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First Time University Students: Predictors of Success

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Introduction and Purpose

P-16 is the symbol representing a seamless educational progression from preschool through a bachelor’s degree in college. Major goals of P-16 systems include reducing achievement gaps in reading and math test scores and ensuring that every student is equipped to pursue a career or be prepared to enter post secondary education (Hess, 2008). Governors, state agency personnel, post secondary education leaders, and business representatives have collaborated to improve postsecondary preparation through the alignment of high school standards, graduation requirements, state assessments, and accountability systems to meet the requirements of higher education or careers (Achieve, 2009). The purpose of this paper is to discuss the findings of an exploratory study designed to identify predictors of successful completion of college level math and English courses during the first year of enrollment as college freshmen.

Literature Review

A review of the literature to examine educational foundations and school reform issues framing college preparedness include the following topics: historical perspectives, reform legislation, achievement gaps, and P-16 initiatives.

Historical Perspectives

Pulliam and Van Patten (2003) suggested that about 7.3% of the gross domestic product is spent on public education across all levels. These authors noted that high schools have been expected to provide a comprehensive education to meet the needs of the entire population since the reorganization of secondary education in the early 1900’s. Since 1918, with the advent of compulsory attendance laws, high schools have strived to provide college and career preparation for America’s youth (Ornstein, Levine, & Gutek, 2011).

With the enactment of the G.I. Bill in 1944, colleges and universities enjoyed significant growth (Ornstein, Levine, & Gutek, 2011). Colleges and universities have become more specialized because the expansion of industry, technology, and the knowledge explosion have made college preparation indispensable to many occupations that previously needed little formal education (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003).

Reform Legislation

Toch (2008) explained that the 1983 Commission of Excellence report, “A Nation at Risk,” formed the basis for the education reform movement. National education goals, announced by George H.W. Bush, formed the basis for education reform through the enactment of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Rudalevige, 2003). Goals 2000 became the foundation for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the most comprehensive educational reform legislation to date (Irons & Harris, 2007). Title I federal grants to public schools were reauthorized as part of the NCLB Act, focusing funding assistance on the highest poverty schools in order to bridge achievement gaps noted between ethnic students and White students (Irons & Harris). Guthrie and Schuermann (2010) noted that America’s schools are now focusing upon student achievement more than at any other time in American history.
Achievement Gaps

Currently the NCLB Act requires annual testing and demonstrated yearly progress for all student subgroups (Irons & Harris, 2007). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) may also be known as the Nations Report Card (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010). Freeman (2004) showed that an analysis of gender differences in reading achievement for the 1992-2003 administration of the NAEP revealed that females in grades four, eight, and twelve consistently outperformed their male counterparts. Freeman also noted that females in these grades outperformed males in writing achievement. A U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) (2005) report showed that smaller percentages of male and female students were at or above basic and at or above proficient in 2005 than they were in 1992 (USDOE, 2007). Kleinfield (2006) reported that boys in all socioeconomic and ethnic groups performed less well than girls with similar backgrounds. The USDOE (2007) report showed that grade twelve male students scored higher on the 2005 NAEP than their female counterparts. Individuals from the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) reported achievement gaps between White and Black students and between White and Hispanic students. Garibaldi (1992), reported that educational statistics consistently showed Black males to be clustered at the top of the distribution of indicators such as school failure, dropout, absenteeism, suspension and expulsion, and low achievement (Cooper & Jordan, 2005). Ferguson (as cited in Cooper & Jordan, 2005) reported that the Black-White test score gap from primary through the secondary grades remained constant at best, and widened at worst. Furthermore, among Blacks and Whites with equal current scores, Ferguson reported that Blacks tended to make less progress in the future.

The College Bound Seniors Profile Report (2009) showed little variance in reading between Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) mean scores for males and females. This college bound report showed more variance in math SAT scores between males and females and differences greater than one standard deviation for both reading and math for Black students, according to Robelen (2010). Although Black students represented 14.5% of the 2009 high school graduating class, only 3.7% of those passed at least one advanced placement test. Pike and Saupe (2002) reported that studies showed that test scores were one of the best predictors of success in college, because of the emphasis on the skills necessary for success on the SAT and advanced placement tests.

P-16 Initiatives

Plucker (2008) explained that the education reform known as P-16 is intended to provide greater continuity across students’ school years and their workforce entry. Plucker noted that P-16 activities include collaboration that links preschool education, K-12 education, and higher education with major roles involving state agencies, state legislatures, and the business community. Plucker explained that P-16 initiatives focused on enhancing college preparation through implementation of a rigorous high school curriculum, alignment of high school graduation requirements with postsecondary admission requirements. In addition, Plucker noted strengthening teacher preparation programs, providing professional development to maintain highly qualified teachers, and encouraging parent-community interaction as well as smoothing transitions across all education levels was important. Hess (2008) suggested that P-16 systems include reducing achievement gaps to ensure that every student is equipped to pursue a rewarding career through successful completion of a higher education program. Plucker (2008) noted that the most successful college preparation programs for first generation and underprivileged students started interventions as early as seventh grade. Plucker explained that waiting until late high school to address college preparation may be too late and this was not supported by research. Pike and Saupe (2002) reported that studies showed that high school performance was one of the best predictors of success in college, which emphasized the importance of the P-16 initiative. Since 2005, forty-eight states have committed to re-examining the alignment of their high school standards to ensure that they reflect the knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to be successfully prepared for entrance into higher education or the workplace (Achieve, 2009).

Methodology

The methodology section includes the following topics: research questions, sample characteristics, research design, analysis and findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
Questions for research
1. What factors impacted success in college math and English for first time college freshmen?
2. What variables predicted student passing grades in college math and English for first time college freshmen?

Sample characteristics
The sample consisted of a cohort of 1460 first-time in college full-time students. Of this cohort, 606 (41.51%) were male, and the majority, 854 (58.49%), were female. Six hundred fifty-nine students (45.14%), the majority, were White, 590 (40.41%) were Black, 104 (7.12%) were Hispanic, 46 (3.15%) Asian, and 50 (3.42%) were ethnically unclassified. The majority of the cohort was White, with the next largest groups being Black and Hispanic.

Over 72% of White participants were successful in first semester college math, while a little more than one-fourth (28%) of Black students were successful. This finding was supported by Robelen (2010), who reported differences greater than one standard deviation in both reading and math on the SAT for Black students. The larger group (59%) of successful math students was female, which refutes research wherein the USDOE (2007) reported that grade twelve male students scored higher on the 2005 NAEP than their female counterparts.

On examining the successful first semester freshman English completers, it was noted that the majority (52%) were Black while 48% were White, which may indicate that P-16 initiatives were positively impacting the achievement gap between Black and White students. Of the female students, the majority (61%) were successful in college English, which supported current research wherein females consistently outperformed their male counterparts in reading and writing (Freeman, 2004). Males made up 39% of students who were successful in first-year college English.

Research design
Correlational research utilizing a quasi-experimental design was used, specifically associating or relating variables in a predictable pattern of success for first time college freshmen. The researchers investigated the impact of five independent variables (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT verbal score, and TAKS/ELA score) on success in college math and English for first-time college freshmen and the impact of the five variables in predicting student passing grades in college math and English for first time college freshmen.

Findings
The two research questions provided the framework for discussion of the analysis of the data.
Question 1
What factors impact success in college math and English for first time college freshmen? The results of the logistic regression for successful completion of college-level math and English courses during their first year of enrollment by full-time (FT), first-time in college (FTIC) students entering in the fall 2008 semester were reported in Table 1 found in Appendix A of this paper. The results of the logistic regression analyses were presented in terms of the odds ratio. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the odds ratio “is the change in odds of being in one of the categories of outcome when the value of a predictor increases by one unit” (p. 461). In terms of the current study, the odds ratio indicated the change in odds of successful completion of a college-level course in the studied area during the student’s first year of study, with a one-unit change in the independent variables being studied. As DesJardins, Kim, and Rzonca (2002) noted, odds ratios greater than one indicated a positive relationship between the independent variable and the odds of successful completion, while odds ratios less than one indicate that a one-unit increase in the independent variable decreases the odds of successful completion. Results tables provided the significance level, or p-value, for each independent variable. P-values less than .05 indicated that the coefficient had a statistically significant impact on the probability of successful completion.

Direct logistic regression analysis was performed to assess the impact a number of factors had on the likelihood that fall 2008 FT/FTIC students would successfully complete their first college-level English or math course taken during their first year in college. The first model analyzed, which included all students enrolled in a college-level math course contained five independent variables (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT math score, and TAKS math score). As reported in Table 1 (see
Appendix A), two of the independent variables made a unique, statistically significant contribution to the model (gender and high school class rank percentile). The strongest predictor of successful completion was gender, specifically being a male, with an odds ratio of .338, which is less than 1, indicated a negative relationship, meaning that male students were .338 times as likely as female students to successfully complete. In other words, women were 2.958 times as likely as male students to successfully complete. The other statistically significant predictor was high school rank percentile, which showed an odds ratio of 1.023. This indicated that as the high school rank percentile increase by one unit, students were 1.023 times as likely to successfully complete.

The second model analyzed, which included all students enrolled in a college-level English course, also contained five independent variables (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT verbal score, and TAKS ENLA score). As reported in Table 1 (see Appendix A), two of the independent variables made a unique, statistically significant contribution to the model (ethnicity and high school class rank percentile). The strongest predictor of successful completion was ethnicity, specifically being White, with an odds ratio of 2.556. These results indicated that White students in the cohort taking a college-level English course in their first year of college were 2.556 times more likely than Black students to successfully complete. The other statistically significant predictor was high school rank percentile, which showed an odds ratio of 1.016. These results showed that as the high school rank percentile increase by one unit, students were 1.016 times as likely to successfully complete.

**Question 2**

What variables predict student passing grades in college math and English for first time college freshmen? Because there are differences in performance among the groups that cannot be quantified through the use of the successful completion dichotomous variable, an additional multiple regression analysis was performed to predict grades in students’ first college-level math and English courses. In order to perform this analysis, grades were converted to grade points, with 0 representing an F, 1 representing a D, 2 representing C, 3 representing B, and 4 representing an A. Multiple regression analyses were performed in order to predict student achievement in math and English courses, reported in Tables 2 (see Appendix A).

The ability of five independent variables (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT math score, and TAKS math score) to predict student success in first year, college-level math courses was reported in Table 2 (see Appendix A). The total variance in student grades received was 17.0%, indicating that 17.0% of the variability in first-year, college-level math grades of FT/FTIC entering students was predicted by the five variables included in this analysis.

Of the five independent variables entered into the analysis, three were found to be statistically significant predictors of student grades: gender, $\beta = -.218, p < .01$; ethnicity, $\beta = .124, p < .05$; and high school rank percentile, $\beta = .267, p < .01$. Two of these results were similar to those of the logistic regression analysis predicting the likelihood of successful completion, specifically, the negative impact of being male, as well as the positive impact of high school rank.

The ability of five independent variables (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT verbal score, and TAKS/ELA score) to predict student success in first year, college-level English courses was reported in Table 2. The total variance in student grade received was 15.5%, indicating that 15.5% of the variability in first-year, college-level math grades of FT/FTIC entering students was predicted by the five variables included in this analysis.

Of the five independent variables entered into the analysis, four were found to be statistically significant predictors of student grade: gender, $\beta = -.082, p < .05$; ethnicity, $\beta = .237, p < .01$; high school rank percentile, $\beta = .222, p < .01$; and SAT verbal scores, $\beta = .089, p < .05$. These results were similar to those of the logistic regression analysis predicting the likelihood of successful completion, specifically, the negative impact of being male, as well as the positive impact of high school rank, although this analysis was the only to find a statistically significant relationship between a test score and success.
Conclusions

About three-fourths of the White first semester college students were successful in college algebra. About one fourth of the Black students were successful. The success rate for Black students was supported throughout the literature, as supported by Garibaldi (1992), who asserted that Black males tended to experience high levels of school failure and low achievement. Research from the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) showed that achievement gaps between White and Black students and between White and Hispanic students continued to exist. The College Bound Seniors Profile Report (2009) showed a difference of greater than one standard deviation for reading and math for Black students (Robelen, 2010), further supporting the significance of ethnicity as a factor in college success. Based on results for first time college freshmen, being a Black male decreases the likelihood of college success.

High school class rank percentile was found to be a statistically significant predictor of college success in that as high school rank increased, the likelihood of successful completion increased. These results were supported by Pike and Saupe (2002), who cited studies that showed high school performance to be one of the best predictors of success in college.

Four variables were found to be predictors of success for first-year college students: gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, and SAT verbal. Results of this study showed that the largest group (59%) of successful math students were female, supported by Kleinfeld (2006), who reported that boys in every socioeconomic and ethnic group were outperformed by girls with similar backgrounds.

