" (p. 13). Further, those attracted to youth organizations faced daily pressures of gangs, drugs, and disrupted home lives, needing a way to ground themselves (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

For these overwhelming reasons parents, as well as, a vast majority of local voters wholeheartedly support funding after-school programs (Baldwin Grossman, Price, Fellerath, Jucovy, Kotlofff, Raley, & Walker, 2002). It should not be a surprise that 8 in 10 voters believe that organized after school programs are a necessity in their communities, and two–thirds of voters say they are willing to pay $100 more per year in state taxes to help fund the programs (Baldwin Grossman, et al., 2002). Granger and Kane (2004) reported in a recent article that Californians voted for a six-fold tax increase in funding for after school programs. These projects, including the ones meant strictly for enrichment, placed no emphasis on test scores, are linked to widespread school gains, and contribute to measurable improvements in students' pro-social behavior (Afterschool Alliance, 2007a).

After-school programs can provide important mentoring opportunities that young people from urban neighborhoods need (Hirsch, 2005). The areas addressed by after-school programs include reliable supervision, homework assistance, and extra curricular interests, while providing nutritious snacks and building important bonds with adult caregivers. Additionally, Hirsch (2005) asserted the need for community-based programs to support school reform efforts by promoting skill development and reinforcing high expectations. After-school programs are similar to Saturday programs in that they address the specific needs of their students in the out-of –school hours.

Quality Programming

Many of these programs were designed to keep children busy and engaged in appropriate activities, however, they can also be a rich source of educational experiences (Banks, et al., 2007). The challenge lies in creating programs that work. The quandary is not just extending time, but providing quality, engaging, enriching, and stimulating learning opportunities during out-of-school time (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). Such programs share many features that in earlier eras characterized family life in that they provide strong feeling of membership, their approach is highly personalized and firm goals and rules are established (Heath & McLaughlin, 1991). Successful youth leaders provide a family-like frame in meeting the needs of community youth by promoting their growth, letting them know they care, and being a stable influence (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

Learning in an informal setting, such as after-school, can enhance the academic achievement of students from diverse ethnic and racial groups by pursuing models that allow for overlapping and reinforcing educational experiences in a variety of learning environments (Banks, et al., 2007). Bell et al. (2009) describe science learning in out-of-school time as an

opportunity to expand experiences with programs, many of which are based at schools that are increasingly folding in disciplinary and subject matter content. Out-of-school experiences have a myriad of responsibilities and rewards. Heath and McLaughlin (1993) state:

> Youth activities geared toward tangible products or performance provided a sense of accomplishment and success. These activities gave youth concrete evidence that something could be gained by sticking with an effort and provided what one youth worker called 'visible victories' for youngsters who have had few such positive experiences in school, in their family, or in the community. (p. 59)

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLC) program, authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was a key component of the Clinton–Gore Administration's commitment to helping families and communities keep their children safe and smart (21st Century, 2000). The funding continues through Formula Grants supporting the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools (United States Deptartment of Education, 2010a). With the help of grants provided by the United States Department of Education, these centers support schools and communities by providing high quality, after-school programming. Children and teens have access to homework help and tutors, as well as, classes that highlight cultural enrichment, the arts, recreation, academic projects, and nutritional opportunities, all in a safe and nurturing environment (21st Century, 2000). These after school services contribute to the developmental skills of children with teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, oral communication, civic engagement, conflict resolution, and healthy decision-making (21st Century, 2000).

The benefits of such high quality, after-school programming are well documented. In an evaluation, the Afterschool Alliance (2007b) found children participating in 21st Century CLC could claim fewer absences and less tardiness in their regular school attendance. These students also reported higher grades, higher rates of homework completion, and increased rates of parental involvement in school (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). In Highland Park, Michigan, a 40% drop in juvenile crime was reported in the neighborhood surrounding their 21st Century CLC (21st Century, 2000). At Huock Middle School in the Salem–Keizer School District in Oregon, a steady drop in the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco was found after their 21st Century CLC program was expanded (21st Century, 2000). In Plainview, Arkansas the 21st Century CLC implemented an abstinence program that resulted in zero pregnancies in their high school graduating class for the first time in a number of years (21st Century, 2000).

Children who regularly attend high quality, after-school programs have better peer relations and emotional development, better grades and conduct in school, more academic and enrichment opportunities, spend less time watching TV, and have lower incidents of drug use, violence, and pregnancy (21st Century, 2000). It is not surprising that between 1998 and 2002, federal funding for the 21st Century CLC programs grew from $40 million to $1 billion (Granger & Kane 2004). As of 2008 that funding had been extended with a Formula Grant of over $1 billion to continue the creation of community learning centers that help students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offering students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs (United States Department of Education, 2010a).

However, 21st Century CLC is not the only after school program available to today's students. Other programs have attained similar successes. In Kansas City, Missouri, 4-H after

school programming is setting high standards for quality after-school projects. The program provides homework assistance, teen tutoring, academic enrichment, and nutritional assistance along with supervised recreation. The program touts meaningful gains; school attendance increased from an average of less than two days to more than four days per week, school suspensions decreased from six to zero, and the majority of children who attended more than one day per week increased their grade point average (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b).

LA's BEST (Better Educated Students For Tomorrow) After School Enrichment Program is an enrichment and recreational program serving 26,000 children (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). It provides a safe haven for students, ages 5-12 years, to engage in fun, interactive games and lessons at 180 sites in California (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). Already the dropout rate among the participating students is 20% lower than the overall district drop out rate (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). In Boston, a program called Tenacity offers tennis instruction and academic enrichment to over 3,000 youths in the metropolitan area (Afterschool Alliance, 2007b). The program runs through the school year and the summer months. It couples achievement and athleticism with a focus on life skills.

Although the Department of Education has funded over 3,600 after school programs in 900 communities (21st Century, 2000), many more programs go unfunded and forgotten. In some urban areas the current supply of after school programs for school age children will meet as little as 20% of the demand (21st Century, 2000). The same is true in rural areas. Experts estimate that the availability of after-school programs will cover only about one-third of the population (21st century, 2000). Hirsch (2005) states, the 40 largest national youth organizations serve approximately 40 million youth, but not all are equally served. The 21st Century CLC program awards funds based on grant proposals. In the last grant competition

there was sufficient funding for only 310 of 2,253 applications (21st Century, 2000). As of 2008, only 52 new 21st Century funding grants were awarded (United States Department of Education, 2010a). This lack of funding and lack of resources has led some districts to explore other options. Summer schools and Saturday sessions have become an option for administrators who can attract community partnerships and financing.

The benefits of after-school programs are well documented in the literature. These positives can be generalized to any out-of-school program, namely, Saturday school. When students gather in the out-of-school hours in a more personal, relaxed environment, away from the routine and pressures of a regular school day, learning can be reinforced, reviewed, and better understood. This translates into a positive situation for all stakeholders.

Summer School

In some parts of the country, Summer schools have long been a standard of the educational community. In the past these instructional opportunities have been primarily for struggling students or those in danger of retention. More recently, districts have utilized the summer months for enrichment and academics.

Some schools, such as the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Academy, a charter school founded in Houston, Texas, require three weeks of summer school for every student. KIPP has grown into a vast network of 66 charter schools serving 17,000 children in 19 states (Feinberg & Levin, 2009). The major goal for the school is to prepare their students for college. So far it is working. Eighty percent of alumni from the first two schools founded in the KIPP program have gone on to college (Feinberg & Levin, 2009). Additionally, more than 90% of enrolled KIPP students are children of color and 80% of the families' incomes qualify students for free or reduced meals (Feinberg & Levin, 2009). Also, for parents with disposable income,

private summer school programs and camps can be an alternative. Establishments such as Sylvan or Kumon Learning Centers offer special summer rates and classes for students interested in getting ahead or just keeping their skills on grade level. Some universities offer summer programs for children and adolescents in developmental reading and other academic areas.

Saturday School

Another alternative for increasing instructional time is Saturday school. Much less is documented on such programs. In most cases, Saturday school is synonymous with Saturday detention. For example, the Holyoke Public School District of Massachusetts instituted a Saturday program for students meeting the following criteria: absent without good cause, tardy more than three hours during any week, assigned a short term suspension, or serving more than two days in-house suspension (Carballo, 2006). Activities included making up unfinished assignments and practicing positive behavior choices. Little documentation can be found for enriching, academic Saturday programs that focus on improving standardized test scores.

Although there is little in the current literature pertaining to Saturday school, other formats, such as after-school programming and summer school, lend themselves to the discussion. These interventions occur in the out-of-school hours and are targeted at improving students' achievement. The SEP is another strategy to help students that is an alternative to the routine and structure of a regular school day.

School Reform

Out-of-school programs are just one facet of school reform. The influence of NCLB has forced schools to seek newer methods of reform in order to achieve AYP. Rose (2010) states "This is an exciting time for education as the federal government, state houses, and private philanthropies are all focusing on school reform" (p. 6). Banks et al. (2007) assert globalization,

job competition, and increasing digitalization in the manner by which students socialize make it imperative to rethink the conventional form of education for all students.

In some cases the importance is placed on what is perceived as good teaching. In recent years, the teacher has evolved into a knowledge-delivery machine due to the need for preparing students for standardized tests (Rose, 2010). The current push is for teachers to become a partner in education, helping cultivate students' interests and talents, creating lessons that are relevant and allow for the teachable moment. Teachers should be advisors to students, helping manage time and energy (Wolk, 2010). To create this teacher, Rose (2010) calls for a rich, widely distributed, program of professional development, not the general half day professional development used to pad a district's state improvement plan, but rather a robust three to four week summer offering that would change and improve teaching practice dramatically. This involves putting the right teacher with the right students, in an effort to individualize instruction (Gabrieli, 2010).

Perkins-Gough (2010) counters, "With so many talented, dedicated people pouring so much effort into school improvement, why is the pace of change so glacially slow?" (p.13). In her conversation with Hess (2010), Hess maintains that schools are like institutionalized systems that continue to do business as usual as it has been done for the past 50 to 100 years. Hess is an advocate for Greenfield schooling, an idea for school reform that involves aid from private non-profit and for-profit groups to help settle the inequities that exist in education (Perkins-Gough, 2010). Neuman (2010) provides an example of settling these inequities, by bridging formal and informal learning with community agencies such as museums, clinics, and universities. The weekly activity schedule of a parent shuttling a child from sports practice, to tutoring, to dance lessons can be mimicked in a school where parents do not have the resources for such

enrichment. Wolk (2010) also gives an example of settling inequities, stating schools must be redesigned to be more personal and meet the needs of individual students. Every child deserves a personalized education, such schools do not have the traditional core curriculum; instead students design their own curriculum that emphasizes real world, hands on learning (Wolk, 2010). Gabrieli (2010) asserts the need for expanded learning time, which offers the enrichment and intervention some students do not receive. In this model, academic gains are made possible by small group tutoring and are matched by opportunities for growth in extracurricular areas (Gabrieli, 2010). Assessment should be rethought as well. Wolk (2010) calls for student learning to be assessed on the basis of actual authentic work, utilizing portfolios, exhibitions, projects, experiments, recitals, and performances. "We will know we have succeeded when society thinks of the conventional school as the 'alternative' schools'" (Wolk, 2010, p.21).

Project Based Learning

Providing enriching, academic programming on Saturdays is a challenge. To motivate students and ensure attendance in such a program, alternative curriculum options should be embraced. Approaches such as the Montessori Method, Project Construct, Reggio Emilia, and Project Based Learning offer a more hands on curriculum, giving students more autonomy in the classroom. In this case, Project Based Learning (PBL) is explored. This approach finds its roots in constructivism, borrowing from the Reggio Emilia ideals, and remembering the basics of John Dewey (Buck Institute for Education, 2002; Mercilliott-Hewett, 2001).

PBL is the framework on which the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP) was established. A description of the fundamental aspects of the project approach is presented and examples of studies showing the successes in the field and illustrations of how this approach looks in the classroom are discussed. The approach also has a specific structure if followed in its

complete form. To be able to make comparisons between SEP projects and the Project approach a model needs to be set. The outcomes section gives the results of empirical studies focused on the PBL approach. It highlights the quality learning that prevails due to the major tenet that students design and pace their own learning.

The theoretical framework behind the concept of the SEP includes the approach of PBL as well as aspects of children's inquiry. The basic idea behind PBL is that project work promotes children's intellectual development by engaging their minds in observation and investigation of selected aspects of their experience and environment (Katz & Chard, 2000). Herron, Magomo, and Gossard (2008) maintain PBL can be defined as an individual or group activity that proceeds over a period of time, resulting in a product, presentation, or performance. Newell (2003), describes PBL as emphasizing depth of understanding over content coverage. Comprehension of concepts, development of problem solving skills, and student interest take precedence over knowledge of facts, learning skills in isolation, or a fixed curriculum (Newell, 2003). Wilhelm, Sherrod, and Walters (2008) maintain classrooms rich in project work allow students to engage in contextualized problem solving, make interdisciplinary connections, develop reasoning skills, and represent and communicate abstract concepts. Katz and Chard (2000), further explain that PBL emphasizes a student's active participation in the development, planning, and assessment of their own work. In Yuen's study (2009), PBL was utilized in an attempt to create lessons that emphasized learning activities that were interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real issues and practices. These lessons changed the teaching styles of the educators involved. Yuen (2009) explained that the children assumed both informal and formal teaching roles with their peers, while teachers were no longer the conventional dispensers

of knowledge. Therefore, teachers assume different roles as facilitators or coaches. However, the biggest changes from this approach are seen in the students themselves.