Ethnicity, specifically being Black, was not a predictor of academic success. Only 28% of the Black students were successful in college algebra. Ferguson (2005) noted that the Black-White test score gap from primary through the secondary grades remained constant at best, and widened at worst, and that among Blacks and Whites with equal current scores, Blacks tended to make less progress in the future.

High school rank percentile was a statistically significant predictor for White students in English and math. Results of the study showed that as the high school rank percentile increased, students were more likely to successfully complete. Pike and Saupe (2002) noted that studies showed high school performance and test scores to be two of the best predictors of success in college, which supported the fourth variable, SAT verbal score, as a predictor of success for first-year college students. Of the five independent variables studied (gender, ethnicity, high school rank percentile, SAT verbal, and TAKS/ELA), the TAKS/ELA score showed no relationship to student success in college math and English. Recommendations based on study findings follow.

Recommendations

1. Professional educators at the high school level should be made aware of the impact of grades and high school rank on the success rate of first year college students. Counseling may be beneficial for all high school students regarding the importance of grades earned in high school. Specifically, career counseling for Black male students should be provided to develop a positive sense of self prior to college.

2. It may be helpful to include parent awareness programs at the high school level stressing the importance of grades for transition to higher education, particularly for parents of Black male students.

3. Provide opportunities for Black male students to increase SAT verbal scores by emphasizing vocabulary development and comprehension skills development in all course offerings at the high school level.

4. Provide opportunities for Black male students to interact consistently with positive, successful male role models such as executives, professionals, entrepreneurs, and sports figures, who would be willing to advise students on the importance of college and career preparation.

5. More research appears needed concerning professional development programs for teachers concerning how to affect test score levels and the Black-White test score gaps. Future research could pursue the study of the impact of parental awareness and assertiveness on Black student success. A longitudinal research study may be helpful that uses a developmental perspective to investigate changes in African American boys’ achievement and performance beginning in pre-kindergarten with the objective of developing an intervention agenda.

6. It may be beneficial for college faculty and staff to be made aware of the findings of this study so that they could provide academic support for Black males.
References


# Appendix A

## Table 1

*Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of First College-level Course Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Math ($n=329$)</th>
<th>English ($n=700$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>2.556**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Class Rank</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKS</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01, **p < .001

## Table 2

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Grades in First College-level Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Math ($n=329$)</th>
<th>English ($n=700$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.218**</td>
<td>-0.082*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.124*</td>
<td>0.237**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Class Rank</td>
<td>0.267**</td>
<td>0.222**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.089*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKS</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01, **p < .001
Introduction

It is imperative that business students are prepared to join the world’s highly dynamic, technologically advanced 21st Century global workplace. Technological innovations have provided an effective transition into the new millennium, while rapid globalization has opened unprecedented risks and opportunities for the business sector. While transition is a major concern for most businesses as it relates to management, the global transformation has revealed that questionable business standards still exist. Scandals over the past decade include but are not limited to the following: Wall Street ethics (insider trading, leveraged buyouts); environmental issues (Con Edison); personal business ethics revealing theft at the highest levels of management (Madoff Investment, Allen Stanford, Lehman Brothers, Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), Adelphia Communications, AIG, Health South; kickbacks (Tyco); racial discrimination (Denny’s and Texaco); sexual harassment (Mitsubishi); and general dishonesty (BP, Enron, WorldCom, Waste Management) have proven financially disastrous due to unethical behavior (Business Week, 2002; Wall Street Journal, 2003; Scharff, 2005; Cagle & Baucus, 2006; Grant & Visconti, 2006; Kaplan & Kiron, 2007; Heminway, J., 2007; Eccles, Newquist & Schatz, 2007; Aguilera, Vadera, 2008; Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2008; Bartkus & Glassman, 2008; Ernst & Young, 2008; Palmer, 2008; Business Roundtable: Institute for Corporate Ethics, 2009; Ethics Resource Center, 2009; Rahman, Burckel & Mustafa, 2009; Putnam & Nicotera, 2010). Unexpected to the public, the epoch and consequences of these activities have been exposed. Corporate earnings management is one of the most repeatedly examined issues in the business arena (Healy & Wahlen, 1999). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been a “hot topic” in the business world since Friedman (1970) introduced the foundations of a free society into the discussion. The importance of CSR has been paramount in the last decade as the significant losses and spillover effects of CSR have fallen into the ethics arena (Ferry & Cruz-Cruz, 2008). Studies on business ethics at the college/university level have become extremely essential.

According to Batten, Hettihewa, and Mellor (1997, 2008) the literature on firms’ ethical management practices can be assigned to three broad categories. The first group defines the concepts and explains the ethical theory. The second group examines the attitudes and practices of various firm managers toward ethics and ethical practices (Norris & Gifford, 1988). The third group explores the influence of socio-cultural factors on managerial perceptions of unethical practices (McDonald & Zepp, 1988; Rashid, 1990; Sen, 1997; Batten et al., 1997; Batten et al., 2001). All three groups appear to be essential in bringing society and business together into a shared ethical atmosphere.

McDonald and Zepp (1988) and Rashid (1990) found that among other factors, the definition of business ethics could vary with age, gender, and culture. Longenecker, McKinney and Moors (1989) and Murphy (1992) found that firm size and organizational structure affect what, exactly, constitutes ethical behavior. Even recognizing all the differences, Donaldson (1989); Payne et al. (1997); and Kung (1997)
emphasized the importance of globalizing ethics. Further, ethical differences among professions appear to vary considerably. In their study, Aila and Jyvaskyla (2004) found that ethics in accounting depends on the act and practice of individuals and on their morality. Further, they found that an act is morally correct for an accounting professional if it is consistent with legislation and provides value for stakeholders and society. Rest (1986) suggested a Four Component Model with moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral intentions and moral behavior to explain the cognitive process that is essential for moral behavior to take place. The research focused on moral behavior in the field of accounting includes examinations on moral sensitivity (Shaub, 1994); moral judgment (Armstrong, 1987); behavioral intentions (Jeffery, 1993). Jones (1991) examined whether the moral intensity plays an important role in establishing moral intentions. Leitsch (2004), expanding this issue examined whether the accounting issue will have any effect on the perceived importance of the components of moral intensity and the students’ moral judgments and moral intentions found that “accounting students’ moral decision process and perceptions of the characteristics of the issue (moral intensity) varied between less unethical and more unethical issues” (p. 322).

Bampton and Maclagan (2006) concluded in their findings that the objection to the relevancy of ethics in the accounting curriculum by skeptics “is more characteristic of academics than it is of those practicing managers who have had to face actual moral dilemmas” (p. 293. As a matter of fact, they believe the need for ethics education and the findings are applicable not only to accounting, but business ethics education in general.

Huitt (1997) identified three major issues in the current education of young people: (1) development of a vision for one’s life; (2) development of one’s character; and (3) development of confidence. Walsh (1990) also emphasized three dimensions of education: (1) knowledge; (2) training of mental abilities; and (3) development of character. Moral development and character formation in the educational debate goes back as far as Aristotle (Nichomaeian Ethics) and Socrates (Meno) and continues to modern time (Nucci, 1989) with many additional developments (see e.g., Huitt, 2004). Miller and Kim (1988) focused on the view that “development of character is a solution to social problems and worthy educational ideals” (p. 135).

Emerging from these discoveries are opportunities for faculty members to discuss challenging ethical issues in the classroom that impact students’ moral development and assurance of ethical learning. The focus is on how one can be assured that students’ ethical perceptions can be impacted. According to an early ethics survey, relationships with customers, suppliers, and competitors are issues covered in greater depth than honesty in business exchanges (SHRM/ERC Ethics Survey, 2003).

To develop an understanding of business ethics, Ciulla (1991) believed that people around the world are trying to discover the kinds of social, moral, and legal arrangements that are necessary to function. Ideally, good ethics are considered a fundamental requirement for all business activities, although good ethics are not always present. Ethical practices establish public trust, providing the essential background to function efficiently (Standards of Practice Handbook, 2005). Research on the relationship between moral behavior and the levels of educational programs has increased considerably in the last few years (Monson & Bock, 2005; Lowry, 2003). The responsibilities of business schools to further develop and expand business ethics has become a popular discussion in the business world. As stated by Mayhew and King (2008), “reports on higher education have called for colleges and universities to take a more central role in providing moral and democratic education to college students” (p. 17). Halsbesleben et al. (2005); Swanson (2004); Sims & Felton (2006) strongly advocate for ethics teaching at early stages in business schools.

At times, an international workforce may not share the same or even similar moral values. Issues of primary concern relate to notions of right and wrong and related behavioral expectations in business and other areas. Beliefs about what are individual versus group responsibilities and what is personal and private vary considerably among cultures. Trust and loyalty to institutions, friends, family, and philosophies differ profoundly across cultures. All of these factors, however, influence the success of business and other institutions. Given the diversity of the workforce in the United States, we must determine the values within various groups in order to operate smoothly. Harris and Moran (1993) stated the following when considering managing cultural differences:
One of the universal, negative aspects of human behavior is corruption. Truth and honesty are noble ideals, but they are also relative to the beholder. As global managers operate transnationally, they are faced with a situation that in one country is lawful or accepted practice, and elsewhere is illegal. Bribes, for example, may be common ways of doing business to ensure service in the host culture, but quite illegal in the home culture (p. 275).

International Management Ethics & Values (IMEV) is an undergraduate course taught in the University of South Australia as part of the management degree in Adelaide, Singapore and Hong Kong. Howard Harris (2008) believes this course is a good example of how reflective activity and opportunity included in an undergraduate ethics course can lead students to develop practical wisdom. Harris (2008) also proposed the following:

The use of a portfolio collected over the professional formation may be the most effective way to assess ethical behavior where there is no opportunity for supervised practice (p. 388).

Statement of the problem
The purpose of this study is to investigate the moral development of student participants in both the United States and Australia at the following levels: vocational, college/university, professional, and graduate using the Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2). This study also seeks to examine the differences among students of different ages when responding to the five moral dilemma scenarios.

The hypotheses tested are:
H₀: Comparing student participants, there is no difference in gender, education, and age between the distributions of responses to the five moral dilemma scenarios involving ethical choices delineated on the survey.

H₁: Comparing student participants, there is a difference in gender, education, and age between the distributions of responses to the five moral dilemma scenarios involving ethical choices delineated on the survey.

Significance of the problem
This study has potential significance to both business and academia. Firms, governments, and international institutions might benefit by identifying differences, if any, in the variables compared. The test seeks to gain insight into the similarities and differences among the moral development of people of different ages, cultures, genders, levels of education, and political views. Researchers can use the findings to add to the body of knowledge that addresses ethics and moral development. This could stimulate further research into the training and educational needs of businesses.

Study limitations
This study and all conclusions and implications are limited to:

- Student participants from both the United States and Australia.
- The five specific moral dilemma scenarios delineated in the Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2).
(See Appendix).

Measures
The Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2) was developed by Rest (1979); Rest et al. (1999) and Rest et al. (1999b) based upon Kohlberg’s (1984) cognitive-developmental theory of moral reasoning. The test consists of five moral dilemma scenarios describing situations that require ethical decision-making. The test seeks to gain insight into the similarities and differences between the moral development of people of different ages, cultures, genders, levels of education, and political views.

The DIT-2 is an updated version of the original DIT devised more than 25 years ago. Compared to the original test, DIT-2 includes updated stories; is a shorter test; has clearer instructions; retains more subjects through subject reliability checks; and in studies so far, does not sacrifice validity. If anything, the updated test improves validity. The correlation of DIT-1 with DIT-2 is .79.

The DIT is a paper-and-pencil measure of moral judgment derived from Kohlberg’s (1984) theory. Instead of envisioning the scoring process as classifying responses into Kohlberg’s six stages, the DIT analyzes responses as activating three schemas. In short, the DIT measures how respondents develop concepts of social justice.
Reliability is adequate. Cronbach’s alpha is in the upper .70s/low .80s (these estimates of internal consistency are for the P score and N2 score). Test-retest reliability is about the same. The DIT is equally valid for males and females (Draft* Guide for DIT-2 2003).

**Methodology**

The DIT-2 was given to 102 student participants in the United States and Australia, with 101 participants accepting the task. Participants needed two parts to complete the test: (1) the instruction booklet, which contained instructions and the five moral dilemmas (see Appendix); and (2) the printed answer sheet, which contained the items and answer grids. Before handing out these materials to participants, we decided how to assign identification numbers to participants and whether additional instructions were necessary. A five-digit identification number that represented each demographic subgroup was assigned to the participants and included on the answer sheet as shown in Table 1:

(Insert Table 1 here)

The answer sheet included five stories of moral dilemmas: Famine, Reporter, School Board, Cancer, and Demonstration (see Appendix). Participants were required to:

- Respond to “What action do you favor?” for each story (three choices).
- Rate 12 issues in terms of importance (1=Great, 2=Much, 3=Some, 4=Little, 5=No).
- Rank issues in order of most important to least important (most important, second most important, third most important, and fourth most important).
- Provide Information about themselves (age, gender, level of education, political views, citizen of U.S. and if English is their primary language).

Note that dilemmas 6 and 7, presented on the last page, were not used. The DIT-2 is not a timed test, although participants were encouraged to complete the test within an hour.

**Findings**

Data analysis techniques and results were reviewed. The majority of the data were categorical values. The appropriate technique is the \( \chi^2 \) test of independence of row and column variables. The technique calculated expected values, however, with the assumption that the expected values have a value of five or greater. Many of the initial tables violated this assumption. As a result, the researchers decided to use the Fisher’s exact test. The Fisher’s test is described in detail in Everitt (1977).

This test used an iterative process to determine expected values. The results can be safely used, therefore, without violating underlying assumptions. The basic test procedure is as follows:

1. \( H_0 \): Row variable and column variable are independent versus \( H_1 \): Row variable and column variable are dependent.
2. The test statistic is the \( p \) value from the Fisher test.
3. If the \( p \) value is less than \( \alpha=0.05 \), then \( H_0 \) is rejected.
4. Conclusion.

The following variables: Sex (gender), Political standing, Citizenship, First Language, Education, and Age were compared against all other variables in the five stories: Famine, Reporter, School Board, Cancer, and Demonstration (see Appendix). P-values for the different concepts as they reference the five stories are shown in Table 2.

(Insert Table 2 here)

For the Education variable, a categorical variable was constructed in which the undergraduate level was assigned the number 1 and professional and graduate levels were assigned the number 2. A special age variable was also constructed as follows:

- Age 20 and below assigned the number 1.
- Age 21 through 30 assigned the number 2.
- Age 31 through 40 assigned the number 3.
- Age above 40 assigned the number 4.

Overall, the study revealed that the Gender, Education, and Age variables were most significant when compared to the variables in the five stories. There were no concepts that appeared significantly across all tests.
The major question for the Famine story (Story #1) was: “What should Mustaq Singh do? Do you favor the action of taking the food?” was only significant when compared with gender.

The major question for the Cancer story (Story #4) was: “Do you favor the action of giving more medicine?” was only significant when analyzed against education. None of the other major questions: Reporter story (Story #2): “Do you favor the action of reporting the story?”; School Board story (Story #3): “Do you favor calling of the next Open Meeting?”; and Demonstration story (Story #5): “Do you favor the action of demonstrating in this way?” were dependent on the comparison variables.

Interestingly, the ranking questions (rating the 12 issues resulting from each story in terms of importance) were significant with Gender, Citizenship, and Language. There were no duplicate questions, however, that were significant.

In terms of Gender, nearly all of the significant questions related to society or the community as a whole. An apparent difference emerged in how men and women react to the “common good.” This trend appeared again in the significant education questions. Based on this study, reactions to large-scale issues and education level are indeed significant in several of the narratives (Famine, Reporter, and Demonstration). This trend is not as apparent in the age category. Presumably, societal viewpoints are impacted more by gender and educational level rather than age.

The variables of Political Standing, Citizenship, and Language showed very few significant dependencies, which is surprising. The researchers had anticipated more differences in the Political Standing category.

**United States versus Australia**

The results in Table 3 display the schema scores based on the respondents from the United States and Australia, respectively. The educational level, mean, standard deviation, and number of participants are displayed.

(Insert Table 3 here)

*Personal Interest Schema Score* represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stage 2 and Stage 3 considerations. Stage 2 considerations focus on the direct advantages to the actor and on the fairness of simple exchanges of a favor for a favor. Stage 3 considerations focus on the good or evil intentions of the parties; on the party’s concern for maintaining friendships and good relationships; and maintaining approval.

*Maintaining Norms Schema Score* represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stage 4 considerations. Stage 4 considerations focus on maintaining the existing legal system, maintaining existing roles, and formal organizational structure.

*Post Conventional Schema Score* represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stage 5 and Stage 6 considerations. Stage 5 considerations focus on organizing a society by appealing to consensus-producing procedures (such as abiding by majority vote); insisting on due process (giving everyone his or her day in court); and safeguarding minimal basic rights. Stage 6 considerations focus on organizing social arrangements and relationships in terms of intuitively appealing ideals.

*N2 Score* is a new index that generally outperforms the *P* score on six criteria for construct validity (Rest et al., 1997).

The *Utilizer Score* represents the degree of match between items endorsed as most important and the action choice on that particular story.

*Humanitarian/Liberalism* variable is a proxy for the humanitarian/liberal perspective on moral issues. Early in the development of the DIT, researchers noticed that professionals in political science and philosophy obtained the highest *P* scores.

*The Number of Cannot Decide Choices* variable was created to represent the decisiveness with which an individual selected action choices on the DIT. For each of the five DIT-2 stories, participants are asked to choose whether the protagonist should or should not act in a particular way (for example, in the Famine dilemma, should the protagonist take the food or not).

*The Religious Orthodoxy* (proxy measure) variable referred to the Cancer story (Story #4) on the DIT-2. It represents the sum of the rates and ranks for item 9 in the doctor’s dilemma. This dilemma asks whether the doctor would feel guilty because he gave the patient so many drugs that she died.
Conclusions

Findings from this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge in that this study provides additional empirical data on the significance of examining moral development. The data indicates that when comparing the categories of Gender, Education, Political Standing, Citizenship, First Language, and Age, only Gender, Education, and Age compared statistically crucial in the decision-making process. Further, the data suggest that significant comparison is evident when respondents answered questions in any of the five moral dilemma stories.

When the questions are ranked according to importance, however, the comparisons of Gender, Citizenship, and Language become more crucial to the decision-making process for respondents in both the United States and Australia. In terms of Gender, a common thread in both comparisons was that the more important questions in this category dealt with society and/or the community.

Baker and Ulstad (2007) determined from their research examining societal expectation (cheating is unacceptable) that female students, when compared with male students, found “cheating behaviors” much less acceptable. Biological gender effect is not diminished by curriculum differences between business disciplines. For example, both accounting students and business students in general experience the biological gender effect. The findings of the Baker and Ulstad (2007) study proposed the following regarding curriculum:

If students do not hold appropriate academic ethical beliefs, it is unlikely that ethics curricula such as learning about accounting scandals can ensure students achieve appropriate levels of business ethics. Basic ethical beliefs provide a foundation for understanding and utilizing business scenarios and theoretical discussion used in formal business ethics training. Ethics curricula in business should focus more heavily on these basic concepts. One important basic concept is general societal ethics (p. 13).

The corollary suggests that the level of one’s moral development can be the stimulus that triggers or motivates the decision making process and/or controls the decisions made. The test, DIT-2, sought the views of a diversified group of students to determine how people use different considerations when resolving a moral situation. Kohlberg (1984) and Rest (1986) believed moral judgments are based upon people’s conception of the situation.

Organizations need to recognize that although their businesses are operating within the law, they conversely may not be executing operations ethically. As global markets continue to mature, businesses will introduce and refine policies of ethics to efficiently address any dilemma in the future (Ashe, 2005).

According to Wade Robison (2004):

The activity of business is not value-neutral, and if one is to manage morally in business, one must come to understand its general tendencies insofar as they affect values (p. 287). Therefore, a more relevant question is, are business students prepared for ethical decision making before they join the general workplace or even the global workplace in this technologically advanced century? A recent study (Neubaum et al., 2009), “reject the idea that a student’s business orientation somehow preordains them to commit ethical violations” (p. 13). This study supports the assurance of ethical learning and that ethical perceptions of students may be influenced.

References
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Ernst & Young (2008), *Corruption or Compliance? Weighing the Costs: 10th Global Fraud Survey,* Ernst & Young, New York, NY.


Work Ethic Ranks #1 in Top Hiring Criteria: January, 1995. The Houston Post, Section J:1, Houston, TX.
**APPENDIX**

**Defining Issues Test (DIT-2) Stories**

**Famine – (Story #1)**

The small village in northern India has experienced shortages of food before, but this year’s famine is worse than ever. Some families are even trying to feed themselves by making soup from tree bark. Mustaq Singh’s family is near starvation. He has heard that a rich man in his village has supplies of food stored away and is hoarding food while its price goes higher so that he can sell the food later at a huge profit. Mustaq is desperate and thinks about stealing some food from the rich man’s warehouse. The small amount of food that he needs for his family probably wouldn’t even be missed.

**Reporter – (Story #2)**

Molly Dayton has been a news reporter for the *Gazette* newspaper for over a decade. Almost by accident, she learned that one of the candidates for Lieutenant Governor for her state, Grover Thompson, had been arrested for shop-lifting 20 years earlier. Reporter Dayton found out that early in his life, Candidate Thompson had undergone a confused period and done things he later regretted, actions which would be very out-of-character now. His shoplifting had been a minor offense and charges had been dropped by the department store. Thompson has not only straightened himself out since then, but built a distinguished record in helping many people and in leading constructive community projects. Now, Reporter Dayton regards Thomson as the best candidate in the field and likely to go on to important leadership positions in the state. Reporter Dayton wonders whether or not she should write the story about Thompson’s earlier troubles because in the upcoming close and heated election, she fears that such a news story could wreck Thompson’s chance to win.

**School Board – (Story #3)**

Mr. Grant has been elected to the School Board District 190 and was chosen to be Chairman. The district is bitterly divided over the closing of one of the high schools. One of the high schools has to be closed for financial reasons, but there is no agreement over which school to close. During his election to the School Board, Mr. Grant had proposed a series of “Open Meetings” in which members of the community could voice their opinions. He hoped that dialogue would make the community realize the necessity of closing one high school. Also he hoped that through open discussion, the difficulty of the decision would be appreciated, and that the community would ultimately support the school board decision. The first Open Meeting was a disaster. Passionate speeches dominated the microphones and threatened violence. The meeting barely closed without fist-fights. Later in the week, school board members received threatening phone calls. Mr. Grant wonders if he ought to call off the next Open Meeting.

**Cancer – (Story #4)**

Mrs. Bennett is 62 years old, and in the last phases of colon cancer. She is in terrible pain and asks the doctor to give her more pain-killer medicine. The doctor has given her the maximum safe dose already and is reluctant to increase the dosage because it would probably hasten her death. In a clear and rational mental state, Mrs. Bennett says that she realizes this; but she wants to end her suffering even if it means ending her life. Should the doctor give her an increased dosage?

**Demonstration – (Story #5)**

Political and economic instability in a South American country prompted the President of the United States to send troops to “police” the area. Students at many campuses in the U.S.A. have protested that the United States is using its military might for economic advantage. There is widespread suspicion that big oil multinational companies are pressuring the President to safeguard a cheap oil supply even if it means loss of life. Students at one campus took to the streets in demonstrations, tying up traffic and stopping regular business in the town. The president of the university demanded that the students stop their illegal demonstrations. Students then took over the college’s administration building, completely paralyzing the college. Are the students right to demonstrate in these ways?
Table 1: Demographic Subgroups and Test Identification Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>10000 = 17</td>
<td>10000 = 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates (seniors)</td>
<td>40000 = 23</td>
<td>30000 = 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates/professionals</td>
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<td>50000 = 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduates/professionals</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>50 (49 accepted)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>p-value</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Age and Demonstration Rank 3</td>
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Table 3: Schema Scores

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<th>United States</th>
<th>Australia</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Interest (Stage 2/3)</td>
<td>Mean: 28.93</td>
<td>Mean: 24.21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 11.53</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 10.63</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>N: 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain Norms (Stage 4)</td>
<td>Mean: 38.02</td>
<td>Mean: 40.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 14.28</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 14.18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 52</td>
<td>N: 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Conventional (P Score)</td>
<td>Mean: 26.53</td>
<td>Mean: 27.98</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 14.14</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 13.05</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>N: 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>N2 Score</td>
<td>Mean: 25.03</td>
<td>Mean: 25.62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 13.73</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 11.37</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Mean: 0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian/Liberalism</td>
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<td>Mean: 1.72</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.08</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.24</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Cannot Decide Choices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.04</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 52</td>
<td>N: 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Orthodoxy (proxy measure)</td>
<td>Mean: 5.30</td>
<td>Mean: 4.09</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 2.72</td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N: 52</td>
<td>N: 49</td>
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</table>
Bibliography

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African American students continue to face obstacles as they struggle for successful academic performance in today’s public schools (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006). Even though schools have been desegregated, Kober (2001) noted that public education failed to deliver a quality education and documented a large achievement gap between minority, particularly African American and White students. Johnson (2007) found that the distribution of achievement scores among ninth-grade students in Kentucky supported patterns of school size, social justice, and conflicting state objectives found in the literature. Phelps (2003) explained that as the achievement gap issue continued, educators were mandated to respond to the challenges of race and accountability. This study investigated three factors associated with African American student achievement: school size, class size, and teacher experience and identified teacher perceptions of effective practices associated with successful fifth-grade math achievement.