PBL has long been used with students labeled as gifted and talented as a strategy to guide learning that allows for creative thinking (Dill, 2009). Hertzog (2007) states:

> During the last 20 years, gifted education has promoted pedagogy that connects learning to students' interests, provides opportunities for students to pursue topics and investigations that are meaningful to them, and encourages creative and critical thinking. In sum, gifted education has been the forerunner of curricular reforms that have embraced higher level thinking skills, problem-based learning, and inquiry processes of learning. (p. 530)

Dill (2009) states exceptional learners thrive with PBL and can often go beyond where their teachers imagined. However, identifying students for gifted and talented programs can be subjective. A study by Speirs-Neumeister, Adams, Pierce, Cassady, and Dixon (2007) found that experienced teachers held a narrow conception of giftedness and did not consider cultural or environmental factors that influence giftedness in minority and economically disadvantaged students. The child who does not perform well in school, no matter his innate intellectual capabilities, is less likely to be identified as gifted and less likely to be served (Tolan, 1996). Students who demonstrated deficit skills in a certain area, had poor work habits, or behavioral or family problems were less likely to be recommended by their teachers for gifted and talented enrichment programs (Speirs-Neumeister et al., 2007). In urban schools, many gifted at-risk students go undiagnosed.

In some urban settings, gifted and talented programs have been completely eliminated due to budget constraints. These programs are a needed outlet for gifted students faced with an

unchallenging curriculum and irrelevant teaching strategies. If left unserved, these students can manifest their creativity by spearheading behavior disruptions. In a study of students from low-income families, Hertzog (2007) found that when PBL was utilized students were more engaged and therefore better behaved as seen by classroom observations.

Structure

A PBL lesson can be utilized with a student individually or with any size grouping of students and is comprised of three basic tenets. It should be mentioned that there are other structures of PBL in existence and not all PBL lessons follow this exact format. Active involvement is a key component (Ellis & Hafner, 2008). There is the initial planning phase, of which all students take part. This first meeting identifies a topic to be studied and goals to be accomplished. As a class project, the group agrees on the major unit of study and how the learning will unfold, as well as what the final product will look like and how it will be judged. Chard and Flockhart (2002) used this time to explore students' past experiences and interests, allowing for discussion and sharing. In a study by Mitchell, Foulger, Wetzel, and Rathkey, (2008) this negotiation is described as a "grand conversation" (p. 342).

In the second phase the students begin their course of action. In this arena, individual students are free to pursue their goals. This is done in an independent, yet collaborative manner. The children work individually or in small groups to investigate sub-topics that are connected to the larger topic (Mitchell et al., 2008). Undertaking fieldwork, conducting research, collecting data, pursuing various lines of inquiry and meeting goals becomes the initiative of section two (Chard & Flockhart, 2002). A study by Ellis and Hafner (2008) highlighted the opportunity for students to work as members of a project team and experience true team interactions and processes while growing collaboratively. McGrath (2003) describes this inquiry as an active

search for explanations, which includes observations, interviews, experiments, problem solving, researching, and data collection.

In the third phase of PBL the final product is presented. In a study by Chard and Flockhart (2002), the culmination of the unit provided students the opportunity to teach other students and share their knowledge in the form of oral reports, dramatic presentations, portfolios, and displays. At this point, visitors may be invited to view the projects, enabling students to synthesize their collective learning and explain it to others (Chard & Flockhart. 2002). The final section of a PBL unit allows the students to be the experts. McGrath (2003) describes the artifact that is presented at the culmination of PBL lesson as an observable and discussable object or process that reflects the knowledge and understanding that the learner has designed. A well-planned culminating event or series of activities helps the children summarize their findings and meet the goals of the investigation (Mitchell et al., 2008).

Outcomes

Many teachers, parents, and students have found success with this approach to learning. Students learn better when they are in control of their own learning outcomes (Bradford, 2005). In a study by Yuen (2009), one teacher explained that the children became motivated when taking learning into their hands and using many different skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and interpersonal skills without realizing it. It was concluded that the experience supported the concept that good project work stimulated the intellectual, social, and problem solving skills that contribute to the capacity to lead a satisfying life (Yuen, 2009). The Buck Institute for Education (BIE) (2002) found that PBL enhanced the quality of learning and led to higher-level cognitive development through students' engagement with complex, novel problems while nurturing a classroom community that can plan and communicate. Chard and

Flockhart (2002) maintain that rich, in-depth projects offer students a learning environment in which they can develop the reading and writing skills necessary for lifelong, effective citizenship. Wilhelm et al. (2008) state PBL can give students an opportunity to represent, model, communicate, and apply content knowledge in novel ways. Herron et al. (2008) found students involved in PBL develop intrinsic motivation and are more connected to their work.

Teachers themselves can grow as dedicated educators through PBL as well. In a study by Catapano (2005) project work became the catalyst to move teachers from directors of children's learning to co-learners and co-researchers. Teachers' practices change as the children's projects unfold by deepening their own knowledge in areas of child development, observation, documentation, reflection–in-action, and understanding of what children should be learning in order to succeed (Catapano, 2005). Katz and Chard (2000), describe their view of good project work as stimulating to the intellectual, social, and emotional dispositions that can contribute to the capacity to lead a satisfying life – both presently and in the future. Newell (2003) believes that PBL creates a learner-centered universe that is the central key to intrinsic motivation, which is necessary to rekindle, keep alive, or create a passion for learning. When students are able to engage in active learning opportunities by expressing their natural interests and curiosities, they become problem solvers (Mitchell et al., 2008).

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth review of the literature describing and pertaining to urban education and strategies that could work toward school reform. Ideas pertaining to achievement and testing, daily environment, family involvement, and the project approach to learning, as well as, teacher retention and mobility were presented. These issues were presented in an effort to set the scene for the reform that urban educators must strive to achieve. These

reforms can come in many ways. One of the most popular methods of reform is the after-school or extra curricular model of re-teaching, pre-teaching or reinforcing. Many of these models are focused around state achievement tests. After-school and summer school programs resemble Saturday school in that they are all interventions occurring in the out-of-school hours that focus on strategies to boost student achievement. Some of these programs are explored more in depth in the body of the review, along with some alternative plans currently being utilized by schools. Project Based Learning (PBL) is presented as the theoretical framework of the program and is described as a means to generate student interest and autonomy.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

Purpose

This study evaluated a program in one urban elementary school. This is a qualitative case study of the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP), a program based on university partnerships with a local school. The study seeks to determine how a hands–on, constructivist, out-of-school program can impact student participation and describe the attitudes of learners about learning. Most important to this study, the SEP was initially created to help elementary students experience autonomy and creativity in their own education. The SEP students demonstrated learning by planning, creating projects, and assessing their learning experiences. This research evaluated the learning components that make the SEP an enrichment program offering a distinctive approach to teaching and learning through Project Based Learning (PBL) and the attitudes of the learners that participated in the program. This study sought to evaluate the SEP that has been developed by one university.

The purpose of the SEP was to provide field experiences for working university pre-service teachers (PSTs), while simultaneously providing a unique learning opportunity for elementary school students. Most field experiences for teacher education programs are completed Monday through Friday, during regular school hours. This program gave university PSTs the opportunity to complete field hours on Saturday and provided support to the school to offer enrichment activities on Saturdays. Preliminary data had already been gathered as required in the reporting guidelines of the grant through which it was created. Further data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of SEP activities for a related article

(Catapano & Gray, 2010). Both sets of data were used as secondary data for this new analysis for dissertation purposes. Data was collected between the years of 2005 and 2010.

Rationale and Assumptions

Case Study Design

Yin (1994) describes a research design as an action plan that takes a researcher from the research questions to the conclusions. A qualitative approach to exploring the SEP provided a more personal narrative by which to understand the phenomenon. Marshall and Roseman (1989) posit "the strengths of qualitative studies should be demonstrated for research that is exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and subject's frame of reference" (p. 46). This study (an evaluative, single case study) presented and described a program utilized in a large, urban, mid-western school district, developed by a state university through a federally funded grant.

Yin (1994) explains, "As a research endeavor, the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena" (p. 2). A case study as described by Berg (2007), is extremely rich, detailed, and in-depth. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) described a case study as a detailed examination of one setting, a single subject, or an event. By concentrating on a single phenomenon, individual, community, or institution, I will uncover the interaction of the significant factors of the case (Berg, 2007). Merriam (1998) described the case study as holistic in explanation in order to achieve an over-arching, heuristic, and illuminating understanding from which meaning and understanding can be derived. Patton (2001) asserts case study data creates detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and other observed behaviors. Yin (1994) calls for a case study to investigate a contemporary

phenomenon within real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the event and the context are not completely evident.

I selected a single case study design as the method for this study to deeply explore and evaluate every component of the SEP's structure and foundation. Yin (1994) cites a descriptor of *unique* as a rationale for a single case study. It was concluded through the literature review that the SEP was rare, not replicated in any other context. By gaining understanding and explaining the workings of the SEP, a rich description is presented and an evaluation of the impact of the study determined. The phenomenon was best explored by dissecting the context, participants, and learning experiences of the SEP and then creating an over all understanding of the perceptions presented.

As asserted by Conrad and Serlin (2005), a case study draws from multiple sources of data to provide an in-depth and contextualized understanding of a given phenomenon. Case studies add meaning to data and delve deeper into a personality or program. For the SEP, a single case study served to describe the setting, participants, curriculum, and impact of this particular program. However, no comparisons or cross-case examples could be given. According to Stake (2005) this is an example of an intrinsic case study, as it is interested in the individual case, wanting a better understanding, and will not explain what it is a case of. This study is not going to attempt to make cross comparisons of other case studies. "Coming to understand a case usually requires extensive examining of how things get done, but the prime referent in case study is the case (issues, context, and interpretations) not the methods by which the case operates" (Stake, 2005, p. 444).

Setting, Participants, Sampling

The pilot of the SEP began in the fall semester of 2005 at a magnet school in a large, urban, Mid-Western school district. Students were invited to come to school on Saturday and experience a different kind of learning. Undergraduate pre-service teachers (PSTs) from a large, state university would teach the classes during their internship course, which is taken the semester before they begin student teaching. The school-based classes consisted of two PSTs collaborating in a team teaching approach with a student population of 12-14 students in grades Kindergarten through fifth. The curriculum of the SEP included integrated communication arts, mathematics, social studies, and science in a structured, scheduled day that lasted approximately five to six hours. The approach allowed elementary school students to be creative, collaborative, and independent learners in charge of their own progress.

Sampling procedures in qualitative research are not quite so rigorous as in quantitative research (Coyne, 1997). However, it is important to note in qualitative research the sample selection has a profound effect on the quality of the findings (Coyne, 1997). In this case, the elementary school was chosen because it was part of a professional development school system (PDSS) funded through a federal grant. The former principal (principal A) was an active member of the PDSS and volunteered her school to participate. The participants were Kindergarten through fifth graders who took part in the SEP with regular attendance. Regular attendance in the eight-week program was defined as students attending at least seven or eight sessions out of eight during the semester. No other school in this area provided a SEP.

The students' parent or guardian, principal, university faculty, and PSTs that were involved in the SEP were asked to participate in interviews and/or observations for purposes of the study. All of the participants signed consent or assent forms and were informed of the nature

and purpose of the study. Sampling is the process of selecting participants for a research study. The sampling for this study was characterized as purposeful or purposive sampling, also called selective (Coyne, 1997). It was criterion based and falls under the description of unique sampling (Merriam, 1998). It was characterized as unique sampling in that the participants were atypical or rare because they were students and families chosen for their regular attendance in the SEP over a period of years. This could also be considered a convenience sample due to the fact that the participants are those who attended the SEP and agreed to sign the consent forms. Preliminary data collection began when the program started (Fall 2005) with attendance records and surveys completed each semester by participating students, families, and university faculty. Additional interviews and observations were conducted during the fall and spring semesters of the SEP in 2009 and 2010.

This program sought to change the status quo for urban education and to create a context in which students felt excitement for learning. I wanted to examine this program and its quality and potential to engage students. I sought to know if and how urban students benefited from a more hands-on, project-based approach to learning. The study described all aspects of the SEP focusing on the students' experiences, the projects they developed, and the engagement illustrated.

Role of the Researcher

As mentioned above, the researcher in a case study becomes part of the data. The presence of the researcher, the background of the researcher, and the views of the researcher all shape the analysis and findings of the project. As an adjunct professor during the inaugural semester of the program, I forged a relationship with principal A and some of the PSTs. I was at the school during every session of the SEP in its first semester. In later years, I observed classes

as a passive observer, performed interviews, and met with faculty as a follow up to the grant and in preparation for an article on the SEP. Therefore, I have an understanding of the program, school, and participants. The principal was my gatekeeper, helping me gain access to the resources needed. I have also been an urban educator for more than 12 years in a neighboring school district.

Inter-rater reliability was used in the coding phases of data analysis to guard against bias. Inter-rater reliability involves using another researcher to code separately and then comparing findings to provide another view of the data. As an educator and a member of SEP faculty, my perceptions shaped the research. Merriam (1998) calls for a researcher to possess three main qualities: a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, and sharp communication skills. As Merriam (1998) describes, an essential concern of the researcher is to understand the phenomenon from the participant perspective. An emic, or insider's perspective (Berg, 2007), guided the findings. It is important to note that the perceptions and comprehensions presented in the interviews reflected the viewpoints of those involved in SEP. As Patton said, "The assumption is that the perspective was meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (1980, p.196). Patton (2001) asserts it is the interviewer's responsibility to make it possible for the interviewee to open up the world as understood by his or her point of view.