Review of Literature

African American Characteristics
Ho (1992) suggested that African Americans may comprise over 13% of the American population. Fischgrund, Cohen, and Clarkson (1987) found that African American children frequently live in female-headed families involved with welfare agencies. These authors noted that about half of the African American children were considered poor. Lambie (2005) stated that ethnic background influenced how individuals interacted with the community and school. For example, Lambie found that African American culture was complex and may include both relatives and close friends providing child care and discipline. Several authors identified socioeconomic status as the major determinant regarding school interaction (Coleman, 1987; Weissbourd, 1997; Wilson, 1982). Various explanations for lower African American achievement have emphasized both environmental and cultural differences (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990).

School and Class Size
Johnson, Crosoe, and Elder (2001); Johnson (2007); and Rumberger and Palardy (2005) linked school organization measured by school and class size with student achievement. These authors hypothesized that smaller school size led to more positive behavioral and academic outcomes; they associated more personal attention and more caring environment with smaller schools and class sizes. Kober (2006) reported that in 2004 about 35% of the nation’s school districts enrolled 600 or less students and were considered small. She noted that the largest school districts enrolled one-third of all students. Kober found that minority students constituted a majority in two-thirds of the nation’s 50 largest school districts and over 90% in several of the nation’s larger districts. Kober noted that about one-third of the students in public schools come from low income families and projected increased minority enrollments up to 50% by 2020. Lee and Burkham (2003) and Lee and Smith (1997) showed that larger schools had lower test scores. Larger schools were associated with more dropout problems, truancy, and behavioral
issues to include verbal teacher abuse and gangs (Fetler, 1989; Fowler & Walberg, 1991; Welsh, 2000). Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2007) found school and class size, when coupled with funding and resources, as well as, organizational culture impacted student performance. Nye, Hedges, and Konstantopoulos (2001) suggested that minority students and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds outperformed minority and poor students from larger classes.

Results of school and class size on student achievement appeared mixed. Walberg and Walberg (1994) noted that school and class size appeared to have a greater impact on student performance when other variables such as teacher quality, attitude, and curriculum alignment were present. Some researchers (Bickel & Howley, 2000; Huang & Howley, 1993; Walberg & Walberg, 1994) did not find a specific relationship between student performance and school size. Howley (1996) observed that student performance variances accumulated and diverged over time for students educated in large school districts. Howley, Strange, and Bickel (2000) reviewed research on school size and concluded academic benefits existed in schools with fewer than 1,000 students when the community served both low and high socioeconomic students. Stewart (2007) concluded that African American students had a greater need for educational environments where both teachers and administrators were accepting, supportive, and fair.

Teaching Experience and Preparation

Lopez (1995) examined the relationship between student diversity and teacher capacity on student performance. Lopez found no student performance differences between teachers with a bachelors and a Master’s degree. Lopez noted that teacher classroom experience was important for student learning and that seven years of classroom experience was needed for teachers to fully develop their professional teaching skills.

Haycock (1998) reported that high poverty schools were twice as likely to have teachers with three or fewer years of experience. Kober (2006) found that there was a 20% teacher turnover rate for high poverty schools when compared to 13% for low poverty schools. Kober reported the percentages for full-time public school teachers with three or less years experience in low poverty, low minority schools was 15%, and 14% in contrast to 20% for high poverty schools and 21% for high minority schools. Winans (2005) indicated that a teacher’s years of experience significantly impacted student performance. O’Connor and Fish (1998) found that years of experience positively related to flexibility, response to students, and the ability to adapt lessons to student needs. Klecker (2002) examined the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math scores and noted a positive relationship with teacher years of experience. Okpala, Smith, Jones, and Ellis (2000) recommended that students have experienced teachers.

What teachers know and do is important. Haycock (1998) reported that data collected from several states connected teachers to student achievement. Haycock noted that students with the best prepared teachers made the greatest gains on standardized tests. Ferguson (1991) found students learn more from teachers with good basic skills test scores; teachers with high verbal skills (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997); and teachers who have a major or minor in the field they teach (Wenglinsky, 2000). After analyzing NAEP eighth-grade math scores, Wenglinsky (2000) noted that math teachers who had participated in professional development for diverse learners had substantially higher achieving students.

Achievement Gap

The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth-grade reading results showed that 41% of the White students scored above the proficient level compared to 13% of the African American students (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). Banks and Banks (2004) argued that minority students were more likely to be tracked in general math classes. Moody (1998) found that students placed in general math classes received different math experiences than those placed in advanced classes. Johnson and Kritsonis (2006) noted that advanced math classes were segregated and as a result poor students, females, and non-white students achieved lower math scores. Dallmann-Jones (2002) and Entwisle (2004) noted that African American male adolescents were included in most categories of academic failure. Meyers, Kim, and Mandala (2004) and Wilson (1987) found that schools’ cultural background and social class were associated with academic competence. For example, the percent of minority enrollment and the percent of students receiving free or reduced lunches influenced teacher-
student relationships and even the number of and quality of teachers hired (Baker, 2005; Ferguson, 2003; Meyers et al., 2004).

**Effective Practices**

Duschl and Gitomer (1997) suggested that a standards-based, rigorous, well-articulated curriculum and high performance expectations were effective student learning practices. Howard (2006) found student-teacher relationship important. Kafele (2009) and Gay (2000) stressed the importance of cultural awareness to make learning more relevant and effective for ethnically diverse students. Kafele reminded readers that all students do not learn alike and emphasized a learning-styles approach. Reichert and Hawley (2009/2010) identified three themes for teaching boys, stating that boys were rational learners. They found boys required appropriate feedback to remain engaged and successful learning required teachers to arouse and hold boys’ interests.

**Method**

**Site**

This research was situated in a field-based setting, a suburban school district spanning about 153 square miles across South East Texas. The city housing this district has a population of 117,593 with an ethnic composition of 41% African American, 4% Asian American, 4% Hispanic, and 51% White. This district contains 33 campuses with a student population of 19,361 students. This district’s student characteristics include 64% African American, 3% Asian American, and 9% Hispanic, and 24% White. About 66% of the students were considered economically disadvantaged of which African Americans (75%) constituted the largest group. There were 50% male students and 60% female in the district.

**Questions for Research**

Two research questions were developed:

1. Are there differences among school size, class size, and years of teaching experience with respect to fifth-grade math scores?
2. What are teacher participants’ perceptions of the most effective tracking strategies for African American fifth-grade students?

**Definitions**

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) was the standard state achievement assessment used to determine promotion to the next grade (Texas Education Agency, 1997). The weighted averages of teacher years of experience were obtained by multiplying each teacher’s full time equivalence (FTE) count by years of experience. These amounts were summed for all teachers and divided by the total FTE count resulting in the averages shown. This measure referred to the total number of completed years of professional experience for the teacher in any district (Texas Education Agency). Economically disadvantaged referred to the percent of economically disadvantaged students calculated as the sum of the students coded as eligible for free or reduced lunches. For the purpose of this research, school size was defined as: small (0-399 students), medium (400-699 students), large (700+ students). Class size was defined as: small (12-15 students), medium (16-19 students), and large (20-21 students).

**Sample**

The sample for this study was purposive. Of the 1,270 fifth-grade math students, 62%, or 787, were African American. African American fifth-grade students were selected for inclusion in this study because this particular subgroup represented the largest accountability subgroup in the district, as well as a unique opportunity to examine factors that may impact math achievement for African American students. This sample represented all 19 elementary schools in the district.

In addition, 38 fifth-grade teachers responded to the request to rank order their 10 best teaching strategies. Of this sample of teachers, 72% of their students passed the fifth-grade TAKS math and reading tests. A follow-up interview was conducted with 15 of these fifth-grade teachers to further identify specific best practices.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Student math achievement data from each of the 19 elementary campuses were obtained from Performance Reporting, a division of the Texas Education Agency. This system generates both
performance and profile information about districts and campuses yearly. The 2007 year scores were used for analysis. The 85 fifth-grade teacher names were assigned identification codes by school number and years of experience to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Of the 1,257 fifth-grade students, 782 African Americans participated in math TAKS testing. Two-hundred eighty-one (36%), attended small schools, 312 (40%) attended medium sized schools, and 189 (24%) attended large schools. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to identify significant mean differences among the independent variables of school size, campus size, and teacher experience and the dependent variable TAKS math scores. A Tukey multiple means test was used in cases where there were more than 2 levels of the independent variable if found significant at the .05 level or higher.

Descriptive statistics were used to quantify responses from the 38 teachers in ranking their perceived best practices. Qualitative data reduction techniques were used to identify trends from the 15 follow-up interviews.

Findings

Table 1 (see Appendix A) shows the means for fifth-grade African American math TAKS scores for school size. Mean comparisons among school size and African American student scores in math were significantly different with $F(2, 779) = 7.8, p < .01$. A Tukey HSD analysis showed that the small school’s mean (2190.62) was significantly higher than the large school’s mean (2147.13). However, the medium sized school’s mean (2217.03) appeared higher than either the small or large school’s mean. These results suggest that African American students from medium sized schools (400-699 students) scored significantly higher on the math TAKS test in the district of interest in 2007.

Table 2 (see Appendix A) shows the means for fifth-grade African American math TAKS scores for class size. There were statistically significant differences $F(2, 779) = 11.49, p < .01$ among fifth-grade students enrolled in different class sizes for math instruction. A Tukey HSD multimeans comparison test identified mean differences. Overall, African American math students in a class with 16-19 students (M = 2203) performed significantly higher than students in a class of 12-15 students (M = 2202) or a class of 20-21 students (M = 2101).

Table 3 (see Appendix A) shows the means for fifth-grade African American math TAKS scores for years of teacher experience. Years of teaching experience concerning African American student’s TAKS math scores showed $F(4, 788) = 6.03, p < .01$. A Tukey HSD multiple means comparison yielded the following results. Students’ scores from classrooms with a teacher who had 11-15 years of experience were lower when compared with classrooms of teachers with all other years of experience ranges. African American students who had a math teacher with over 21 years of teaching experience showed higher math TAKS scores than students who had a math teacher with six to 10 years experience.

Table 4 (see Appendix B) shows the rank order from one (least) to 10 (most) likely used instructional strategy for fifth-grade African American students.

Best Practices in Teaching African American Students Reported by 15 Volunteer Fifth-grade Teachers

All of the 15 teachers interviewed had at least a bachelor’s degree in one of the core subjects of math, science, social studies, and language arts at the fifth-grade level. Two-thirds or about 10 agreed that parent involvement made all the difference in student learning. These results are supported by Gay (2000) and Kafele (2009).

All 15 teachers participated in mandatory district-wide professional development activities and based upon these experiences, spent time with fifth-grade parents discussing the advantages of education related to careers, and family support. All 15 teachers agreed that focusing on higher-order thinking skills through use of questioning, reflection, and brainstorming facilitated student learning.

Conclusions

Differences in both school and class size were identified for fifth-grade African American students. The optimal school size appeared to be a middle sized school with a student population ranging between 400 and 699 students. The optimum class size appeared to be a class with 16 to 19 students. Similarly, Howley et al. (2000) suggested that academic benefits accrued to schools with populations fewer than 1,000 when the district served both low and high socioeconomic students. However, results of this
research should be viewed with caution since the study was limited to only one district in Texas. The researchers recommend replicating this study statewide and perhaps nationally if test comparisons can be made. It may also be beneficial to examine other grade levels.

The impact of teacher years of experience appears mixed. It was difficult to understand or interpret the lower test results from math teachers with 11 to 15 years experience, particularly since researchers such as Lopez (1995) noted that teachers more fully developed their professional teaching skills after seven years experience. Higher test results such as those found by teachers with over 21 years experience were supported in the literature by such authors as O’Connor and Fish (1998) who found that years of experience related positively.

The findings from this study suggested that African American students benefited from optimal school structure, e.g. school and class size, as well as from very experienced teachers. School improvement recommendations (Spradlin & Prendergast, 2006) have emphasized the importance of preparing and retaining teachers. The strategies ranked as most useful by teacher participants included cultural awareness and experience in teaching, as well as utilizing African American students’ visual, hands-on learning style, higher-order thinking skills and parent involvement.

Teacher professional development was considered important in promoting student learning. Professional development and teacher preparation for enhancing learning of minority students was considered important by such researchers and Haycock (1998), Ferguson (1991), and Wenglinsky (2000).

**Recommendations**

Based on study findings, the researchers made the following recommendations for the Texas school district of interest.