Data Collection

The data collection was comprised of three forms: interviews, observations, and review of existing documents. The data were labeled secondary, as they had been collected as part of the reporting requirements for the grant and stored in university archives. Secondary analysis is most often used and generally defined as a re-analysis of existing data (Sales, Lichtenwalter,& Fevola, 2006). I conducted additional student, parent, and faculty interviews and classroom observations

under another Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for purposes of writing an article about the SEP. All of these existing data were used under an exempt IRB approval from the university for which this dissertation is written.

Berg (2007) describes the qualitative interview as a conversation with the purpose to gather information. The semi-structured interviews were reordered during the process and taped with a digital voice recorder, the wording of questions was flexible, and the level of language had to be adjusted for the age and level of the participant. I added and deleted questions and provided clarification as needed. The interviews were held to a certain format but changeable if the need arose. Berg (2007) describes this sort of interview as systematic with a consistent order, but interviewees are allowed to digress and interviewers are allowed to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared, standardized questions. The interview protocol (located in Appendix A) included essential questions (concerning the main topic of the study), extra questions (similar to the essential to check for accuracy), and probing questions (to draw out a more complete explanation). Interviews with children were developmentally appropriate in terms of time and attention. Parent interviews were longer and more probing in the details surrounding the questions.

The existing documents reviewed included attendance records for the program and surveys collected from parents at the completion of the SEP each semester. Attendance records can be considered unobtrusive research, as defined by Berg (2007) in that they were used to examine and assess human traces. Attendance records are an example of archival data in the form of official documentary records.

The observations were conducted by the researcher and stored for the grant archives. Newer observations were recorded, as well. The observations included classroom activities and

projects as well as unstructured time. When observing, Merriam (1998) offers ideas for focus, including the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and even the researcher's own behavior. I conducted observations as a passive observer, not taking part in the action of the setting, but still known to the participants. Merriam (1998) described this stance as the observer as a participant. The researcher's observer activities are made known to the group and participation in the group is secondary to the role of information gatherer (Merriam, 1998). All of the notes, thoughts, and drawings recorded during these observations were considered field notes.

Table 6

Data Sources Chosen to Answer Specific Research Questions

Research Question	Data Source Used
How did learners participate in the SEP	Observations (classroom, common area) Interviews (PSTs, university faculty, school administration) Review of existing documents (surveys)
What were the attitudes of learners	Observations (classroom, common area) Interviews (student, parent) Review of existing documents (surveys, attendance)

All of these data sources were triangulated or compared and contrasted for accuracy. Berg (2007) describes triangulation as combining several lines of sight to obtain a more

substantive picture of reality. "Three known points or objects are used to draw sighting lines toward an unknown point or object…these lines intersect, forming a small triangle" (Berg, 2007, p. 5). This triangle demonstrates a convergence of meaning that will support the interpretation of data. More information on triangulation can be found in the Trustworthiness section of this report. Interview transcripts and existing documents were compared to field note observations. As themes emerged in the analysis, collected data was revisited. Data collection and analysis happened simultaneously. As the data was refined, patterns and insights directed the analysis and shaped the themes. Themes were reformulated and rethought to follow the direction of the recurring ideas.

Data Documentation

Observation notes and existing documents were compared to interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Notes were also taken during interviews to increase the reliability of the data. Field notes that represented existing data were revisited and rethought. New observations were taken long hand, reviewed, and transcribed into a narrative that described the setting, feeling, and relevant background information. Existing documents were handled with an aim toward truthfulness and insight. For example, having been a member of SEP faculty, I knew the circumstances of the families in regards to transportation issues and family culture. I knew that some of the students could not maintain regular attendance for issues that were out of their control. However, I did not misrepresent the data by making the attendance records seem better than they were. As Merriam (1998) described, rigor is derived from the researcher's presence, interaction, triangulation, interpretations, and descriptions. It is an interactive process. All data was stored on disks and backed up. Hard copies were kept in the researcher's locked file to guard against losing data.

Interviews

An interview is a method to construct reality through a surrogate observer, to see what one could not see through his or her own eyes (Stake, 1995). Yin (1994) describes interviews as the most important source of case study information. Interviews were conducted with students of the SEP, their parents, the principals of the school and the SEP's PSTs. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix A. Interviews lasted from 10-15 minutes for a child and up to an hour-and-a-half with parents. The interview process was carried out in the school, in hallways, alcoves, classrooms, the school office, and the cafeteria. Patton (2001) asserts "the major way in which the qualitative methodologist seeks to understand the perceptions, feelings, and knowledge of people is through in-depth, intensive interviewing" (p.29). The interview questions were open-ended and conducted in a person-to-person manner. Since the interviews involved children, an unstructured and informal atmosphere was created for maximum comfort and information retrieval. Plenty of wait time was given. As interviews were transcribed, the text of the interview was emailed to the individual adult participant for additional comments, deletions, and additions. A sample of the interview transcriptions can be found in Appendices B and C.

As Merriam (1998) outlined in her guide, the four questioning styles that should be utilized are hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position, and interpretive. The hypothetical question asked the participant to take a certain point of view. The devil's advocate asked the interviewee to examine an opposite point of view. The ideal position question probed the respondent to describe the perfect situation in relation to the current situation. Lastly, the interpretive question tried to summarize a given answer and ask the participant to provide feedback or clarification. However, questions were worded in an easy to understand language.

In general, the interview began with easier, neutral questioning to break the ice and moved into lengthier, more opinionated questions as the interview progressed. The numbers and time requirements were as follows (Table 7).

Table 7

Participant Type and Interview Length

Participant	Estimated length of interview
Six elementary students enrolled in the SEP (grades second through fifth)	One 10-15 minute interview per student
Six pre-service teacher interns	One 30 minute interview per intern
One-two university faculty members	One 30 minute interview per faculty member
Two school administrators	One 60 minute interview per administrator
Up to12 parents (of students participants)	One 30 minute interview per parent

It was decided that interviewing all stakeholders involved in the program would increase the trustworthiness of the findings. The obligatory IRB informed consent forms for adults and assent forms for minors were utilized for every participant.

Observations

Some of the observations were considered existing data as I conducted them through the grant program to utilize in an article about the SEP (Catapano & Gray, 2010). Additional observations were carried out later for publication purposes and then utilized as secondary data. Stake (2005) describes an observation as a way to use the culture of a setting to account for observed patterns of human activity. The observations lasted from 10 minutes (a general walk through) to a half hour (observing a lesson) per classroom. I wanted to get an overall feel for the atmosphere of the room and an idea of the quality of instruction. I observed the environment,

participants, and the interaction of participants with the environment and each other, paying close attention to the work produced in the classroom and the general feeling of the room. I listened to conversation, as well as, student self talk and took note of key behaviors and small occurrences. I was interested in data that could emerge in other forms that would match a scenario from my field notes. Berg (2007) explains that a researcher must take in the physical setting, develop relationships with the participants, track, observe, even eavesdrop, and ask questions, as well as, locate subgroups and central characters. I provided detailed descriptions, observer comments, and subjective reflections.

Data Analysis

Processing qualitative data is a systemic search for meaning in such that what has been learned can be communicated (Hatch, 2002). Stake (1995) describes data analysis as a matter of giving meaning to first impressions, as well as, final complications. Data was analyzed with the procedure of phenomenological analysis as described by Merriam (1998). I provided a structured description of the underlying factors that accounted for what was being experienced (Merriam, 1998). To begin the analysis of data, I needed to first bring all of the data together and organize it into easily retrievable portions. Merriam (1998) described this as getting your information ready for intensive analysis so that specific data could be located in a timely manner. The ultimate goal of my analysis was to derive meaning from the data. To do this I consolidated, reduced, and interpreted what was said and seen (Merriam, 1998).

The biggest challenge in data analysis was to construct categories that eventually became the answers to my research questions. These categories (or themes) encompassed recurring patterns and similarities. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) describe themes as a simple sentence or a string of words that appear in the data, reflect the purpose of the research, and can be

counted. It was important to establish codes that were easily identified and understood by others, so that auditing and inter-rater reliability could be utilized to increase trustworthiness. During data analysis and upon completion of this project, an outside auditor was consulted to verify findings. Using organized data and bits of information, as described by Merriam (1998), I compared and contrasted every meaningful detail to see if there were larger umbrellas under which they fit. If a piece of data fit into more than one category, it was placed into the category judged most fitting by the researcher. This application followed the practice of exclusive coding.

This category construction was the data analysis. As described by Hatch (2002) "analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, and mount critiques" (p.148). To analyze and organize data (interview transcripts, field notes, attendance records and observations) a descriptive framework (Yin, 1994) was established. Yin (1994) states if the original objective of the case study was a descriptive one, a case description should be developed. The case description in this study included seven categories under which to organize data. The categories were; organization and implementation of the SEP, structure and routine, projects (PBL) and curriculum, student perspectives and perceived outcomes, parent perspectives and perceived outcomes, faculty and administration perspectives and perceived outcomes, and attendance (see Table 8).

Table 8

Analysis Categories

Category	Research Question Fulfillment
Organization and Implementation	How did learners participate in the SEP?
Structure and Routine	How did learners participate in the SEP?
Projects, PBL, Curriculum	How did learners participate in the SEP?
Student Perspectives/ Perceived Outcomes	What were the attitudes of learners toward learning?
Parent Perspectives/ Perceived Outcomes	What were the attitudes of learners toward learning?
Faculty/ Administrator Perspectives/ Perceived Outcomes	What were the attitudes of learners toward learning?
Attendance	How did learners participate in the SEP?

First, I read through all of the data a few times without making any marks or notations. I did not want to form any preliminary conclusions, rather, ponder the data and the ideas and themes that began to emerge. After these initial readings, I added the seventh category of

attendance because there seemed to be a need. It stood out in the data as an issue that kept resurfacing.

After reading and establishing the categories, I read through the data again. This time I began to highlight words, phrases, even paragraphs that fell under the categories I had constructed. For example if a transcript contained a line about a class having two teachers and eight students, that line was highlighted in the color that corresponded to the attendance category. If an observation noted a classroom engaged in small group work, that line was highlighted with the color that corresponded to the category of structure and routine. This method was employed for every piece of data. Exclusive coding was used to put each piece of data into one category. Therefore, none of the data overlapped into more than one category. Exclusive coding kept the data better organized and provided for more consistency among categories in the mind of the researcher.

I read through the data again to double check the consistency and accuracy of my highlighting. After this step, I then created a new document with each of the seven categories listed in bold, underlined text. I went through each piece of data electronically this time and pasted each highlighted word, phrase, or paragraph under the heading to which it belonged. This enabled me to reorganize my data by category. Therefore, each bit of data that served to explain or offer insight on a particular category was put together so it could be easily compared or contrasted and therefore, be shaped into answers for the research question and sub-questions.

Merriam (1998) offered guidelines for category construction; categories should reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive, mutually exclusive (one unit should only fit into one category), sensitizing (well labeled, so an outsider could understand), and conceptually congruent (characterized by the same level of abstraction). Hancock and Algozzine (2006)

describe this method of analysis as thematic analysis because as each piece of data is examined in light of the research questions, tentative answers to the questions are constructed until themes emerge that are well supported by all available information. Mertler (2006) explains this idea as inductive analysis. To reduce the volume of information, it is necessary to identify and organize the data into patterns and themes with a coding scheme in an effort to construct a framework that will report key findings In basic terms, I decided how to best describe and evaluate the experience that was the SEP and examined the impact of the program on the students involved. As Hatch (2002) maintains, data analysis is asking questions of your data and stopping when the research questions have been answered. Hatch cautions (2002) "Data analysis is like teaching– there is always more you can do" (p.150).

Trustworthiness

One of the most important aspects of the research was producing results that were trustworthy. The best way to account for trustworthiness was by addressing validity and reliability. Huberman and Miles (2002) caution validity is relative to purposes and circumstances. Carefulness must be exercised in drawing conclusions from data; understanding is relative (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

External validity asks if the study can be generalized to other situations (Merriam, 1998). Since this was a qualitative case, external validity could be considered a limitation because the exact situation could not be replicated. Huberman and Miles (2002) assert qualitative studies are not usually designed to allow systemic generalizations to a wider population. The only way to provide evidence for validity or the ability to generalize was to provide the rich, thick description necessary for readers to understand the phenomenon and be able to apply it to their own situation. Stake (2005) concludes researchers must describe the case in sufficient detail so the

reader can make good comparisons. The more the case is specific, unique, and bounded, the greater the usefulness (Stake, 2005).

Internal validity is whether or not the findings match reality (Merriam, 1998). In this case, it was important to recognize the researcher as an instrument in the study and to understand that the findings represented the reality as the researcher understood it. One of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multi-dimensional, and ever-changing. It is not a fixed, single, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as is the expectation in much quantitative research (Merriam, 1998). Huberman and Miles (2002) maintain specific questions of qualitative validity within particular features of an account can be addressed by seeking evidence to rule out the threat. To check internal validity, Merriam (1998) offered six basic strategies including triangulation, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative research, and clarifying bias. These strategies were utilized as much as possible as data analysis took shape.

Triangulation called for multiple categories of data (observation, interviews, documents) to be compared with each other. To triangulate, it is necessary to verify if the phenomenon stays the same at other times, in other spaces, or as people interact differently (Stake, 1995). A strength of the case study is its ability to utilize a full body of evidence (documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations) beyond what might be available in a conventional study (Yin, 1994). In this case, documentation in the form of parent surveys and attendance records was compared with the information given in interviews and then compared to what was seen in the classroom observations. Then, the interview transcripts were compared to the observation records and the documentation. Following, the observations were compared to the interview transcripts and to the documentation. I checked to see that the ideas and details of the data were

consistent or if there were discrepancies on ideas such as the length and structure of the day, the philosophy behind the curriculum, or the response from the students themselves. Was the student response to the SEP perceived differently by the intern than the administrator? Specifically, with the usage of secondary data in this study, methodological triangulation can be utilized as described by Stake (1995), to increase confidence in an interpretation, an observation can be followed with a review of old records or an interview response can be backed up with a previous survey entry. Stake (2005) asserts triangulation helps to identify and clarify distinctive realities. To improve trustworthiness, these comparisons should carry the same meaning when found under different circumstances (Stake, 1995).

Long-term observation was established through the sheer length of time between the initial observations and interviews and the additional observation and interviews. Initial observations began in the fall semester of 2005. Additional observations were completed in the spring semester of 2010. A span of five years passed during which observations were recorded. Interviews formally began in the summer of 2008 and were completed in the spring of 2010. These initial interviews were used in a related article and to formulate the interview protocol for the additional interviews conducted in 2009-2010. Documentation in the form of attendance records and parent surveys was collected throughout the five-year span of the SEP.

Peer examination and collaboration were on going. The proposal for the study was reviewed by a professor and by peers from the university in fulfillment of a doctoral seminar requirement. Additionally, since a related article about the SEP has already been published, collaboration with the university faculty in charge of the SEP and the administration of the school that houses the SEP was necessary and cumulative throughout the five years that the SEP has been in existence.

Clarifying the researcher's bias was accomplished through peer editing and an outside auditor. Another academic in the field of education served to evaluate the entire study in the area of bias. The auditor offered an outsider's perspective as she has not seen the SEP in action, nor has she been a part of the SEP's faculty or development.

According to Merriam (1998), reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. If the study is repeated will you get the same results? This was a challenging task. The best that I could do was to fully explain the assumptions and the thought processes that went into the analysis. The question became more of a relationship between the findings and the data. Were the results consistent with the emergent themes of the data analysis? Stake (2005) asserts a single case can be trusted more than conclusions between two cases. Triangulation, member checks, long-term observations, peer examinations, conducting collaborative research, and clarifying the researcher's bias provided for maximum reliability and trustworthiness (Merriam, 1998).

Ethical Considerations

Obviously, when working with children, ethics were of utmost concern. The IRB for both UMSL and the school district were consulted for complete adherence to the rules. Stake (2005) maintains researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world and should adhere to a strict code of conduct, even go beyond rules to extend the protective system. All participants were asked to sign consent or assent forms prior to the beginning of data collection. Careful attention was given to time constraints and representing the children fairly. No names were given and all interviews, transcripts, and field notes were destroyed upon completion of the project. No photographs or videos were taken. Schmuck (2006) identifies several ethical principles to follow that include: only collecting data that fits the study's purpose, discussing the

plan with all involved and gaining approval, signed informed consent agreements for each participant, and collecting confidential data. In this study, full IRB approval was granted from both the university and the school district. Consent forms were signed by each participant as well as assent forms for each child that was interviewed. Interview data was stored digitally in the hand held voice recorder. The interviews were also transcribed and saved to three different files. Additionally, transcriptions were printed as hard copies and stored in a binder in a locked cabinet in my office. Observations were recorded in notebooks and on loose paper following a predetermined observation outline. These papers were stored in the locked cabinet as well. Existing documents were kept in the university's SEP archives.

Limitations

Major limitations included external validity, as the findings were hard to generalize to a different population. Also, as stated above, my views (as an urban educator and stake holder in the SEP) needed to be addressed as part of the analysis. Further, I had to avoid bias as I described a program that I already believed had the potential to be innovative and unique. As stated above, another limitation involved generalizability. This study and the personalities and experiences of the participants would be challenging to generalize to another context and therefore, no general theories could be derived from the data or the results. As this study was situated in a specific model of urban educational reform, it would be difficult for other researchers or teacher educators to replicate the exact situation and findings. Another possible limitation was that the SEP might not continue into following years, in which case I would be unable to do any additional observations. This could lead to missing areas of information to gather an examine in the data if the existing observations left out key ideas or if further analysis called for additional details.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, this study sought to answer the research question that asked: What were the participants' (students, parents, administrators, university faculty, and pre-service teachers) perceptions regarding the impact of a Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP)? I will clarify how the data was used to provide an answer or define a concept used to answer the research sub-questions: How did learners participate in the SEP, and what were the attitudes of the learners toward learning?

The first section explains the participants' participation in the SEP. First, I discussed the many ways learners participated in the SEP, including attendance trends and class sizes. I also explore the projects and curriculum that made up the SEP, as well as, the implementation, curriculum, and structure of the SEP.

The second section reports the attitudes toward and the perceptions of the learning that took place in the SEP as described by the students themselves, their parents, the administrators of the SEP and the university faculty. This section also explores the perceived outcomes the SEP had on the student learning as described by all research participants. The participants in this research are described in Table 7 (p. 57 in Chapter 3). For a complete list of the interview protocol questions by participant, please see Appendix A.

It is important to note that there have been two school principals as participants. The original principal (principal A) was a major founder and developer of the SEP. She conceived the idea and collaborated with the university faculty to create the program, with the major focus being that the SEP was a departure from the instruction that prevailed in the school Monday

through Friday. The original philosophy of the SEP was to utilize PBL in a shorter day that was less formal than the instruction during the school week. A new principal (principal B) began in the fall semester of 2009. She continued the SEP despite the fact that the original funding source had ended. Principal B was formerly the assistant principal of the school, and therefore, had some prior knowledge of the SEP. She was present every Saturday and supported the program. However, principal B had a different vision for the SEP. She knew the students enjoyed the SEP, but believed there could be more rigor in the instruction.

As described in Chapter 3, once the data was reorganized and grouped into categories, I read through each category. As I read, I began to underline and make notes on ideas that were repeated consistently and outliers (ideas that were not consistent with the data). Anything that appeared as important to describe the SEP or provide an explanation for answering a portion of the research question was noted. I used post-its to keep track of ideas that were repeatedly addressed and to check their consistency. For example the structure of a typical day in the SEP was addressed in many of the transcripts, as it was a protocol question. I wanted to describe and compare the answers as to the hours and function of the SEP. I also wrote down my own ideas, thoughts, and reactions to sub-ideas that emerged from the categories.

How Did Students Participate in the Saturday Enrichment Program?

By looking at the constructed categories encompassing the ideas of attendance, organization and implementation, structure and routine, and projects and curriculum, I examined how the SEP students spent their Saturday.

Attendance

Students showed participation by being at the SEP with regular attendance. Attendance varied in the research. Earlier attendance reports from the semesters when the SEP was new,

beginning in fall 2005 with a clearer focus on PBL, revealed higher numbers and a waiting list. Students on the waiting list were admitted if a participating student missed more than two Saturdays (2005-2008). In recent semesters, attendance percentages have dropped. As administration at the school level and within the university has changed (there have been two principals and four different adjunct professors in the role of overseer, also two different full time university faculty members have organized the SEP), the PBL focus has been lessened and curriculum has now been replaced with lessons that feature small groups and hands on learning, but is not decided, planned, or developed by the students as a true PBL lesson as was discussed in the literature review. However, this structure is still characterized as PBL by the PSTs and university faculty.

Attendance has dropped off over the five years; however, the initial interest in the program stays consistent. The number of sign up sheets returned and attendance for the first couple of weeks remains high. Data showed that attendance dwindled as the SEP semester progressed in the fall of 2009. One administrator said that when first looking at the class list, "I thought, 'Oh my gosh, this is wonderful', (but after closer inspection) you can see (shows roster), they are not coming." Total enrollment for that semester was supposed to be around 100 students for seven classrooms, averages about 14 students in each class. It was reported that over 100 sign up sheets were turned in, but data shows that less than half attended consistently. PSTs echoed this concern, "The only thing I would like is more kids", one revealed in an interview. Another participant said, "We can accommodate, you know, between 12 students about, 12-15 per each set of teachers and so we could have had 100 and that would have been fine." "I thought we would have more participation," one administrator revealed, "I received 100 applications, so I was expecting 100 students to show up." Another university faculty member

said, "Maybe some go out of town for a particular weekend. You have to expect that, and that's OK…but I would like to have a few more." A PST agreed, "Our class originally started out with 23 students (a larger class with three PSTs) and we have approximately, probably 13 that show up on a regular basis. It is a Saturday, families have other things going on."

In earlier semesters (2005-2008), when the SEP was a newer concept, principal A stated, "For approximately 60 slots [this semester had fewer slots because there were fewer interns] we would receive no fewer than up to almost 200 applications, but truly no less than 175." She related stories of how students would miss birthday parties or come to the SEP with a toothache instead of going to a Saturday dentist appointment because they did not want to lose their enrollment slot to someone on the waiting list.

In the most recent semester of data collection, at the beginning of the spring 2010 SEP semester, attendance was up again and PSTs reported having 23 students per class. When asked, "23 kids…and every day are 23 of them here?" The response was, "At least 19-20. This was a classroom with three teachers team teaching, and therefore allowed for higher numbers. It was also at the beginning of the semester. However, overall, as the SEP semester continued, the students made it less of a priority as attendance data showed more students absent.

Project Based Learning

The Project-Based Learning (PBL) curriculum category had much repetition. Words and phrases like "projects", "hands-on", and "cooperative learning" were seen often which provided a link to the structure and routine category. This category often featured the idea of small groups, working together, around themes that were established by the PSTs. The students interviewed agreed. One stated, "The teachers here (PSTs) always help us and our real teacher, she tries to help us all the time but she can't hear us when, like, a lot of people [are] in the

classroom because we have 19 people in the classroom and she can't check all of us, but, we only have like six kids (in the SEP) and she can do all of them." Parents highlighted the smaller group setting in interviews as well, saying, "They have a smaller group setting…it is more enjoyable from the teacher's standpoint and the student standpoint." Another parent agreed, "It looks like my kids have more fun at Saturday school…maybe because they have less child(ren)." One PST mentioned, "the smaller groups and the one-on-one … they are getting more attention…and we are providing them with these fun activities and therefore they are getting knowledge that school is fun and hopefully that sticks with them."

Table 9 presents some of the activities and projects that comprised the SEP in fall 2008 - 2010 and gave evidence of participation from the learners, thus answering the second research sub-question; how did learners participate in the SEP? SEP students participated in field trips to the city zoo, pumpkin patch, and farmer's market, among other locations. Projects and experiments included, but were not limited to, journaling, cooking, science experiments, artistic and creative expression, as well as, instructional technology, and community building.

Table 9

Activity Examples by Content Area

Content Area	Activity
Communication Arts	followed a recipe to make pumpkin muffins
	studied different versions of the Cinderella story
	silent reading
	read-alouds
	implemented the writing process
	exercised creative expression

	journaling
	scrapbooked
	problem-solving debates such as; there is no hospital in your town, should the only park in town be considered for the possible site of a new hospital?
Mathematics	sorted with Skittles
	predicted probability with tongue depressors
	estimated the usage of plastic materials in the home
	measured ingredients for a recipe
	planned a trip on a $100 budget
Science	bubble blowing analysis
	made rain forest necklaces
	made simulated glaciers and studying the effect
	an egg drop experiment (how to save the egg from breaking)
	made telescopes
	cleaned up trash around the school yard-Earth Day
	made inventions out of recycled materials
	explored leaves in the fall
Social Studies	made Indian Head Scarves
	role playing snake charming
	located countries on blow-up beach ball globes
	learned about the job of a firefighter
	tried on a firefighter's suit

Art	painting
	drawing
	made models with clay

Previous themes from the earlier (2005-2008) semesters followed a more culturally relevant approach to PBL and included neighborhood themes. SEP students explored cultural landmarks and discovered community history by taking walking fieldtrips. Students learned about how their neighborhoods were established and the rich history that occurred. Maps drawn on paper bags that had been wetted to look like aged parchment represented their learning. Students also produced skits and presentations that dramatized the early industry of fur trading that took place in neighborhood's open-air market. Place names were investigated and history came alive. These projects are the authentic assessment phase of their learning. In culmination of a PBL lesson, the learning is demonstrated with a product, project, or presentation.

This neighborhood exploration also benefited the PSTs. These individuals came to view the city's inner core as a place of pride and history, with many resources to offer its students. Instead of viewing the city as a place of decay, with little value, these educators uncovered a world of positive learning experiences. PSTs that would not have considered applying for employment in an inner-city district began to see themselves as urban educators.

Scheduling

The routine for a typical day in the SEP was a question that appeared on every participant's interview protocol. Every answer matched and the results are presented in Tables 10 and 11. The schedule for fall 2009 was revamped to allow for more instructional time and the Accelerated Reader Certification (ARC) program was eliminated to allow for increased

instructional time. The schedule for spring 2010 put lunch later in the day and stretched the dismissal time to 3:00 pm. Students, PSTs, administrators, and parents all mentioned the ARC program and described it as a time when certified classroom teachers, already employed by the district, worked with the students in a professional development opportunity that allowed the teacher to become a certified reading teacher. This program was utilized in the SEP to increase reading comprehension for participants. For reasons not made known to the researcher, ARC was removed from the SEP during the last semester of data collection (spring 2010).

PSTs also stated that ARC occurred at the end of each SEP day and took away from their instructional time. One of the students mentioned in her interview that "I didn't really like the literacy program [ARC] as much as Saturday school." She stated that eliminating ARC was the one thing she would change about Saturday school. Her mother agreed in her interview, that took place in the fall semester of 2009, "I know that it [ARC] is not a part of the program, but it impacts my kids wanting to come … it is kind of snuck in and it is not an option and it does take away from the students' time."