1. Provision of professional teaching opportunities (internships) for preservice teachers inside classrooms with experienced teachers of African American students may be helpful.
2. Encouragement and continued professional development among teachers may be helpful in the effort to better understand and work with African American students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

In addition, five competencies for teachers of diverse students were identified by teacher participants. Teachers of African American students should:

a. have an attitude of respect for cultural differences and promote a belief that all students are capable of learning;

b. be familiar with the cultural resources students bring to class, and be aware of the culture of students in their classrooms;

c. implement an enriched curriculum for all students;

d. build bridges between the content and the process of instruction and the cultural backgrounds of students; and

e. be aware of cultural differences when evaluating students.

**References**


### Appendix A

**Table 1**  
*African American Mean Math Scores by School Size (N = 782)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small (0-399 students)</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>2190.62</td>
<td>194.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (400–699 students)</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2217.03</td>
<td>194.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (700+ students)</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2147.13</td>
<td>184.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>2190.64</td>
<td>193.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**  
*African American Mean Math Scores by Class Size (N = 782)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-15 students</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>2202.09</td>
<td>196.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-19 students</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>2203.42</td>
<td>192.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21 students</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2100.97</td>
<td>156.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>2190.64</td>
<td>193.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**  
*African American Mean Math Scores by Years of Teacher Experience (N = 793)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2174.95</td>
<td>193.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2224.87</td>
<td>182.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2114.35</td>
<td>137.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2205.15</td>
<td>213.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2251.43</td>
<td>213.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>2190.88</td>
<td>193.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

**Table 4**  
*Classroom Teaching Strategies Most Likely Used to Least Likely Used Strategy (N=38)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permit students to bring life experiences into the math learning environment.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage activity-based and hands-on programs for minority students.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use study materials that show individuals from different cultural groups engaging in math activities or occupations.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss career opportunities with minority and female students.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to illustrate a sense of community, ask each student to share what makes them unique as one individual.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance or promote the heavy reliance of African American students on visual stimulus rather than auditory stimulus.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw upon cultural experience of the student and family to include cultural perspectives in the curriculum.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use examples of minority persons or groups that highlight their successes or their respected position in the community.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan a parents’ night on careers that portrays minority students in math, science, or engineering fields in which they have traditionally been underrepresented.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider using upper grade-level minority students as peer tutors.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaboration in Inclusive Education: A Case Study of Teacher Perceptions Regarding the Education of Students with Disabilities

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The education of students with disabilities has progressed substantially from the days of abandonment or institutionalization (Snyder, Garriott, & Aylor, 2001). Parent activism and corresponding legislation demanded that students with disabilities be educated along with their non-disabled peers (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Snyder et al., 2001; Rueda, Gallegos, & Moll, 2000, Seery & Johnson, 2000). The resulting educational concept of providing individualized education in the general education setting has been coined "inclusion" (Miller, 2001; Snyder et al., 2001; Thomas & Rapport, 1998; Yell & Drascow, 1999).

Three recurrent themes were revealed in the review of literature regarding inclusive education: the diversity of teacher training, the importance of collaboration, and the effect of teacher perceptions upon student achievement (Stowitschek, Rodriguez, & Trinifi-Lisk, 2000; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001; Buell, Hallan, Gamel-McCormick, 1999, Gilberts, Agran, & Hughes, 2001; Smith & Smith, 2000; Kea & Utley, 1998; Siris, 2001; Bloom, Perlmutter, & Burrell, 1999). While all three factors are crucial, teacher perceptions may be the greatest predictor of successful inclusive classrooms (Kamens, Loprete, and Slosstad, 2003; Kyungiee, 1996; Thijs, Koomen, & van der Leij, 2008; Griffin, Jones, & Kilgore, 2006, Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001).

This recognition of the power of teacher perceptions and expectations is representative of research that examines general and special education teacher perceptions of students with disabilities. This research also suggests strategies for successful inclusionary classrooms. Pertinent literature reflects the complex interaction of perception and values that influences educational success and teacher willingness to facilitate more inclusive classroom environments (Smith & Smith, 2000; Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Pavri & Monda Amaya, 2001; Kamens, Loprete, and Slosstad, 2003; Kyungiee, 1996; Thijs, Koomen, & van der Leij, 2008; Griffin, Jones, & Kilgore, 2006). Research focusing upon the elimination of negative perceptions towards individuals with disabilities, while offering solutions promoting collaboration among a pedagogically diverse group of instructors, benefits general and special educators and, more importantly, the students they instruct. In effect, the simple sharing of this preliminary information with practicing teachers might form the impetus for positive change.

Methodology

This study is an example of an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) where the case itself is of secondary interest (Campbell, 1975). The particular case is examined to pursue and facilitate an understanding of teacher perceptions and the degree to which perception influences collaboration between general and special education teachers. A solid understanding of content is central to this study because it helps the reader to better understand the motives of the individuals involved in the events described herein, and leads directly to implications that make findings relevant to contemporary practice.

This study originated in a rural elementary school in New Mexico. The school staff consisted of 13 general education, two special education, two instructional assistants, and one school administrator serving 212 students, 24 of whom were identified as students with mild to moderate disabilities and six of whom were identified as being students with severe cognitive and physical disabilities. Educators wanted
to examine strategies for adapting instructional content, fully including all students in the general education classroom and developing an understanding of how general and special education teachers could best work collaboratively.

The subjects in this initial study were the general and special educators engaged in instructional collaboration, nine of whom agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were chosen as the preferred method of data collection because they provided a focused method that directed the participants to concentrate on the topic of interest and allowed the researcher to gain insight from the participants' perspectives of the situation (Yin, 1994). Pseudonyms were used in reporting data in order to preserve individual differences.

Data were analyzed across individual characteristics, utilizing an atomistic approach reflecting the intent to present useful and accurate generalizations rather than articulate a narrative (Husen, 1979; Willis & Jost, 1999). Data analysis began with the use of open coding in an issue-related framework (Malinoski, 1984) to identify interactions that pertained to instructional collaboration. Significant elements were separated from the surrounding texts and organized into a new data-driven context of a generalized nature (Malinowski, 1984) that was descriptive of how teacher perceptions changed during the collaborative process (Mulder, 1994). Validation of findings was provided by triangulation involving multiple researchers in order to combine several lines of sight for analysis and interpretation of the data (Denzin, 1995).

**Results**

Interviews with nine reporting teachers were recorded and transcribed. Review and analysis of the transcribed interview revealed three recurrent factors impacting collaborative relationships between general and special education teachers: inaccurate perceptions of students with disabilities, the fear of failure, and pedagogical and logistical difficulties in forming collaborative relationships.

**Lack of Training**

All participating educators reported a basic familiarity with the history and theoretical philosophy regarding education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Yet, with the exception of the two special education professionals, credentialed teachers reported limited instruction or training for meeting the academic needs of students with disabilities. None reported special education coursework integrated within their undergraduate degree.

The assumption was that anyone who taught students with disabilities would major in special education. (Parker, general education)

I do not remember it being taught. (Green, general education)

General education teachers reported similar experiences as they recounted memories of student teaching connected with their university teacher preparation programs. None reported directed experiences related to the instruction of students with disabilities. By their accounts, students with disabilities were either segregated from the primary student body and received instruction from a teacher of special education or were included as "visiting" members of the general education classroom. In either case, students with disabilities seldom interacted with student teachers.

There were not any kids with disabilities in that class. (White, general education)

I can't recall any particular strategies used, and am, in fact, not certain that there were any students with disabilities in the classroom when I did student teaching. (Parker, general education)

My cooperating teacher was very glad that I was there. It gave her an opportunity to take the struggling students aside to give them individualized instruction while I worked with the majority of the students. (Green, general education)

The perceived failure of higher education to include coursework addressing strategies designed to meet the needs of all students, coupled with minimal experiences encountered during or subsequent to student teaching resulted in reports of increased fear of personal and professional failure and decreased self-confidence. Consequently, general education teachers in the study were initially reluctant to invite students with disabilities into more inclusive classroom settings.
I was afraid that I would not be able to meet the individual needs of the students with special needs within my classroom. (Smith, general education)

The unknown is always somewhat fearful. Since I was one of the two "inclusion" teachers for three years, I wondered about being able to meet these student's academic needs for a full day. (Parker, general education)

When I spoke to teachers about the possibility of collaboration between special education and general education, I was surprised to see that many of them were afraid of looking "stupid" in front of their colleagues. They didn't think that they had the skills that they needed and were afraid of what others might think. They didn't want to fail in front of their peers. (Lewis, school administrator)

**Lack of Professional Development**

Perhaps the most intriguing revelation concerned teacher perceptions of the “experience” factor. While most indicated that their years of experience had resulted in improved classroom practice, they did not report similar perceptions of their abilities to develop appropriate educational interventions for students with disabilities. Inclusive education was considered to be “new territory”. The local school district had provided some training for preparing teachers to instruction students with disabilities, however few reported adequate levels of support.

I attended a conference about twelve years ago. (Smith, general education)

A one-day workshop. (Jones & White, general education)

One workshop last summer. (Parker, general education)

This scant amount of training lead to teacher uncertainty and reluctance to embrace inclusive practices. Teachers reported that they did not feel prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

**The Weight of Responsibility upon Collaboration**

The possibility that general education classroom teachers might be reluctant to embrace collaborative teaching and that students with disabilities might fail to meet their designated IEP goals and objectives caused some anxiety for special education personnel. Teachers of special education reported feeling concerned and worried that their colleagues might either refuse to accept instructional responsibilities for students or would regard a collaborative effort as intrusive.

I first thought that the regular classroom teacher could not meet the needs of the students with disabilities and that their IEP objectives were not going to be addressed unless they had proper support and the student's modifications or accommodations were carried out. I was also leaving my classroom for the entire school day (my comfort zone) and going into someone else's classroom. I really wondered how it was all going to work out. (Grant, special education)

Classroom teachers reported that, since they had limited information and experience with special education, their perceptions of inclusive classrooms were primarily based upon childhood memories of public school education or from observations of students educated in segregated settings. Perceptions tended to fall into one of two categories: beliefs that students with disabilities would be unable to meaningfully participate in grade level activities and beliefs that students would be unable to conform to mainstream behavioral expectations.

Teachers expressing concerns related to academic proficiency believed that students with disabilities would be unable to meaningfully participate in any aspect of the curriculum. In addition, they reported beliefs that the addition of curricular modifications, supplemental supports, and related services would be insufficient to meet the needs of those students with deficits in math and reading. The fact that all of the students with disabilities had previously been educated in segregated settings with individualized curriculum not aligned to grade level standards greatly reinforced those perceptions.

I was afraid that I would have to "teach down" to my other students. I did not think that I would be able to use the same materials or methods. I would not be able to cover as much or go into much depth if I had those kids. (White, general education)

I did not think that they could do the work. They obviously didn't have the skills that the other kids had so I didn't see how they could possibly have much success. (Jones, general education)
Perceptions of Challenging Behaviors

Participating teachers were equally concerned with the possibility of encountering challenging student behaviors. Many recounted negative prior experiences with "mainstreaming" in which students with disabilities were "placed" with their typical peers in music, physical education, or recess. They reported witnessing frequent behavioral problems and expressed concerns that those disruptive behaviors might erupt and negatively impact their classrooms.

I worried about what I would do if the child's behavior was distracting for the other students in the classroom. (Smith, general education)

Also, there was some question in my mind in regard to the extra time it might take to work with students who had "behavioral" problems. (Parker, general education)

I thought about all of the disruptions they would cause and I didn't know how I would handle it. (Jones, general education)

Despite those concerns, a beginning date to implement inclusive classrooms was established. The building administrator arranged teacher schedules so that collaborating teachers were able to meet several days each week. Teachers from general education, special education, and ancillary services formed collaborative teams to begin the transition. Team members essentially fell into one of two groups: those anxious to begin and those voicing resistance to sharing teaching responsibilities.

I think that it truly went back to the way each teacher felt comfortable teaching. We weren't sure if we would be able to work together. (Grant, special education)

Strategies

Teachers considered various collaborative strategies and approaches that might better assure student successes. Pedagogical and logistical issues quickly surfaced among participants. Conflict centered primarily upon four issues associated with the creation of the newly established collaborative relationships: assignment of teaching roles and responsibilities among collaborators, appropriate modifications of the curriculum for students, monitoring and reporting of student progress, and perceived time constraints associated with collaborative efforts.

Though working in teams, both special and general education teachers expressed uncertainty regarding the assignment of teaching roles and responsibilities. Special education teachers were accustomed to planning and monitoring all instructional activities for their students. However, the implemented collaborative approach required that they share those responsibilities with their general education colleagues. General education classroom teachers were unaccustomed to having cooperating teachers working within their classrooms and were equally uncertain as to how to divide teaching responsibilities.

Some team members preferred to utilize a complementary instruction model in which one teacher was responsible for delivering the core content of math and reading and the second was primarily responsible for re-teaching. Other collaborators were more comfortable implementing a duet model in which both teachers planned and designed instruction while alternately taking responsibility for lesson delivery.

It was hard and a lot of responsibility to decide what the special education teachers should teach when they were in the classroom with me. I was worried that I was either going to give them too much to do or not enough to do. I didn't want someone standing around and just watching me. (Smith, general education)

Initially, I couldn't imagine how we would work out the schedule for all students when other teachers were in the room to instruct. (Grant, special education)

Questions occurred regarding the appropriate modifications of the grade level curriculum. General education teachers were unaccustomed to planning lessons for students with disabilities and clashed with special education personnel over their interpretations of specified IEP modifications/accommodations. Some general education teachers felt that the modifications on the IEP would severely compromise the rigor of their instruction.

I felt I would have to "teach down" to the rest of my class and I didn't want to do it. (White, general education)
I first thought that the regular classroom teacher could not meet the needs of the students with disabilities and that their IEP objectives were not going to be addressed. I wondered if they would have the proper support and if the student's modification and accommodations were really going to be carried out. (Grant, special education)

**Planning Time**

Teachers identified planning time as being central to the success of the inclusion process. As teachers involved in the study worked to establish meaningful dialogue among team members, the perceived rigidity of daily scheduling and personal obligations appeared to limit opportunities for successful collaboration. Creative scheduling was partially able to resolve the dilemma. Teachers volunteered to forfeit their individual teacher preparation times to assure the possibility of continued collaboration during the school day. Team memberships were formed to provide an hour of collaborative sharing per week.

I gave up my prep time one time each week to plan for Richard and Eric. (Jones, general education)

We modified our schedules to create a collaborative team planning time each week. (Smith, general education)

We talked about what went along with the standards and benchmarks and what would be Grant for all the students. Isn't that what prep time is for? (Grant, special education)

**Documenting Progress**

Collaborative teams frequently discussed, and often disagreed, about the grading of daily assignments. While some believed that students should be graded strictly according to grade level standards, others believed that the perceived degree of student effort should also be taken into account. Unlike the process used to appraise the assignments of typical peers, a review of grading practices revealed that general education teachers rarely established grading rubrics for assignments completed by their students with disabilities. Teachers typically attempted to develop a grading procedure or rubric after collecting work samples from students with disabilities. Aside from acknowledging that grading should be a collaborative effort, general and special education teachers lacked definitive and consistent guidelines for appraisal of student performance.

Before inclusion, the special education teachers did all the grading. They are given more time, individualized instruction, and a peer tutor. How did I grade that? (Parker, general education)

I didn't know what to do with the work at first. It obviously wasn't on the same level as that of their peers, but they had put in so much effort. (Brown, general education)

I really didn't know if I could give them a grade if they had that many modifications. (Jones, general education)

Weekly meetings provided some summative information, yet teachers noted the need to establish a system for documenting student progress. Collaborating teachers implemented a matrix system for each IEP objective to be addressed. IEP goals and objectives were effectively matched with classroom learning opportunities. The IEP matrix was placed inside a communication notebook that was passed between collaborating teachers. Teachers initially made daily notations that provided timely feedback to team members and served as a basis for further discussion at scheduled meetings. Although teachers continued to plot student progress on the developed IEP matrix, communication notebooks were eventually discarded as general education teachers became more adept at making curricular modifications.

**Aligning the Curriculum**

As general education and special education teachers continued to collaborate, team members gradually became more astute in the process. Rather than restricting discussion to the instructional challenges associated with students with disabilities, teacher dialogue became primarily focused upon meeting the challenges of mastery of curriculum as it applied to the total student population. Teachers unanimously elected to align classroom instruction in all core curriculum areas, resulting in a more unified instructional plan that increased student performance for all learners.
I think that coordinating the reading curriculum between all classrooms helped establish a consistent plan for all students. This coordinated plan allowed the teaming teachers to be able to prepare more efficiently for the students with special needs. This also helped all of the teachers feel more at ease and helped us to be more open to sharing ideas with each other. (Smith, general education)

One major change was that the curriculum was aligned and every classroom was on the same focus skill or topic. The targeted students are happy, not in trouble as much, and are excelling academically at a faster rate than they ever have before. Although they are still behind their peers, they have made great gains. (Grant, special education)

Team members compromised and revised teaching strategies based upon their continuing experiences within the classroom. Teachers noted that their perceptions of students with disabilities began to change in tandem with the changes occurring among learners in their individual classrooms.

We have actually "turned up the volume" for these kids and in many instances, the students with special needs are outperforming our initial expectations. The general education classroom provides higher expectations. My students with IEPs are learning concepts like multiplication right along with the other kids. I don't mind using my prep time for that. (Smith, general education).

Changing Perceptions

Academic and social perceptions held by general education teachers continued to evolve as collaborative relationships developed across the term. Fears slowly dissipated as educators became more comfortable with implemented changes and as their students began to routinely experience success.

The students have grown in maturity and confidence. I believe that their number of friendships has grown too. (White, general education)

The students with special needs are more able to work independently than they were prior to being placed in an inclusive classroom. The regular classroom helps these kids to recognize their strengths. I am amazed at how well they are doing in my classroom. (Brown, general education)

Richard has turned out to be a pretty great kid. (Jones, general education)

Charles couldn't do much math when he started, but by the end of the semester he was doing division with the rest of the kids. He just hadn't had the same opportunities to learn those concepts before he came into this class. (Green, general education)

Positive student and teacher expectations, combined with evidence of student mastery of grade level appropriate skills, effectively reduced negative perceptions associated with inclusive education. General education teachers maintained daily instructional contact with targeted students and assumed more responsibility for instructional planning and measurement of progress. As students successfully integrated academically and socially into the general education classrooms, their teachers began to focus less upon deficits identified in student IEPs and more upon student strengths. Educators reflected that their prior perceptions of personal inadequacy, lack of training, and fear of failure were gradually replaced. Teacher statements reflected more positive association as they became more involved in planning for student success.

At times I felt overwhelmed. Now I am celebrating that my students with special needs are learning concepts like multiplication right along with the other students. (Smith, general education)

With the right direction and guidance, these kids can be successful. (Green, general education)

Well, I've always known that, if the students had the proper support, the general education classroom was the best place for all students to learn. (Grant, special education)

In addition, the students themselves were responsible for changes in teacher attitudes and perceptions. The positive feedback that teachers encountered in inclusive classrooms played an integral role in altering teacher perspectives. The reciprocal relationship that was created through the inclusion process proved beneficial to both teachers and students. Students with disabilities became participating members of the classroom and made significant progress in both academic and social arenas. Teachers became more confident in their abilities to effect change as they interacted with students and were encouraged to
continue instruction in collaborative, inclusive classroom settings by the positive responses that they received.

We really don't think about what "label" kids have anymore. We just try to make sure that everybody is learning. I have had to make some changes but the changes have helped all of my students to learn. (Smith, general education)

I think that everyone wanted the inclusion process to work. We just all had to learn to give a little and change a lot. (Smith, general education)

Inclusion proved to be a tremendous experience and privilege for me! I would recommend it! (Parker, general education)

**Implications for Practice**

This study offers an opportunity to examine the impact of teacher perceptions upon the successful implementation of inclusive education. Analysis of transcribed interviews confirms research examining the complex interaction of perception and values influencing collaborative success and the corresponding willingness to facilitate inclusive classrooms (Smith & Smith, 2000; Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001). Teacher perceptions of students with disabilities and self-doubt regarding their own abilities to provide suitable instruction appeared to be the primary barriers to implementing equitable educational opportunities for all students. Consequently, this case study suggests that the probability of successful inclusionary education appears to be more heavily influenced by educator attitude than by the challenges associated with disability status.

Students can be appropriately and successfully educated in general education settings when teachers are receptive to the process and appropriate supports are provided. Classroom teachers consistently noted the impact of collaborative relationships upon educator attitude and perceptions of personal competency. Confirming results historically reported by Snyder et al., (2001), teacher attitudes became more positive as they encountered student success.

While an awareness of administrative support for "risk taking" appeared to somewhat alleviate teacher fear of potential failure, it should be noted that much of the anxiety might have been alleviated through greater focus upon inaccurate teacher perceptions. Educators had minimal prior experience with collaborative teaching and, with the exception of the special education teachers, had received scant preparation regarding the education of atypical learners. The failure of university programs to include applicable course work addressing the characteristics of students with disabilities coupled with the failure of the local school district to provide on-going training resulted in perceptions of fear and inadequacy.

Teachers reported greater personal satisfaction, greater academic gains among students, and fewer behavioral conflicts following the completion of the study. Teachers indicated a willingness to continue collaborative teaching in inclusive settings as a method of ensuring student success for all learners. Both general and special education teachers linked the collaborative process with more positive perceptions of students. The successful development of an instructional model valuing diverse learners in an inclusive educational setting was a direct result of the change in teacher perceptions of student ability and social skills. Students experienced success with the general education curriculum when teachers believed that they could be successful.

**Recommendations**

While the trend in public schools is clearly towards more inclusive classrooms teacher perceptions continue to influence educational practice (Smith & Smith, 2000; Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001; Thijs, Koomen, & van der Leij, 2008; Griffin, Jones, & Kilgore, 2006). Greater knowledge of students with disabilities partially eliminated the negative impact of scant teacher training and promoted more meaningful appraisals of student performance. Consequently, institutions of higher learning tasked with preparing pre-service teachers must better prepare their future educators to interface in collaborative classrooms.

Similarly, school districts implementing educational reform must provide sustained professional development opportunities for all staff members. Echoing research conducted by Stotwischek et al., (2000), effective staff development programs must include the components of planned observation, reflection, practice, and follow-up. Continuous staff development better facilitates instructional decision
making and assists educators in both anticipating and in meeting challenges. In addition, staff development assures that all parties have access to current, research-based, proven teaching strategies.

A decade ago Stanovich (1999) noted "the voices of general education classroom teachers must be added to the conversation about inclusive schools if this education reform is to be successful" (p. 56). The current study suggests that the frequent discussion and planning associated with collaboration is crucial to eliminating negative perceptions. Consistent with earlier research, opportunities for collaboration may be viewed as a change agent for perception and the single greatest predictor of successful educational reform for students with disabilities (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Smith & Smith, 2000; Pavri & monda-Amaya, 2001; Elliot & McKenney, 1998; Sapon-Shevin, 2001, Snyder, Garriott, & Aylor, 2001).

Teacher perceptions further evolved as students experienced success. Educators must work together to provide a curriculum that confers educational benefit. This study was accomplished through a collaborative team effort. Individual and collective lessons learned from analyzing the data enabled participants to develop, implement, and refine essential school practices. This inclusion experience challenged educator perceptions and ultimately improved student educational outcomes. The introduction and nurturing of fresh perspectives eliminates negative associations and offers a more promising prospect for equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Your attitude will determine the atmosphere of your class and the success of your students. (White, general education)

Your biggest hurdle may just be in working with another adult. My joy came when my colleagues witnessed first-hand the importance of their role in educating students with disabilities. All the hard work is worth it when you realize how much everyone has accomplished. (Grant, special education).