Table 10

Sample Schedule Of SEP for Fall 2009

Time of Day	Activity
8:30-9:10 am	Arrival activity
9:10-9:45 am	Class time / lessons
9:45-10:00 am	Snack
10-11:30 am	Class time / lessons
11:30 am -12:10 pm	Recess / Lunch
12:10-1:00 pm	Class time / Lessons
1:00-2:00 pm	Accelerated Reader Certification

Table 11

Sample Schedule Of SEP for Spring 2010

Time of Day	Activity
8:30-9:00 am	Arrival activity
9:00-11:15 am	Class time / lessons
11:15-11:30 am	Snack
11:30 am-12:40 pm	Class time / lessons
12:40-1:30 pm	Recess / Lunch
1:30-3:00 pm	Class time / Lessons

Curriculum

The curriculum of the SEP varied depending on the PST who created the lesson plan. However, all PSTs and administrators agreed that curriculum was aligned with the state-wide Grade Level Expectations for the grade served. Principal B thought it would be more helpful if the PSTs were also given the school district's curriculum pacing guide. Two PSTs claimed to use the teacher's daily objectives that were posted in the classroom as a guide.

An objective board is a common sight in most classrooms today. It can be an area on the chalkboard, dry erase board, or bulletin board that lists the day or week's planned curriculum much like an agenda. It helps to focus the students and teachers, so the topics or subjects that were planned, get presented in class. The objective board helps the students know what to expect and the teachers to stay focused. By using the objective board, the PSTs were making sure that whatever was being covered in the class Monday through Friday would be reviewed or extended on Saturday.

It was also agreed that all PSTs team-taught classes and that the team came up with a general over-arching theme for the lessons for an integrated curriculum approach that covered communication arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Some of the themes included: Five Senses, Four Seasons, Endangered Species, Cultural Diversity, Rainforest, and Community. Some PSTs discussed that the overall project was based on a philosophy of Project Based Approach or Project Based Learning. In many cases, PBL was synonymous to these teachers with smaller group learning or more hands-on activities and higher order thinking skills, such as application and analysis of a concept. When asked, "Would you call it a project-based approach or are they doing more hands-on?" Principal B replied, "It is just more hands-on." This researcher would define the curriculum as a loose interpretation of PBL, which allowed for more

hands-on activities, small groups, and cooperative learning. The PSTs did have coursework to prepare them for the PBL curriculum and a seminar after each SEP day was complete to discuss the activities of the day. However, a PST from the fall semester 2009, claimed, "It is a project in that it is not just a worksheet." As the SEP was modified by different administrators and different university faculty, the more traditional meaning of a PBL approach (as discussed in the Chapter 2 literature review) began to lessen. The major component of PBL that was left out was the focus on student selected and developed activities. The emphasis on an over-arching theme was also less obvious. However, to the current university faculty member and the PSTs this was still considered PBL.

One PST from the fall semester of 2009 described their theme as "animals", but then told me in great detail how her class completed a unit that compared Cinderella stories from around the world, did a bubble blowing experiment, and had a debate about the Montgomery Bus Boycott. As a comparison, in the fall semester of 2008 another PST described her theme as "Saving Our Environment" and related activities like calculating how much plastic (in pounds) each student's household went through in a year, holding a community clean up day, and engaging in a problem-solving debate about using a town's only park as a possible hospital site, because the town lacks a hospital. As this shows, in earlier semesters the PBL philosophy was much more developed and consistent. This seemed to give way to other important activities, such as the "Hot Topic" presentations described by the current adjunct professor in charge of the interns, as an outlet to explore timely and important issues in the field of education. Although, as less time and energy was focused on the development of PBL lessons, the curriculum began to lack the coherence that PBL offers, as well as, the student autonomy that goes along with the students having input on the activities.

The classroom observation that explored the "Saving Our Environment" theme and related activities occurred on November 8, 2008. In this classroom, two PSTs worked with a small group of six students. The students were writing revisions to an article and the PSTs were conferencing with the students using graphic organizers such as explaining webs and editing checklists. The students were allowed to lay on the floor in a warm patch of sunshine that filtered through the window. When I had a chance to interview the PST, I learned all about the articles and related lessons.

The environmental theme truly resonated through everything that the class did that semester. The lessons flowed with a coherence that obviously took a great deal of planning and thoughtfulness. The theme was chosen by the students based on personality profiles and getting to know you activities that took place in the first week of the program. Once the theme was established, every activity centered around it, no matter the curricular area. The class made models of environmental effects, made pumpkin globes to illustrate where these effects were felt, and graphed the relationship between the polluted areas of the world and the life expectancy of these regions. They created webs with the information and then wrote letters to political leaders voicing their concerns. They also wrote letters to the school board arguing against the usage of Styrofoam in the school district. The class created recycled inventions out of the trash they collected around the building and yard during their school-wide clean-up day. For a mathematics activity, the class estimated the number of trees used by each person in a lifetime; during a field trip to the zoo, they converted this number into elephants based on the weight of the animal given in the zoo literature. The students also predicted how many pounds of plastic was used in their home and then collected plastic containers for a week and weighed their findings. A very appropriate activity was the problem solving debate. The students had to form

teams and hold a debate centered on the predicament of a town with no hospital. They argued whether or not the town's only green space should be considered as a possible site for a future medical center. Much research and creativity went into these speeches and rebuttals. This is a strong example of project based learning centered around a larger theme that is student driven.

In contrast, consider the animals theme stated earlier. A classroom observation was performed along with a lengthy PST interview on February 27, 2010. The class was observed sitting in their desks. The PST was talking over a low rumble of student conversation. In her interview, the PST described their theme of "Animals" and said that everything centered on the theme. She mentioned using blow-up globes and locating animal habitats on the globes, such as pandas in China. Another activity highlighted was a game that sorted animals by vertebrates and invertebrates played by sticking Velcro cards to a board. However, as the interview progressed other lesson and activities began to stray from the theme. The PST described a probability game using tongue depressors, and another game using pennies. Also mentioned were bubble-blowing experiments where bubble solution was tested to see which produced the biggest bubble, a Cinderella around the world writing activity, and a conflict resolution activity inspired by the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. These are all quality lessons and worthy skills to develop; however, it was far more disjointed than the environmental unit. To this researcher it seemed like the PSTs just tried to put together fun and interesting lessons that they would enjoy teaching, not necessarily working creatively with the students to build a project.

The student driven lessons of the environmental unit created a feeling of ownership and autonomy for the students; it was not just a lesson that had been planned for them, rather, it was a project and they saw themselves as project managers instead of workers. The body language of the students spoke for itself. They had immersed themselves in this lesson. I was not noticed by

the students as I walked into the comfortably quiet classroom to observe them, only pencil scraping paper and the soft buzz of conferencing could be heard. When one of the students overheard me asking the PST about the lesson, she quickly and enthusiastically began explaining her favorite components, as well.

What Were the Attitudes of Learners Toward Learning?

The second sub-question asked was what were the attitudes of the learners toward learning. By exploring the categories of perspectives and perceived outcome, I found some consistencies among data responses. Ideas that reoccurred regularly included the opinion that the SEP was more fun than regular school, the SEP was a better alternative than other Saturday morning options, and there was a carry-over of information involved in the SEP that allowed students to be more successful Monday through Friday. I will organize the responses by participant. The student participants in this research were all in grades K-5 with one exception. One student was in sixth grade and she completed 4 years of the SEP before moving into middle school.

Fun

Fun is a word that was repeated frequently throughout the data, particularly when describing curriculum. Principal A revealed that a student confided in her, "When I come to school, I learn. When I come to Saturday School, I have fun and I learn." A previous university faculty member said, "They don't even realize that they're learning and applying skills because they are having so much fun." A PST echoed this idea:

> By creating lesson plans where they would have fun, but at the same time learn something from it too … That is probably the hardest thing, trying to put the two together so they can enjoy Saturday school and at the same time learn something.

A student said, "I do a lot of projects. I sometimes even learn when I'm doing fun things and I don't know it." Another student related that she liked the SEP because, "I like the hands-on because the book work and worksheets … we are really bored so it doesn't really help us learn as much as hands-on where we remember it because it is kind of fun." Another student said, "Most of the time we are doing fun projects, but we are still learning with them." A different student described a day at the SEP as "shorter (length of day) and more fun." One parent stated, "They are excited when they come home, like, 'Look, I did this!'"

Not all administrators were as impressed with the fun, particularly principal B. "It's fun and the kids have a good time, but with those small numbers, I would expect to see some pretty amazing work and I don't know that I'm seeing that." The same participant also revealed, " I don't know that all the work I've seen is as rigorous as it could be, because there are small numbers you could really push some of these students and I guess I don't see the rigor necessarily, at this point." However, as far as curriculum is concerned a PST claimed that the lesson plans "are really cool and educational, not just silly things we're doing. They actually relate to what they're learning about." Principal B feels differently, "They enjoy that and they are learning, but is that directly connected to what is currently happening in classrooms? I would have to say, 'no'." In an era of school accountability and data, fun is not foremost in the minds of many school administrators. The bottom line becomes test scores and AYP, and principal B did not see a strong connection to these.

An Alternative

Interview responses revealed that these students enjoyed the SEP as an alternative to what they would be doing at home. One student participant claimed that the SEP kept him "entertained instead of being bored, instead of watching TV." Another cited the same reason: "I

don't really have nothing to do at home." One student participant said, "I'm usually excited the whole week to go to Saturday School." Another PST agreed with the comments by saying in his interview that the, "educational activities (were) better than Saturday morning cartoons." This idea was consistent with parents as well. One parent explained, "It gives the kids something else to do instead of just being at home watching TV." The current university faculty member stated in her interview that the students told her if they were at home they would be "just watching TV, playing video games, something like that."

Carry-Over

Another idea that appeared consistently in the student perception category was that of a carry-over of information, the idea that a concept covered in the SEP was a review or an introduction to a subject covered in class Monday through Friday. A student participant said in interview dated fall 2009, "When you learn something here, sometimes you learn it in class." Others agreed, "If we learn about a topic, and then we learn about it at school, even if it was Saturday School a few times back, it came back and I remembered it." One student said,

> We do math (at school), but I don't get math when I come home because I be frustrated … In Saturday school they help us a lot and that can make my math get better and better. So, when I come home now, I can do math all by myself.

In the projects and curriculum category, during fall 2009, a PST commented that after implementing a lesson on glaciers, many of the students came back the next Saturday excited that "glacier" had been the "Word of the Week" in their classroom. Another PST revealed that parents had approached her and requested that certain concepts be covered because a student was struggling with mastery of concepts covered in class Monday-Friday. As mentioned earlier, two PSTs interviewed in fall 2009 even used the classroom teacher's objective board to plan their

lessons. A parent commented in fall 2009, "every subject they covered (in the SEP) does transpose over into what they are learning in the regular class day at some point and I think they are excited about learning that particular thing."

Not everybody agrees on the transference of SEP lessons. Principal B stated, "I guess if I had a wish it would be that the teachers (PSTs) actually reinforce what is happening in the class." She continued to say; "They could get a hold of our pacing guide at least and try to at least do the GLEs (Grade Level Expectations) that are current so that it would be a reinforcement rather than being so separate." The role of principal B is to oversee the logistics of the SEP. She is there every Saturday, unpaid, to make sure things run smoothly, but will admit, "I don't have to look at the lesson plans or observe the teachers officially or anything like that so the work is done by someone else." This participant will readily state that the students enjoy the program and benefit from the smaller groups and hands-on nature of the lessons, however, she also said, "They (PSTs) can't just do whatever, which is what I think they are doing right now, whatever comes into their mind and it's great and it works, then they do it, but I don't know if there is a direct connection."

Summary

Overall, what began as a federally funded grant to build a public school and university partnership that would benefit both entities grew into, among other things, the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP). This program continues despite the fact that the original funding source has ended. This study endeavored to explain the participant's perceptions of the SEP and answer two sub-questions that guided the research, how did the learners participate in the SEP and what were the attitudes of the learner's toward learning?

The question of participation was answered by looking at the data that tracked attendance, Project Based Learning (PBL), scheduling, and curriculum. It was found that attendance trends were notably higher at the beginning of the program in the semesters that occurred between 2005-2008. Starting in 2008, initial attendance and interest remained high, but then dwindled as the SEP semester progressed. Also, at the onset of the program a PBL based curriculum was more strictly adhered to by the PSTs who taught the SEP classes. Data showed that recent, unintentional refocusing of the program on a more traditional curriculum, one that mirrored school Monday-Friday coincided with falling attendance. Therefore, as less attention was given to the interests of the students when planning and developing lessons and units, fewer families made SEP a priority. Attendance began to drop as the students had less input. Initial interest in the SEP remained high each semester because students from previous semesters had enjoyed the program.

The question of what the learners' attitudes were toward learning was answered by the data that fell into the categories of parent, student, and faculty/administration perceptions and outcomes. This was explained in the sections titled fun, an alternative to school, and carry over of information. In summary, the learners who participated in the SEP enjoyed the curriculum of the SEP because it was more hands-on and delivered in smaller groups. They found it more enjoyable than a regular day of school because learning was more relaxed, interesting, and students believed they had more autonomy over how and what curriculum was covered. They also preferred the SEP to alternative Saturday experiences, such as watching TV or playing a video game. As an educator, a student who prefers to be at school on a Saturday engaging in quality, grade level appropriate curriculum is a student that I believe is hard working, enjoys school, and wants to be successful at school. It seems that student will therefore enter the

classroom on Monday with the advantage of being involved in programming that either reviewed, introduced, or extended the instruction from the Monday through Friday classroom. Most parents, administrators, PSTs and students agreed that they benefited from a whole extra day of instruction and enrichment that mirrored concepts covered at grade level in a more hands on fashion. This research confirmed the philosophy and goals of the SEP program.