References


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American Healthcare is a complicated and expensive entity. Its estimated gross domestic product (GDP) for 2008 is 13.58 trillion dollars of which approximately 17% (2.4 trillion dollars) will be spent on healthcare (CIA, 2009). Medicare is a multifaceted program administered by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It is a federal health insurance program that covers most individuals 65 years of age and older. It also covers younger disabled individuals or those who have End-Stage Kidney Disease. The Medicare Fee for Service (FFS) program consists of a number of payment systems, with a network of contractors that process over 1.2 billion claims each year, submitted by more than 1 million health care providers. These providers may be hospitals, physicians, skilled nursing facilities, labs, ambulance companies, and durable medical equipment (DME) suppliers. (CMS, 2008) The contractors process these claims, make payments to health care providers in accordance with Medicare regulations, and are responsible for educating providers about how to submit accurately coded claims that meet Medicare’s medical necessity guidelines. Improper payments on claims happen for many reasons including but not limited to: 1) payments made for services improperly coded; 2) providers failing to provide documentation when requested; 3) payments made for services that do not meet medical necessity; 4) claim payments based on outdated fee schedules, or 5) providers being paid twice because duplicate claims were submitted. (CMS, 2008)

Years of ever increasing healthcare costs, expanding Federal benefits, and a growing beneficiary population have prompted CMS to decrease and streamline healthcare costs and services. CMS has implemented programs such as quality care improvement measures, (so-called pay-for-performance measures) designed to reward health care providers for reporting specific quality measures of their care. The hope is that improved quality care will provide improved patient care, and thus save CMS money over time (Sinha, 2007). Since 1996, CMS has implemented several other initiatives to prevent improper payments when claims are processed. Five programs have presently been developed for this purpose. These claim review programs are conducted pre-payment or post-payment. The pre-payment programs are (1) National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) edits and (2) Medically Unlikely edits (MUE). The NCCI program was developed to promote national correct coding methodologies and to control improper coding that leads to inappropriate payment in Medicare Part B claims. CMS established units of service edits for Medicare Part B benefit claims referred to as MUEs. The MUE edit, like the NCCI edit, is an automated pre-payment edit that helps prevent improper payments. The following claim review program is used as both a pre- and post-payment review program. It is the Carrier / FI (Fiscal Intermediaries)/ MAC (Medicare Administrative Contractor) Medical Review (MR) where through analysis of claims data and evaluation of complaints, suspected billing problems are identified by Medicare claims processing contractors. MR activities are targeted at identified problem areas appropriate for the severity of the problem. The post-payment programs are (1) Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT) program and (2) Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC). The CERT program was developed to produce a national Medicare Fee for Service (FFS) error rate as required by the Improper Payment Information Act. CERT randomly
selects a small sample of Medicare FFS claims, reviews the claims and medical records from providers and suppliers. The claims are reviewed for compliance with Medicare coverage, coding, and billing rules. (CMS, 10/2008) A more direct approach at cost containment has been found in the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program. As a mandate from Congress, the RAC program was designed to reduce improper payments within the Medicare programs as well as identify process improvements to reduce or eliminate future improper payments. RACs are tasked with detecting and correcting improper payments on Medicare claims. They are to collect overpayments and pay back underpayments. (CMS, 2008)

With increasing expenditures, expanding Federal benefits, and a growing beneficiary population, the importance and the challenges of safeguarding the Medicare program are greater than ever. Some improper payments are best prevented when Medicare claims processing contractors request and review the medical records associated with the claims prior to payment to ensure that payment is made for only Medicare-covered and medically necessary items and services provided in the appropriate setting. CMS actions to safeguard Federal funds are not merely limited to claims processing actions and error rate programs. In 2006, Program Safeguard Contractors were established nationwide across all provider and supplier types. These special fraud fighters perform data analysis to identify potential problem areas, investigate potential fraud, develop fraud cases for referral to law enforcement, and coordinate Medicare fraud waste, and abuse efforts with CMS’s internal and external partners. CMS has determined that most improper payments in the Medicare FFS program occur because a provider has submitted a claim to Medicare that was not medically necessary or was incorrectly coded. (CMS, 2008)

In Section 306 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA), Congress directed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to conduct a 3-year demonstration project using RACs to detect and correct improper payments in the Medicare FFS program. Congress gave CMS the authority to pay each RAC on a contingency fee basis, which is a percentage of the improper payments corrected by the RACs. The MMA also mandated that a report to Congress be developed 6 months after the end of the demonstration project to include information on the impact of the project on savings to the Medicare program and to provide recommendations on the cost-effectiveness of extending or expanding the project. (CMS, 2008)

The RACs were chosen through a competitive process. CMS held a full and open competition to select the three Claim RACs and two Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) RACs. The contracts were awarded in 2005. California, Florida, and New York were the first states selected due to their large Medicare utilization. Initially, each Claim RAC had jurisdiction for a single State. The Claim RACs jurisdictions were expanded in the summer of 2007 to include the following three additional states: Arizona, Massachusetts, and South Carolina. The selected RACs and their corresponding jurisdiction/start dates were: (1) Connolly Consulting (Connolly): New York (March 2005) and Massachusetts (July 2007), (2) Health Data Insights (HDI): Florida (March 2005) and South Carolina (July 2007), and (3) PRG-Schultz (PRG): California (March 2005) and Arizona (July 2007). Although Arizona was added in 2007, no Arizona claims were reviewed before the end of the demonstration. The MSP RACs were (1) Health Management Systems: Florida (March 2005) and New York (February 2006) and (2) Diversified Collection Services: California (March 2005). (CMS, 2008)

Congress authorized CMS to use a different method of payment for the RACs. The Medicare claims processing contractors and the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO) are paid through funds earmarked by Congress. This contrasts with the payment methodology in place for the RACs. The CMS paid each RAC a contingency fee that was negotiated between CMS and the individual RAC. (CMS, 2008)

The RACs are obliged to conduct their review process based on Medicare policies, regulations, national coverage determinations, local coverage determinations, and manual instructions when conducting claim reviews under the demonstration project. In instances where there is no Medicare policy, the RACs reviewed the claims based on accepted medical standards and practice at the time the claim was submitted. (CMS, 2008) The CMS report based on its’ three year evaluation on the project states that the RACs did not develop or apply their own coverage, coding, or billing polices. The RACs used medical personnel to review claims for medical necessity and a physician Medical Director that
would assist nurses, therapists, certified coders when needed. The RACs also used proprietary techniques to identify claims that clearly contained errors resulting in improper payments. (CMS, 2008)

There were two review processes employed during the demonstration project. In cases were it was clearly evident that an improper payment had occurred, the RAC contacted the provider to either collect any overpayments or pay any underpayments. This process is called an automated review. During this review process, the RAC used information systems that would search for claims for two or more identical procedures for the same beneficiary on the same day at the same hospital. Duplicate surgical procedures are not medically necessary and should not have been billed and paid for twice. The second review process is a complex review. In this case, the claims are likely to contain errors, thus the RAC requested medical records from the provider to further review the claim. Once the medical record was reviewed, the RACs were able to determine if the claim should have been paid. They were able to determine if the medical record met with Medicare’s written policy for medical necessity, or were Medicare-sanctioned coding guidelines adhered to. CMS did not specify which claim types a RAC must review. They allowed the RAC to identify the claims most likely to contain an improper payment. Claims excluded from RAC review included incorrect level of physician evaluation and management (E/M) code, hospice and home health services, payments made to a provider under a CMS-conducted demonstration, claims previously reviewed by another Medicare contractor, and claims involved in a potential fraud investigation. The RAC had the use of a data warehouse developed by CMS that is an automated means of administering and overseeing the claim RAC component. CMS developed the RAC data warehouse as a Web-based system intended to facilitate the activities of the multiple entities that participated in the RAC demonstration project. Improper payments corrected by the RAC cumulative thought 3/27/08 were as follows: 1) Claims RAC: Overpayments - $980 million, Underpayments – $37.8 million and 2) MSP RAC: Overpayments - $12.7 million with no underpayments reported. That is approximately 96% in over-payments compared to 4% in under-payments. (CMS, 2008) Most of these monies were recovered from inpatient hospitals.

The cost of running the demonstration project was considerably less than the amount self-reported by the RAC that was returned to the Medicare Trust Fund, but it was still a significant amount. The cost of operating the demonstration project was 1) Medicare claims processing contractor costs: $8.7 million, 2) RAC evaluation, validation, and oversight expenditures $5.4 million and 3) RAC contingency fees $187.2 million. (CMS RAC, 2008) It is clearly evident that reducing improper payments and preventing claim submission errors is of vital importance to ensure the viability of the Medicare program. The RAC contingency fees are quite substantial and the difference between the dollar amounts of recovered overpayments and the fees paid due to underpayments is also considerable. It remains in the best interest of the RACs to have a higher percentage of overpayments than underpayments since the goal is ultimately to reduce the improper flow of Medicare dollars from leaving the trust fund. It is apparent that the RACs were more zealous in overpayment detection than underpayments. There were issues during the demonstration project that prompt the Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor Program Moratorium Act of 2007 (H.R. 4105). Briefly, this Act was meant to suspend all RAC activities and impose a moratorium on the use of RACs for one year; it increase Congressional oversight of the RAC program going forward, required a reconsideration of the program by Congress and required continuous monitoring of RAC appeals determinations to ensure fairness to hospitals. Although the bill was introduced in November of 2007, no action was taken and the bill remained in committee. Congress adjourned and the bill was to be reintroduced in January 2009. (The Advisory Board, 2008) This bill never became law. The following are some of the issues that were detected during the demonstration project:

- **RAC Medical director:** Optional for demonstration, but mandatory for the permanent RACs.
- **Coding experts:** Optional for demonstration, but mandatory for the permanent RACs.
- **Minimum claim amount:** for the demonstration project- $10.00 aggregate claims, for the permanent RAC - $10.00 minimal claims.
- **Look back period:** Demonstration: 4 years; Permanent: 3 years.
• Maximum Look back date: Demonstration: none; Permanent RACs: 10/01/2007
• Reason for Review Listed on Record Requests and Overpayment Letter: Demonstration: Optional; Permanent RACs: Mandatory.
• Allowed to Review Claims in Current Fiscal Year: Demonstration: No; Permanent RACs: Yes (The Advisory Board, 2008)
• External Validation Process: Demonstration: not required; Permanent RACs: Mandatory
• Limits on number of medical records requested: Demonstration: Optional, each RAC set its own limit; Permanent RACs: Mandatory, CMS will establish uniform limits.
• Quality assurance/ Internal control audit: Demonstration: Optional; Permanent RACs: Mandatory
• Public disclosure of the RAC contingency fees: Demonstration: No; Permanent RACs: Yes (CMS, 2008)

In spite of these issues, the demonstration project has proven successful in returning dollars to the Medicare Trust Fund. Congress has required that a permanent and national RAC program be in place by January 1, 2010.

The names and jurisdictions of the new national RACs are:
• **Diversified Collection Services, Inc. of Livermore, California**, in Region A, initially working in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York.
• **CGI Technologies and Solutions, Inc. of Fairfax, Virginia**, in Region B, initially working in Michigan, Indiana and Minnesota.
• **Connolly Consulting Associates, Inc. of Wilton, Connecticut**, in Region C, initially working in South Carolina, Florida, Colorado and New Mexico.
• **Health Data Insights, Inc. of Las Vegas, Nevada**, in Region D, initially working in Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Arizona.

Additional states will be added to each RAC region in 2009. (CMS, 2008) PRG-Schultz was not selected as part of the permanent RAC, hospitals in California blamed the company for aggressive behavior and high claims denial rates, notably regarding in-patient rehab claims. (Bush, 10/2008) RACs are profit driven private companies and although the RACs are tasked with correcting underpayments as well as overpayments, the percentages are extremely skewed. The majority of the over-payment determinations (96%) have been found to be from in-patient hospital settings (85%). (Wachler, 2008) Medicare suppliers, suppliers, and their legal counsel are concerned regarding how RACs identify and recoup alleged over-payments. Undeniably, the providers have every right to appeal but the process is lengthy and expensive. The appeals process has five stages: 1) Redetermination, 2) Reconsideration, 3) Administrative Law Judge Hearing, 4) Medicare Appeals Council Review, and 5) Federal District Court. The hospitals pay the legal fees, Fiscal Intermediaries (FI) work the appeal, Medicare pays for the cost of the appeal, and the RACs continue to collect their fees! Hospitals have chosen to appeal only 11% of the over-payment determinations of which 50% have been reversed. Hospitals often choose not to appeal because the appeal expense is cost prohibitive based on the expected recoupment.

These troublesome issues ask the following questions. What does this mean for the health care providers already experiencing financial hardships? How will these providers survive in a stressed economic environment? What are health care facilities doing to ensure that their billing and coding practices result in kept monies? It is imperative that in these economic times Healthcare organizations continue providing patients with quality health care and still meet their fiduciary responsibilities. How will they weather the storm and mitigate RAC losses? Just the volume of correspondence and request for medical records is a daunting endeavor. An example of how difficult it is to keep tabs on inpatient chart request is as follows. The Compliance officer receives a request for 150 charts, which the hospital Health Information Management department (HIM) must retrieve, copy, and mail within 45 days. If the records are not sent within the time frame, it will result in automatic denials. Within two months, the compliance officer is notified that 40 cases have been denied and the hospital now has 15 days to rebut and 120 days to appeal this decision. While the HIM department is attempting to find additional information to support
information for an appeal, RAC request an additional 140 charts. Now the HIM department, while attempting to assemble information for the appeals misses the deadline for 30 records from the second record request. Thus the cycle continues and departments continue to be overwhelmed with the amount of work required to keep a handle on the requests. (Advisory Board, 2008)