Although most participants agreed with the benefits of the SEP, principal B voiced concerns regarding what she saw as the lack of rigor in the program and gave the impression that the fun could be better spent on preparing for state testing. She mentioned in her interview that the SEP was a departure from the weekly objectives and that there wasn't much of a carry-over of learning. She saw the benefits of the SEP and had a working knowledge of PBL, but thought the potential for learning would be even greater if the lessons and experiments were re-worked to be more rigorous, structured, or explicit.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief summary of the study, as well as, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. It provides a discussion of the implications for action and ideas for further research based on the data that was collected and analyzed.

Summary

This study sought to explore and evaluate a program in one urban elementary school. This is a qualitative case study of the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP), a program based on university partnerships with local schools. The study sought to determine how or if a hands–on, constructivist, out-of-school program could impact student participation and influence the attitudes of learners about learning. Most important to this study, elementary students experienced autonomy and creativity in their own education. The SEP students demonstrated learning by planning, creating projects, and assessing their learning experiences. This research evaluated the learning components that made the SEP an enrichment program offering a distinctive approach to teaching and learning through Project Based Learning (PBL). This study sought to describe the SEP that has been developed by one university using pre-service teachers (PSTs). The research questions asked; what are the perceptions of the participants (students, parents, administrators, university faculty, and pre-service teachers) regarding the impact of the Saturday Enrichment Program (SEP)? The research question generated two sub-questions; what were the attitudes of learners toward learning and how did learners participate in the SEP?

The purpose of this program was to provide field experiences for working university students, while simultaneously providing a unique learning opportunity for school children. Most field experiences for teacher education programs are completed Monday through Friday during regular school hours. This program gave university students the opportunity to complete field hours on Saturday and provided support to the school to offer enrichment activities on Saturdays. Preliminary data had already been gathered as required in the reporting guidelines of the grant through which the SEP was created. Further data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of SEP activities for a related article. Both sets of data were used as secondary data for this new analysis for dissertation purposes.

Review of Methodology

The sub-questions guided the review of the research. By arranging the data into categories, the question that asked how learners participated in the SEP was answered by concentrating on the attendance trends, scheduling, curriculum, and the Project Based Learning (PBL) focus. It was found that attendance was higher at the onset of the program and then in following semesters, attendance rose at the beginning of a semester and then lagged as the semester progressed. This coincides with curricular changes. PBL was strictly followed in the early SEP semesters (2005-2008) and then in later semesters (2009-2010) the focus lessened. This change came as the building administrator and university faculty began to change. It was found that as less of a PBL concentration was modeled by administrators and university faculty, then fewer PSTs endeavored to use this approach in the SEP classrooms. Therefore, students had less autonomy with the learning activities. As this change came about, fewer students made regular attendance a priority.

The sub-question asking what were the learners' attitudes towards learning was answered by the data that fell into the categories of parent, student, and faculty/administration perceptions and outcomes. In summary, all participants believed that the learners enjoyed the SEP because it was more hands on and delivered in a smaller group setting that was more relaxed than a regular day of school with teachers who were students themselves (PSTs). These learners benefited from an extra day of enrichment instruction that mirrored concepts taught in class, but went deeper to provide more autonomy with the goals of the lesson, more hands on experiments, and a smaller student to teacher ratio than their traditional classroom could provide. These students were excited about learning in a creative manner and excited to have the opportunity to be at school on Saturday!

Major Findings

The major findings of the study included the areas of attendance trends, PBL, scheduling, and curriculum. Basically, attendance dropped in the more recent semesters of the SEP. Many factors could have played a role in this trend and they are explained further in this chapter. PBL was the major educational philosophy of the SEP when it was created. However, as university and school administration changed, the PSTs interviewed had less of a working knowledge of this philosophy and thus the curriculum became a loose interpretation of PBL that still included more hands on activities and experiments than a regular day of school, but lacked the planning stages, student input, and authentic assessment of PBL as described in the literature review. The authentic assessment found in PBL is the culmination of the project. It can be a presentation, poster, or product, among other things. The schedule of the SEP changed as well during the years and it was found that a shorter day was more effective. However, all participants agreed on the general schedule of the semesters. The curriculum of the SEP was found to be enjoyable

by all participants. The PSTs reported putting much effort into designing activities that were fun yet educational. The students interviewed all had a favorable opinion of the SEP and mentioned an enjoyment factor they did not always find in school Monday through Friday. Parents who participated thought the SEP was educational and enriching and that it helped their student succeed in school overall. The university and school faculty all found the SEP to be a positive experience for the students. The current principal (principal B) thought that overall the curriculum could be more rigorous, but believed it was a good opportunity for the students.

Findings Related to the Literature

Urban Education

The literature review began with a rather bleak portrait of urban schools in modern society. With good reason, lately the headlines blast the institution of education at all levels, but focus most of the blame on the failing test scores of urban and minority districts. Growth in performance based state assessments should not be the only measure of teacher (or school) effectiveness, however, it remains the best and most objective in the eyes of policy makers (Jerald et al., 2009). Therefore, the bottom line for all schools becomes one test, taken during one week of a school year that grows longer and longer with each failing score.

The career of an urban educator has a copious amount of hurdles. Many teachers struggle with the politics of administration. Administrators who have not taught in a classroom for years (sometimes decades) decide what and how teachers teach, which, of late, means accountability, pre and post-tests, and data. Data that drives instruction, that is when there is time to teach, which is limited because so much precious instruction time is spent on collecting data, formative assessments, and pre and post-tests. There is no time left for creativity, student autonomy, or enrichment. In short, the enjoyment factor has been taken out of classroom

instruction, which makes students less engaged, then translates into less learning, and ultimately a lower test score on the state assessment, for which teachers are being blamed. A program, such as the SEP, could help students to find interest and engagement in their daily studies. A well-planned, hands-on experience may stimulate student learning and transpose that attitude into the regular education classroom. If students are excited to learn and excited to be at school, test scores may improve as a result.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

The literature review continued by asserting that while the current picture of urban education is less than inspiring there is hope. Some reform efforts are moving in the right direction. Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) is making classroom instruction better fit its constituents. In part, CRCM calls for more movement, games, cooperative learning, and vocals in a classroom. This mirrors the philosophy of the SEP and creates a more exciting and enriching learning environment for students. One of the SEP interns pointed out, "We always have some type of activity that gets them out of their seat or they are always working in groups and we try to make a game out of it." As Ladson-Billings (2009) states, culturally responsive teachers view their craft as an art, not a technical skill. These teachers know that a test score cannot measure a child's worth.

Such is the case of the SEP, a program that thrives on being a departure from the normal, everyday classroom. By following the major tenets of the Project Based Learning (PBL) philosophy, students have more of a voice in directing their learning. The curriculum calls for hands-on experiments, small group collaboration, and creativity. This combination is described by the participants as fun, yet learners will readily admit that the instruction is meaningful and does transpose into the curriculum that is followed Monday through Friday. State test scores at

the urban, minority school that hosts the SEP have increased and the school can now tout meaningful gains and count themselves among the schools in the state that earned adequate yearly progress for the 2009-2010 school year (DESE, 2011). Of course, the SEP can't take all the credit, but perhaps these results show that there is room for enrichment and even fun in today's urban classrooms.

Out-of-School Programs

The literature review also presented information on out-of-school programs. The case for programming that occurs in the out of school hours has been well documented as a powerful predictor of school success. Students who participate in quality before and after school operations are more likely to enjoy school and feel an attachment to their school. With the student participants interviewed, this was the case. The student participants consistently referred to the SEP as fun. One student participant revealed that school was fun, but the SEP was even more fun. Anytime that a child views learning and school as enjoyment, the field of education wins. That is one more student who will view himself or herself as a learner, and therefore, feel more confident in the school environment.

School Reform

The SEP is a powerful example of school reform. In the literature review, Gabrieli (2010) called for the need for expanded learning time, offering enrichment and intervention that students do not receive in the regular classroom. This is exactly the void that the SEP fills. With smaller class sizes and a reduced ratio of students to teachers, the SEP can provide more one-on-one instruction. As one student participant noted, "We do math (in regular school), but I don't get math when I come home and I be frustrated, and in Saturday school they help us a lot and

that can make my math get better and better. So, when I come home now I can do math all by myself."

Principal B gave an example of a SEP class with two teachers and between eight and nine students, giving that class a student/teacher ratio of 1:4. You would be hard pressed to find a ratio like that in any school, let alone an urban, public school. The current principal noted, "They do a lot of projects…they are getting a lot of individual attention." She continued to say, "It is good opportunity for our students on a Saturday." The SEP model follows Gabrieli's (2010) vision of expanded learning time making academic gains possible by small groups tutoring and enrichment.

Wolk (2010) pointed out the importance of authentic assessment such as portfolios, experiments, and projects. This is another area in which the SEP is answering the need for reform. Many of the student participants highlighted the experiments and projects utilized in the SEP as the reason for their attendance. These projects are the assessment phase of their learning. In culmination of a PBL lesson, the learning is demonstrated with a product, project, or presentation. A paper and pencil test will rarely spark the creativity employed by the learners who can choose independently how to demonstrate their knowledge of a subject area.

Project Based Learning

In the literature review Project Based Learning (PBL) was explored. The SEP began with a PBL focus, but as both university staff and school administration began to change, the focus lessened. The current principal says she would not describe the SEP curriculum as PBL, rather it is just more hands-on than a regular day of school. A PST claimed that the curriculum was project based in that "it is not just a worksheet." Some of the PBL components missing from the later SEP semesters include the student autonomy of selecting the subject matter and

learning goals of a lesson, as well as, student assessment. Results showed that as the curriculum began to lose a PBL focus, the attendance began to drop as well. Attendance data shows that as the students had less autonomy with the activities and projects and a less cohesive theme, students began to miss more and more Saturdays. This is just one factor affecting attendance, other changes in the program or just the novelty of the program wearing off could have played a part in lessening attendance, but it is nonetheless concerning.

Surprises

Some of the outcomes of the data analysis were unanticipated and stood out as noteworthy simply because of the unexpected nature. These findings influenced the results by being outliers, drastically different perspectives from others collected, or by being a direct contrast from what this researcher was expecting.

The first surprise was the sharp drop in attendance previously mentioned in this chapter. As a university faculty member during the planning stages and the onset of the program, I remembered vividly the waiting list of students who wanted to attend the SEP and the full classrooms that became the norm each Saturday during the first semester of the SEP. After taking a few years away from the SEP and then returning to gather data for a related article, I noticed that much had changed. The university faculty and the school administrator were different and attendance had decreased. I witnessed a class with two teachers and five children during one of my observations. While this was favorable for those five students, it would have been optimal to have a few more. There are many possible reasons for this change. Perhaps, the biggest reason is that the university faculty member in charge of the PSTs has less knowledge and insight concerning PBL. She has placed less of an emphasis on the wholeness of the theme and related PBL methods, such as student planning and assessment. Besides that, the principal

has changed. The current principal (principal B) is no longer looking for enriching, hands-on activities that are a departure from the regular school day. Rather, she would like to see more rigor and, in my opinion, more lessons designed to enhance test scores.

Administration Change

As mentioned before, the administration and faculty had gone through some changes. Principal B stated in an interview that she had nothing to do with the development of the SEP and she was not sure how it began. "It existed when I came to this school, so I don't know all of the details," she said. When asked if she just feel into the role of a SEP administrator, she said yes. It was apparent that she did not quite feel the passion for the program that the previous principal felt. She continued to say, "Quite honestly, I am not paid, so it is a time commitment and I am responsible for organizing quite a bit of it on our end and it can conflict with my regular daily duties."

In contrast, principal A had been in contact with the university requesting extra support for the students at her school and ultimately had a hand in creating the SEP. Principal A was not reimbursed monetarily for her time either. She explained, "The reason why I was excited (for the SEP) is the fact that it was going to be a full day of instruction in the…core subject areas. It was going to be project based, which of course is of greater interest to the students." She continued, "It was going to be connected with the grade level expectations…and the state standards." Principal B believes that the SEP does not reinforce what happens in the classroom (Monday through Friday). She said, "They can't just do whatever, which is what I think they are doing right now."

As far as attendance in the early days of the SEP, principal A stated, "It was astonishing, for approximately 60 slots I would receive no fewer than up to almost 200 applications."

Principal A went so far as to say, "It became like a status symbol almost to be able to be at Saturday School." However, principal B reported, "I received…over 100 (enrollment forms) I think that we only have between 50 and 60 that attend." This statement corresponded to the fall semester of 2009.

Additionally, principal A said that the openness of the curriculum added to the success of the program. "You didn't have as many constraints as the pacing curriculum", she reported. While principal B laments the fact that the PSTs don't follow the school district's pacing guide. "They could get a hold of our pacing guide at least and try to at least do the grade level expectations that are current," she stated in an interview.

Curriculum Change

These opinions tied into the curriculum changes that could have also played a part in the downturn of attendance. In the first few semesters of the SEP (2005-2008), a PBL focus allowed students to have more autonomy with their subject matter and gave more creative freedom. As principal A explained, "There were no workbooks…so it was creative." Further she described the curriculum saying, "This is what they have to be able to do as far as the performance level and application level of skills, now let's open up the creative process of how do we reach that goal." In sharp contrast, principal B stated, "I don't see it being very rigorous…It is fun and the kids have a good time, but with those small numbers I would expect some pretty amazing work, and I don't know that I'm seeing that." Basically, the students had better attendance when the SEP was more creative and followed a PBL approach. In more recent semesters, the PBL focus has become looser and principal B finds fault with the lack of rigor in the curriculum.

Conclusions

Based on the data and results it can be concluded that the SEP was more effective when it was better attended, which was when it was fully supported by the principal and the PSTs had a better understanding of PBL. Presently, the SEP is still a positive experience and excellent scholastic and social opportunity for the students. With a few small changes the SEP could be as popular and well attended as it was in the first semester.

Implications for Action

The enthusiasm that principal A experienced for the SEP was due in large part to the fact that she was a partner in creating the learning experiences and structure of the program. The current principal should have more of a say in what happens and what is taught in the SEP. She should be able to present a pacing guide, current GLEs, and explain to the PSTs how she wants the program to look and what the learning outcomes should be. It would then be up to the PSTs to create activities that fit the pacing guide, the current GLEs, and the principal's vision while still staying true to the PBL philosophy. This process is what certified teachers do every day, create lessons that have to meet certain criteria, yet keep the students creatively engaged. If principal B had more of a voice in the planning and curriculum of the SEP, she would probably feel more excitement for the program and therefore, through her excitement, the students would be more motivated to attend.

The PBL focus needs to be rekindled in the SEP. The current university faculty should be made aware that this is the intent of the program. If the PSTs were better trained in this area, they would be more willing to use the philosophy. The students would be more autonomous with the curriculum and the attendance would again follow an upward trend. PBL can work with the current principal's focus on rigor and pacing. Again, the PSTs need to find a common

ground between the creativity of PBL and the rigor of GLEs and a pacing guide. This would be excellent experience for the reality of a job in education in today's world of accountability.

Recommendations for Further Research

One area that stood out in the data as interesting, and yet unanswered, was the perception of the PSTs as to whether the SEP experience adequately prepared them for student teaching, managing, and organizing their own classroom. It would be very interesting to follow up with former SEP PSTs who have become teachers to find out if they thought the SEP was good preparation for the reality of teaching.

Another idea that presented itself was conducting a deeper case study. It would be very revealing to follow a SEP student through the years and compare and contrast this student with another similar student who did not attend the SEP. Would the student who attended the SEP find more success in his or her academic career?

Concluding Remarks

Overall, the SEP is a quality and worthwhile program for the students at this urban school. If at home, the students would not be engaging in the enriching, scholastic pursuits that are offered at the SEP. While the attendance fluctuates, it is apparent that the students who do attend enjoy learning in a variety of ways. Establishing a love of learning early in a child's life will create a solid foundation for the future. This child will find confidence in his or her abilities and develop an understanding that school and education are important. As a teacher, a SEP student is a child I would want in my class. As a parent, this sort of learning experience is what I hope to be available for my own children.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocols

Students

1. Tell me about the Saturday school program you were involved in.
2. How was the Saturday school program different from regular school?
3. What did you do in Saturday school?
4. What was the best part of the Saturday program?
5. Describe a perfect day at school.
6. What was wrong with the Saturday Program?
7. Did you like the Saturday school teachers?
8. Why did you choose to attend the Saturday school?
9. Did Saturday school help you do better in school?
10. What would you change about Saturday School?

Parents

1. Describe the Saturday school program.
2. How do you feel your child benefited from the program?
3. Compare Saturday school to a regular school day.
4. Was regular Saturday school attendance important to you?
5. How did you feel about the Saturday school teachers?
6. Did your child's attitude toward learning change in any way during or after the program?
7. Describe a perfect classroom for your child.
8. What was unfavorable about Saturday school?

9. What would you change about Saturday school?
10. Would you like to see the program continue?

University Faculty/ Principal/PSTs

1. How did the Saturday school program develop?
2. Describe a typical Saturday during the program.
3. How did the students react to the program?
4. Did you see any changes in student attitude during the program?
5. Were there any behavior problems during the Saturday program?
6. What did not go as planned during the Saturday program?
7. What surprised you about the program?
8. What would you change about the program?
9. Describe a typical Saturday school classroom.
10. Describe a typical Saturday school day.

Appendix B

Principal B Interview
XXXX Elementary

P=principal
I=interviewer

I= This is Principal B. Do you mind if I take notes? All right, how did the Saturday program develop?
P.= it existed when I came to this school so I don't know all of the details but it Is a partnership with the school to allow them to have an opportunity to have their student teachers get some practicum hours.
I.= and so when you became principal, you just kind of fell into the role?
P= yes.
I.= and can you describe a typical Saturday?
P.= that teachers arrive at about eight o'clock and they began to set up for the day. The students arrive at 830 at nine clock they go to the classrooms. They do a lot of comm arts and math In the morning we do a snack at 945 they go back to the room and we do lunch at 1130. We do a quick recess and about 20 minutes and then they continue with usually social studies or science. until about one o clock at one clock the ARC reading teachers come down and do some intensive reading with the students
P...= from 1 to 2?.
I.= yes
I..= and ARC is accelerated reader certification?
P= yes.
I= okay and how did your elementary school students react to the program?
P.= I received a lot of forms as saying that the students were going to participate, over 100, I think that we only have between 50 and 60 that attend. So I am not sure if parents changed their mind, or signed it just because it was something that the child brought home and really didn't read it. So I had expected a better turnout than what we received this time.
I= so last semester was there a better enrollment?
P.= I don't know because I wasn't a part of…
I.= oh that Is right you said that.
P.= from what I have heard it is usually 40 -50-60.
I.= okay so you are right where you usually are.
P.=Yeah, but we can accommodate, you know, between 12 students about, 12-15 per each set of teachers and so we could have had about 100 and would have been fine.
I.= as a principal, do you feel that the university interns are getting a good feel for teaching?
P.= I feel that they are creating lessons, they are carrying out their lessons, but in terms of it being a realistic setting- I don't feel that it is.
I.= can you explain why?
P.= well there are two teachers in the room and the most that a class has, I think is eight or nine. so that is a 4 to 1 ratio and in some cases a two to one ratio in some of the rooms and that is just not realistic. And if so because of that they can do projects.

I.(noise and background) do you need to go check on that
P.= yes
(pause)
P.= do you want to go back and do that again because I might have not finished my answer?
I.= we were talking about how the program Is unrealistic for some of the interns…
P.= Right, but having the small numbers is a good chance to do some of the things you wouldn't be able to do If you had a class of 25 students in and so I guess it depends what the purpose of the coursework is that they are completing is It to learn how to write lesson plans and carry that out? Then I'll obviously they can do that, but is it to deal with classroom management and those kinds of things, it is not realistic for that.
I.= I can see that. Now, how do you think that the students benefit from the program?
P.= because they do a lot of projects and it is the small number, I feel like they are getting a lot of individual attention. I don't know at all the work I've seen is as rigorous as it could be. Because there are small numbers you could really push some of these students and I guess I don't see the rigor necessarily at this point although there are a couple of weeks left. So I don't know if they are just afraid to push at this point and they don't know the level of the students and obviously they only have them for like five hours a week. They can't maybe gauge what the students can actually do. With that small amount you could really push the students to do some amazing things.
I= that is so true. (pause)
(principal goes to help guests in the building)
I= we are moving on to the challenges of the program for you as the principal.
P= Well.. quite honestly I am not paid so it is a time commitment and I am responsible for organizing quite a bit of it on our end and it can conflict with my regular daily duties. I have to get the sheets out I had to send them to classes.
I.= do you have to make the flyer?
P.= MV made them I had to do some revising of them. And then dealing with parents regarding Saturday school and it is an extra thing and so it does conflict some part with the school day. It is a good opportunity for our students on Saturday, but it does have its time commitment especially when it first started it was a lot of time. It was several hours worth of getting those, putting them in classes and in communicating that with MV.
I.= what surprised you about the program?
P.= I thought that we would have more participation. I received 100 so I was expecting 100 and students to show up. The food has been an issue pretty much since day one. It is free so how much do you complain? but that has been in organization issue. But I am responsible for doing that as well you know so…
I.= so a lot of this falls on your shoulders?
P.=yeah, I don't have to look at the lesson plans or observe the teachers officially or anything like that so the work work is done by someone else and the logistical stuff feels like it Is mine to take care of.
I= What would you change about the program if you could then?
P.= I would pay the principal.
.I.=yes
P=(laughter) Umm, I don't think I would do a snack and I honestly don't know if we need to do lunch but we are only going until two o'clock. Maybe just do the snack and not the lunch. I mean we don't start until nine and we are out by two so…

I.= I was wondering about an that. How long does the snack take?
P.= it takes too long.
I.= that is what I was thinking.
P. it takes too long, at least 15 minutes and they usually attach that to a bathroom break
I.= and they have to come down here to do It(down a flight of stairs to the cafeteria).
P.= but I don't want them to eat in the classrooms because we don't pay a custodian to be here either. So there Is no one here to clean. So we are offering this free program, and a lot of people are putting in time, even though because even on Monday morning when the custodian comes in, he is having to clean up whatever is left, although the teachers do a good job of trying to take care of that. It can be a little… there are extra things that have to happen. and now with the economy people want to be reimbursed for their time and their effort.
I.= now, let me ask you this-as a teacher in the building Monday through Friday, I think I would have issues with somebody else being in my classroom.
P.= well the problem is it is not their classroom. it is the school's room and they use that room and so I only had one teacher complain about using their room and I basically put it that way and to the teacher, that it Is not your room . It is the school's room and all the desks are school property. if you have anything lock it up, but I have explained to the teachers and they have done a really good job of not messing with things that belong to the teachers. So that is another thing that the interns have to bring every thing that they want to use. Crayons, markers, when those are part of the classroom, but the district is not paying for this, so I can't… you know it is hard for me to use district property and funds and things for me to provide for the Saturday school. So I know that they have to bring a lot of those things. Which I guess they are building a good toolbox for when they have their own classroom.
I.= I was thinking that when I did the program we had a big supply cabinet and that was full of crayons markers games…
P.= I remember that.
I.= anything that we thought the interns might need… they don't have that anymore?
P.= not that I know of. if it is here no one has given me direction as to where it is or where the key is in. I remember that at L. There was a cabinet that the Saturday school had with those kinds of things. Maybe MV has not been clued in that that exists either, or maybe In the move it got…
I.= it was on the other side and, there is another part of the basement and on the other side that was down there right off the steps
P= that is the Girl Scouts now.
I= it is probably not there then.
P.= we lost a lot in the move . We lost a lot of stuff
I.= when you say it in the move, what?
P.= from Lafayette to here, for the air conditioning
I.= so you had to move to L.
P.= for a year
I.= I didn't even know that! oh my gosh!
P.=yeah! we moved the whole school to put air conditioning in but that is nice to have so…
I.= that is nice to have but I didn't know that you did that. Wow, that is a lot to do. Alright, can you describe a typical classroom in the Saturday school program? what would be happening if I'd just walked into a classroom?
P.=I see the teachers working with the students in a group setting because it is so small I don't see a lot of lecture or whole group presentations. I see them actually sitting with the students

and working with them.
I.= I keep hearing about the projects. Can you describe the projects that they do? Would you call it a project-based approach or are they doing more hands-on?
P.= it is just more hands on. And I don't see their lesson plans so I don't know. I don't know the relationship that those have
I.= what feedback have you received from your families? The students, the parents?
P.= the students liked it.(pause)
I.= we were talking about the feedback and from the administration.
P.=umm, I guess if I had a wish it would be that what the teachers teach actually reinforce what is happening in the class. They could get a hold of our pacing guide at and try to at least do the GLEs that are current so that it would be a reinforcement rather than being so separate and the kids liked it because it is fun. They do all of these projects and hands on activities. So they enjoy that and they are learning but is that directly connected to what is currently happening in the classrooms? I would have to say no. So that would be a goal but that also limits what the teachers on Saturday can do. You know, they can't just do whatever. Which is what I think they are doing right now, what ever comes to their mind and it's great and it works, then they do it. But I don't know if there is a direct connection.
I.= so maybe if the interns contacted the classroom teachers?
P.= or even If I've just gave them a pacing guide for the quarter or something, just so that it is linked a little more.
I.= that is a good idea. Because I know that MV was saying that they look through the GLEs, but when you think about it they are so broad. You could just pull from anything and say that it fit this GLE.
P.= and the District sets up our pacing guide. There is a certain order that things are taught in. So I wouldn't be giving them the curriculum I would be giving them the pacing guide. They could at least see that these are the first five GLEs that we are going to do in math. They could at least work from those and and try to, you know, they each have a theme for their rooms so they could try to tie that into their theme. But like I said I don't see it being very rigorous. It is fun and the kids have a good time but with those small numbers I would expect some pretty amazing work. And I don't know that I'm seeing that. But they are also new teachers. So to them, they might think if the kids are happy I'm doing a great job. And we are not obviously evaluating them on rigor. But, we could, with the small number, you know.
I.= a lot could be done, definitely. And is there anything that you want to add that I did not touch on?
P.= no
I.= well I really appreciate your time thank you.

Appendix C

Parent 3 and Student Interview
XXXX elementary

P= parent
S= student
I= interviewer

I= okay my first question is to describe the Saturday school program.
P.= the Saturday school program is one that enables the kids to meet on a more personalized level with instructors, with a themed curriculum that the students feel more ownership of. And it is more, for some reason , they think it is more interesting. It is more hands-on.. It is more individualized. And it is a little less formal so they get excited about their project and they seem to really learn because It is like theirs. They feel It is their program not just school.
I.= that is a great answer thank you. And how about you (to student)?
S= I think it is a program where we have a theme and we do projects on It and learn more about it.
I.= that's good! And this one is just for you mom, how do you feel your child benefited from the program?
P.= both of my kids were Involved in the program and it was on a volunteer basis. When it was put me I thought it was amazing that any child want to come on a Saturday. Once they were in the program, the first day, the one that was more reluctant said, "when do we get to go back!?". They come up with themes about very real things, such as oceans or animals or community and they learn much more than they could in a regular day time setting because there are too many different subjects to cover, too many distractions. The way they encompass, this program is one that teaches all those other skills rolled into one. Such as when they do the community project. They went to the zoo on their walking field trip and the kids were looking at the animals but, at one point one of the boys broke away and said, "look, there's a community helper." They learn and put it into real life, with what they do. That is the benefit. Both of my kids seem to really pick up things in a different way because it's math, and then it's social studies, and now were moving to this, and now we are writing this. And they encompass the project into one where they are writing, they're counting, they're doing all the other skills in one. So I feel they are learning the basic skills of school in a different way at Saturdayschool and that rolls over into their everyday life
I.= so how do you feel you benefited (to student)?
S.= I think that I have learned more about different topics and met new people and learned how like different things, different skills. I've learned more things.
I.= so you enjoy that?
S.= mmm hmmm.
I= did you learn anything?
P.= it's true they have learned from different teaching styles too, which is wonderfully beneficial.
I.= that is true. All right, can you compare Saturday school to regular school?

P.= I don't… it is similar, but it is very different. It is not really a comparison. You have young teachers who don't have the formalized format of the school day. They are more relaxed. They have a smaller group setting. They have a theme that they can cover. And they are not expected to test on this, so it is more enjoyable from the teacher's standpoint and the student standpoint. As I said before, I don't think the kids really view it as school. It is an opportunity to go have fun in a little more relaxed way and still learn wonderful things that they take with them.
I.=S (student)?
S= and in regular school we pretty much, sometimes we do fun projects but we usually do book work or tests or something. But in Saturday school, most of the time we are doing fun projects, but we are still learning with them.
I= was regular attendance important to you?
P= it is. It's very important. In the past, and the fall session, they had more neighborhood activities that they were expected to do and I always felt very badly if they had to miss one because each session works and builds on the other. They would miss a craft or an activity or something that was very important. Since it is only an eight week program in the last week as kind of a, not a throwaway, but they don't do anything, they get to enjoy showing it all off, and so each week is very important because they are excited to be here. They are learning and doing something that culminates with the last week that they get to show us. So, it is very important. Attendance to me is always very important.
I.= so your kids may be, missed just one day?
P.= and she didn't this year, oh, she did because they didn't get the enrollment form. For some reason, we turned it in the very next morning because she was excited and they lost the form. I didn't follow up by the time I did, they said oh it started last week. So, yes, she did miss the first week. But normally, no, that activity was changed this year, so she would have been able to come each and every time.
I= well S, let me change it a little bit for you. Was it hard to come every Saturday? And after you had been at school all week long did you really want to come every Saturday?
S=uh, most of the time I did. Sometimes it was kind of hard to get up, but I'm usually excited pretty much for the whole week to go to Saturday school.
I= wow! good job. This is the biggie. Do and you feel that your child's attitude toward learning changed in any way because of the program?
P= I. think… I'm not sure that their attitude towards learning… but their excitement about learning about things did, so that is probably the same thing but I'm not sure. To them school is school and we have to take tests, we have to do this. It is all very cut and dry, by necessity I am sure. But the style of how this is taught I think probably carried over to if they were learning about oceans, then they started learning about something in school it probably brought that excitement back. School is a wonderful thing and the Saturday program has the flexibility of being less formal, more casual, but I think the way it is allowed to be run would be more beneficial during the class day and class year. But I don't know that that is a possibility with all the structure and testing and the criteria and things, but I think it carried over in their excitement and when it was something that they studied here and it was a wide… oceans was a wide thing. There was all the ocean life and the interaction. But you know, each and every subject they covered does transpose over into what they are learning in the regular class day at some point and I think they are excited about learning that particular thing. So yes, I think it did.
I= good. S (student), do you think your attitude toward learning changed in any way?
S= yes, like she said. If we learn about one topic, and then we learn about it at school, ,even if it

was (unintelligible) at Saturday School a few times back. It like came back and I remembered it. I Would answer questions more because I knew about it.
I= so, would you say that he gave some confidence?
S= yes
I= that's good. Can you describe the perfect classroom for your child? If you could create the classroom, what would it look like how would it run?
P=I think that the perfect classroom would be very visually stimulating, as a lot of the classrooms are. It would have a wide variety of different subject matters covered, because every child learns in a different way and even though parents kind of know their children. They don't always know what sparks an interest or where their skills lie or where their interest might lead from this subject over here and transpose. So, one that was visually stimulating and a lot of reference materials, whether it be pictures or books or chapter books or posters or anything that the kids could take an interest in and delve into deeply. Of course, have a computer available that they have access to, a lot of reading materials always very important, but a lot of different textured objects, a lot of different subject matter. You know, maybe some seashells or maybe a piece of lava, things that would stimulate different interest levels were different worlds, different regions and different cultural things, which again is what (this school) covers. My kids have always been very interested in other people and not just curiosity for curiosity's sake, but these people are the same as, but what do we do different. We want to try this. We want to understand this and saw the classroom should have a big variety of things just to spark their interest and answer their questions.
I= you must have been a teacher .
P= no
I= you sound like one.
P.= I would love to be. I have always wanted to be.
I= you would be a great teacher.
P= MV wants me to be one
I.= you should be. S., describe your perfect classroom.
S= a library…
I= so, lots of books?
S= a library in the classroom, yes. Computers, I think because it's more and more. I can learn more and more things when I use the computer. (Background noise)
I= you can think while they walk up the steps.
(unintelligible)
I.= So, lots of books and computers… and what would your teacher be like?
S= she would, or he would, not be too strict and try to have a lot of different things to talk about to help us learn and I don't know I forgot the word I've never thought about this…
I.= I know it is neat to think about designing your own classroom… maybe you would like to be a teacher one day, did you think of that?
S.=uhh……
I.= would you do more hands on activities or do you like worksheets and book work?
S= I'd like the hands on because the book work and worksheets, like, if we are just doing them, then we are really bored and so it doesn't really help us learn as much as hands-on where we remember it because It is kind of fun.
I.= good
P= maybe he would have, like, competitive learning, where you are competing against another

person or another team, or working on a project together.
I= did you encounter any challenges getting your child to school on a Saturday?
P= other than the fact that they are worn out from during the week, normally Saturday morning would be the morning that I would let them sleep in. They started the program several years ago so initially there is a wonderful little program on Saturday mornings that starts at 8:30 and ends at 3. So, those are small things, but no not really because they are always excited to come. So, no not really.
I.= isn't hard to get up on a Saturday, S?
S.= sometimes, if I'd had a bad week or something or just wanted to sleep in. Usually, if I know it is time for Saturday school I'm Like, "okay, fine I will get up."
I.= it's worth it?
S.=umm, hmm.
I= good. All right, I really want you to think about this one now; would you change anything about the Saturday school?
P.= I don't know that I would change anything about it, umm… because I think it is very well thought out. I think it is very well run from what I know of it. I wish more parents and children would be involved in it, but I don't know what the parameters are for how many they can take. I certainly would not change the ratio of kids to teachers, instructors because I think that is what makes it able to be more casual. Umm…
I.= well let me ask you this, the ratio of students to teacher is supposed to be, roughly,12 or 13 to 1. But since there are two teachers in each classroom , they were planning for 22 to 25 kids in a room for two teachers , but they never seem to get that.
P.= exactly
I= so, that is a good thing, you think, then?
P.= so far, but they have had-they've had a few more students enrolled and then they had three teachers in the room. If it is something where the teachers are excited about doing it, and they seemed to be, as long as it is run the same way I don't think it matters how many kids, because the kids, again, I don't see that behavior problems here because the students are wanting to come. As far as I know, for the most part, I don't think any of the parents are making them. I think it is pretty much volunteer on the kids part, so it is the kids that really either have the interest in learning or having the experience it provides. It is fun for them. They know they get one field trip. They know it is always something really fun. They get to know different teachers and I don't think the behavior problems are there. They get to have the playground all to themselves with friends. It is more like a day camp or something for them because they don't see it as I gotta go to school. I don't think it would matter how many teachers and how many students. We just have had the smaller ratio. I'm sure It would work. And I wish there would be more student involvement because I think it is wonderful. I can't say enough about the program because my kids are always like, "oohh, when do we get to go next?!" so, when you have something like that, it feels to me like they are always in school, but this part they don't feel like they are in school and they are having fun so, I don't see any negatives. Some of the things I see are like the literacy program that was added on, I don't think was indicated to the parents with enough, well I don't think we really knew about it. It was just kind of squeezed in there. The kids don't seem to have as much fun with that so, I think it was kind of snuck in maybe and that may be just me. But, other than that they like the whole program itself and so I don't think I would make any changes. I think it is different each and every time. But the program isn't. The program has a set expectation, I'm sure, but it is different each and every time with the kids. So, I think

that is what makes it fun, the unknown. And I enjoy seeing, and it may be a separate question but, I enjoy seeing the student teachers that come in, the student teachers come in with a look on their face like oh, parents what do I do? Kids, am I going to be able to do this? The look is kind of apprehension, almost fear and then I enjoy watching the progression of week to week. How all of a sudden they feel like this is mine. This is what I do. These are my kids. And by the end of it, and they look and act like teachers and… And I think for me, I know it is for the kids, for the students, but I am getting something out of it too because I interact with the student teachers and it is fun to see that. Anything that they can do for my children and I get to support the student teachers and then I get to see them come back into the schools later and I already know them.
I.= that is true .
P.= I wouldn't want to change that. It is working very well and actually there is always something to be improved but I wouldn't know what that is.
I.= okay, good. well S, would you change anything if you could?
S.=umm, I also didn't really like the literacy program. I think, well, it was okay, but I didn't really like it as much as the regular Saturday school and I liked the rest so I think that is all I would change.
I.= okay, we should put on the record that the literacy program is the accelerated reader certification program and that is for, correct me If I'm wrong, that is for teachers that are already certified, already in classroom and in but they are coming back to get a different certification.
P= and that is not part of your program
I.= right
P.= basically, I know that is not part of the program but it impacts my kids wanting to come. It impacts our understanding of the program when we come here so that is why a mention it because to the kids it is part of the Saturday school program because that is what they have to do when they come. It is not an option of well, I'll leave before that program or I'll come after that program. It was encompassed as part of it without really, we didn't know that, I don't think. And that takes away from your students time.
I.= yes it does. I have noticed that from what they've told me. Honestly, from what they have told me it sounds like they don't have that much class time with the kids because a whole hour is taken away.
P.= I don't mean to bad mouth whatever the program is, but it is kind of snuck in and it is not an option and it does take away from the students time. I would think that for myself as a parent, knowing my children love the Saturday program, but they don't like that, that would be a consideration as to whether to bring them. I know that is a very important program, but to kind of trap students who don't choose to go there is a little disconcerting that they would not choose that and the time that they would enjoy learning more, they don't have.., I'm sorry.
I.= no, I am glad we are getting into this. S, what do you do for that hour with the literacy program?
S.=umm, we did, I think we wrote a story. I think they were trying to make it fun but it wasn't really as fun compared to Saturday school. We played like one game over and over every time. We read books, we read books and….
I.= did you have to take any tests or anything?
S.=yeah, we take a few test, like literacy tests and, umm, I don't really remember that much because I didn't like it.
I.=yeah
P.= very political

I=alright, next question. Would you like to see the program continue?
P.= definitely, not a doubt. I was very concerned that it may not continue with changes. The kids were very concerned, well of course S. doesn't have the opportunity to come and that made her sad. I mean, she was looking forward to coming and E. by still being able to come was lording it over her. Like, I still get to come. So, yes definitely. I would be very sad if the program didn't continue. I think that we need to, if we know the parameters of how many kids are able to come, we need to get the word out better. In and I really feel we do, because I don't think that a lot of the parents understand . I think that a lot of the parents may not want to give up their Saturday. I have heard of kids that say I want to come but my parents don't want me to come because it is a Saturday. So I think that is kind of a stickler for parents who aren't really inspired for the best always, but I definitely think we have the interest there and it may not be presented well enough to some of the other kids parents. If we could get the word out more, I know that the program is already a success, and it could be even better, bigger ..
I.=alright, well is there anything else you just want to add on top of everything I already asked?
P.= nothing?(To S.) I just really think it is a phenomenal way of helping teachers. I don't know of any other program like this and when it was first presented, when we first came here, I just laughed.. I am like, (principal A) was here and she said, "oh maybe your kids would like to come to Saturday school." And I am like, "yeah, right!" and from the first time they came, both of them were like, especially S., "oh yeah, I want to come." But E. was like, "oh, do I have to go to school?" But, once she started the first day she was the one who said, "when do we get to go back?" When the program was over the first time, I didn't know it was presented again in the spring and they were both very sad. It was like, "oh, it's over." And then they said it will be presented again in the spring and they both said, "can we go?" I think it is a phenomenal program. As I have said before, the student teachers seem to benefit. I know in the past and I don't know if that would change but when (principal A) was here I know she got to know each of the student teachers very well. When there came an opportunity for them to do their student teaching… almost all of them were here. And some of them went on to, I was going to say, they've done their student teaching they already know the students. They feel at home in the building and with the materials available, it gives them, I believe, a better start on their student teaching. They interact with my kids again and again at some point and it goes on because if we see them out somewhere they know the kids. They remember things they learn from the teachers or they will refer to those teachers. They have learned that deeply from them. And then a lot of them go on to become staff here and I know several I mean (names names) was here and (more names) was here in. I mean you know where the teachers came from and you know when you go to choose, or have any Interaction on behalf of who your kids will have. You already know what they have to offer. So it is definitely a leg up.
I.= that is true. alright, well you guys were wonderful