During these financial trials, it is important for in-patient hospitals to spend more of their dwindling finances on processes to save money, rather than on means to provide better care to patients. Nothing can be done about past medical records except reviewing the charts in an attempt to find information that will support the claims, but moving forward the best defense is a well thought out offense. In 2008, CMS made a change in their DRG payment system. It is now the MS-DRG Medicare Severity-Diagnostic Related Group. In 2009, the Department of Health authorized by state statute implemented a new hospital inpatient payment system. The hope is to provide a more equitable and fair payment method for services being rendered, New York will be implementing a severity-based methodology using 3M™ All Patient Refined Diagnosis Related Groups (APR-DRGs). In addition, a new acute care payment methodology has been developed as well. (DOH, 2009) The changes require greater specificity in medical record documentation. In-patient medical record documentation and medical office provider documentation have different requirements for reimbursement. Hospital documentation requires clear specific documentation of principal diagnosis, co-morbidities (cc), major co-morbidities (mcc), and procedures while the physician is reimbursed based on sign and symptoms or simply put E/M (Evaluation and Management) coding. In-patient hospitals who were overwhelmed with the RAC process now had to educate HIM staff and physicians on the new level of specificity required in documentation. HIM departments need to properly staff with personnel specifically trained to manage chart requests from the RACs. They need to appoint a leader who will oversee the steps in the process. A centralized approach is needed for record request and correspondence. (Advisory Board, 2008) Healthcare facilities need to involve their informatics and technology departments to create a web-based tracking system that is accessible to every department involved with the RAC. This will allow all updates and deadlines to be viewed by everyone involved. Hospitals need to proactively ensure that medical records are well documented and are coded appropriately. Coders must be trained to recognize the type of coding errors that lead to claims denials. It is essential to fully understand the appeals process and to not confuse it with RAC communications. Be prepared for denials and prepare contingency plans for the expected loss of revenue. (Bush, 11/2008) Last but not least, hospitals need to implement a documentation improvement program. Documentation improvement (DI) programs might well be the answer in assisting healthcare facilities during these economic trials. It all goes back to the clearly, specified, documented quality care provided to the patient. The well documented medical record will withstand the review of the improper payment programs. It will assist in the reporting of quality measures, but more importantly it will render the medical record RAC proof. Hospital compliance officers need to be educated in their DI programs and obtain support from senior management for the program. The best documentation programs involve expert coders and RNs trained in coding. In order for any DI program to work, there must be physician buy in. It is important to educate and train the physician in CMS documentation and coding requirements. (Bibbins, 2008) The RN’s utilize their clinical expertise to examine the chart while the patient is still in the hospital. If there are any questions about a diagnosis or if treatments are noted for signs and symptoms that have no clear diagnosis, the RN/DI expert will pose a query to the physician for clear, consistent documentation of the information. This prevents the coder from having to pose the query after patient discharge as well prevents the delay in billing. It also allows for the appropriate severity of illness to be captured in order to justify the utilization of resources. (Bibbins, 2009)

It is obvious that the economics of health care are in dire straits and the state of the Medicare Trust Fund is frightening. CMS continues to develop program after program to reduce the number of improper claims. They continue decreasing payments, and figuring out new ways to limit payments to providers and suppliers. What CMS is actually doing is forcing providers to increase their fees to cover the loss of revenue. The patient and the tax-paying individual will be paying for the loss of revenue incurred by all. Ultimately CMS will be required to pay the increased rate, thus not having saved much in the long run.
The only organizations that will benefit are accounting firms and collection agencies. Oh wait, these organizations have a name, they are called the RAC!

References


INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the paper is to analyze the relationships between real effective exchange rates and 1) trade variables and 2) investment variables for United States data for the period 1996-2007. The paper is outlined in four sections. In the first section the foreign exchange markets, its functions and exchange rate determination are given. A brief review of literature pertaining to the topic is presented in the second section. Definitions of variables, data sources, and methodology are presented in the third section. Analysis of the relationships between the real effective exchange rate and the selected trade and investment variables forms the core of the fourth section.

SECTION I. FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET

A foreign exchange market (FEM) refers to the organizational setting with which individuals, businesses, governments, and banks buy and sell foreign currencies and other department instruments. The foreign exchange market is merely a part of the money market in the financial centers in which foreign currencies are bought and sold and is not restricted to any given country or a geographical area. Not all currencies, however, are traded in FEMs. Reasons for no trading in a particular currency range from political instability to economic uncertainty.

The basic function of the foreign exchange market is to facilitate the conversion of one currency into another, i.e., to accomplish transfers of purchasing power between two countries. This transfer of purchasing power is affected through a variety of credit instruments such as telegraphic transfers, bank drafts and foreign bills. The foreign exchange market also provides credit to other national and international countries to promote foreign trade.

Another function of foreign exchange markets is the offset of risk through hedging. Hedging applies to anyone who is obligated to make a foreign currency payment or who will enjoy foreign currency receipt at a future time. Exporters hedge against the possibility of foreign currency depreciating against the domestic currency and importers hedge against the possibility of foreign currency appreciating against the domestic currency. International investors make use of foreign exchange markets to hedge an offsetting position or counterweight to any exposure to risk. A geographical hedge is simply geographical diversification of currency holdings in such way that offsets occur across the currencies. It is crucial that currencies held in the hedged portfolio are not correlated in their exchange values.

Foreign exchange transactions also take place through interbank trading with banks buying and selling foreign currencies for their customers. Retail transactions are defined as those which are less than one million currency units and these are bank purchases from sales to customers. Wholesale transactions are when the amount is more than one million currency units and occurs between banks with large corporate customers.

Banks earn profits in foreign exchange transactions. Banks that regularly deal in the interbank market quote both a bid and an offer rate to other banks. The bid rate refers to the rate at which the bank is willing to sell a unit of foreign currency and the offer rate is the rate at which the bank is willing to buy. The spread is the difference between the bid and the offer rate and at any given time a bank’s bid quote is less than its offer quote. The spread is intended to cover the bank’s costs of implementing the exchange
of currencies and foreign exchange dealers who simultaneously purchase and sell foreign currency earn the spread as profit.

Currency exchange transactions in the cash or spot market have immediate payment and delivery. Rather than effect an immediate trade, a forward contract is an agreement now for a transaction or trade that is to take place at some specified future time at a specified price with the payment occurring at maturity or settlement. The actual payment and delivery can be a few days, months, or even years in the future.

Standardizing the details of forward contracts, such as amounts and delivery dates, facilitates trading of the contracts in an organized market. The CME Group lays claim to the largest regulated foreign exchange marketplace and offers both electronic trading and open outcry trading floors. The various CME Group foreign exchange futures contracts cover 20 currencies including the G10 currencies as well as currencies of other countries such as Brazil, China, and South Africa. With a few exceptions, the CME Group foreign exchange futures contracts mature on the third Wednesday of March, June, September and December.

The foreign exchange rate refers to the price of one currency in terms of another currency. Assume that the U.S. is the home country and the U.K. is the foreign country. Also suppose that $2 exchanges for £1. There are two ways of quoting or measuring the foreign exchange rate:

a) The direct exchange rate quote is the price or value of foreign currency per unit of domestic currency or £0.50 per dollar.

b) The indirect exchange rate quote is the price or value of domestic currency per unit of foreign currency or $2.00 per pound.

Since the two exchange rate quotes are reciprocals of each other it is inconsequential whether the direct or indirect quote is used as long as the version selected is used consistently whenever a quote is applied.

Under the present international monetary system, nations have a great degree of flexibility in choosing the exchange rate regimes that best fit their economic conditions. At one extreme, is a fixed exchange rate system, where the exchange rate is stable and can only fluctuate within a very limited band. At the other extreme is a freely fluctuating exchange rate system where the exchange rate is set by the free market forces of demand and supply. The freely fluctuating exchange rate system is also referred to as a freely floating exchange rate system, a flexible exchange rate system, or a clean-floating exchange rate system.

SECTION 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have focused on the relationship among exchange rate, trade variables, and investment variables. In this section a brief review of the literature is given. The review is not intended as an exhaustive list and is limited in scope to studies pertaining to analysis of exchange rates published in the previous decade.

Goldberg (2004) constructs three industry specific real exchange rate indexes for the U.S. and looks at the extent to which each index co-moves or diverges from aggregate economy wide measures. The article’s intent is to provide tools for analyzing the real and financial effects of exchange rate movements.

Belts and Kehoe (2006) examine the relationship between the bilateral real exchange rate of the U.S. and the associated bilateral relative price of non traded goods for five of its trade relationships. They find that this relationship depends crucially on the choice of the price series used to measure relative prices and the choice of the trade partner. Additionally, the relationship is stronger when producer prices are used as a measure of relative prices and when the trade relationship between U.S. and trade partner is more important.

Liew, Lim, and Hussain (2003) examine the impact of exchange rate changes on trade balances between Japan and the ASEAN-5 countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. They conclude that the role of exchange rates on trade balances has been exaggerated. Their study indicates that real money, more so than the nominal exchange rate, affected trade balances during the sample period of 1986-1999.

Kakkar and Ogaki (1999) examine the long run movements of real exchange rates and relative prices of non-tradable’s and tradable’s. They conclude that real exchange rates may not move in the direction
predicted by theoretical models when the producers of these tradable goods experience changes in productivity.

A study by Tille (2003) emphasizes the impact of exchange rate movements on U.S. foreign debt. The conclusion from the study is that the depreciation of the dollar would improve the U.S. position by making exports more competitive and thereby reduce U.S. reliance on foreign financial flows. A valuation effect is examined in the article that provides an additional mechanism through which the current depreciation of the dollars might improve the U.S. net position.

Wilamoski and Tinkler (1999) examined the effect of U.S. foreign direct investment in Mexico on U.S. trade with Mexico. Their analysis shows that foreign direct investment has positive impact on exports to and imports from Mexico. Hejazi and Safarian (2003) use a gravity model for 51 countries and confirm the Wilamoski and Tinkler (1999) results. Hejazi and Safarian also found that the impact of U.S. foreign direct investment is stronger on exports than imports. Hence, foreign direct investment may increase trade surplus or decrease traded deficit.

Goldberg (2009) reviews several studies on the relationship between exchange rates and foreign direct investment. She points out that research supports the view that the variability of exchange rates contributes to foreign investment. She further summarizes explanations given as to why a country with depreciating currency should expect to experience an increase in foreign investment in that country.

From above, the relationship among exchange rate, trade, and investment abroad can be summarized as follows:

a. There is a positive relationship between exchange rate and exports and imports. However, the impact on balance of trade depends on which relationship is stronger. This is usually negative.

b. There is a positive relationship between balance of trade and foreign investment abroad.

The implication of a. and b. is that appreciation of the US dollar will likely have a negative impact on foreign investment abroad.

SECTION 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this section the data and methodology used for the study are given. The main data source is the International Financial Statistics Yearbook (2008) published by the International Monetary Fund. The trade variables selected are Real Exports (RX), Real Imports (RM), Real Balance of Trade (BOT), and Real Effective Exchange Rate (RER), while the investment related variables are Direct Investment Abroad (DI) and Portfolio Investment (PI). The choice of the variables is based on the literature and the availability of continuous data for the sample years.

To examine the relationship between RER and the trade related variables, a double logarithmic model as given in Equation 1 was fitted for each of the trade variables:

\[ \log R_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \log RER_t + \alpha_2 \log R_{t-1} + \mu_t \]  
(Equation 1)

Where:
- \( R_t \) = real exports, real imports, or real balance of trade.
- \( R_{t-1} \) = previous year’s value of \( R_t \)
- \( \mu \) = error term
- \( \alpha_i \) = coefficients
- \( t \) = time: 1996 to 2007

However, taken logs of negative BOT values will yield complex numbers; hence the BOT model was estimated using the data in its level form.

A model similar to Equation 1 is used to examine the relationship between RER and the investment related variables, Direct Investment Abroad (DI) and Portfolio Investment (PI). The dependent variable is the investment variable \( I_t \), which is either direct investment abroad (DI) or portfolio investment (PI).

\[ \log I_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log RER_t + \beta_2 \log I_{t-1} + \mu_2 \]  
(Equation 2)

Where: \( \beta_i \) = coefficients

Each model is estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS) method.
Elasticity

The relationship between exchange rates and international trade is affected by the “J-curve” phenomenon. The J-curve shows the initial decline in export value and increase in import value due to exchange rate depreciation but, in the long run, the trade balance increases because the depreciation stimulates exports and discourages imports. To capture the difference between the short run and long relationship between RER and the trade related variables, short run and long run elasticities are estimated. The coefficients of Log RER in the models are the short run elasticities of RER. Long run elasticities are obtained using the equations below:

\[ \varepsilon_{1.1} = \frac{\alpha_1}{(1 - \alpha_2)} \]  
(Equation 3)

Where: the coefficients are from Equation 1 following Nerlove and Addison (1958) and Koutsoyiannis (1977).

\[ \varepsilon_{1.2} = \frac{\beta_1}{(1 - \beta_2)} \]  
(Equation 4)

Where: the coefficients are from Equation 2.

For the BOT model, the short run elasticity was calculated using the usual elasticity formula

\[ a_1 = \phi \times \frac{\text{RER}}{\text{BOT}} \]  
(Equation 5)

Where: \( \phi \) is the coefficient of RER;
\( \text{RER} \) is the average of RER
\( \text{BOT} \) is the average of BOT.

SECTION 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the results for the regression analysis of the relationship between real effective exchange rates (RER) and the trade related variables Exports (RX), Imports (RM), Real Balance of Trade (BOT). The three models are all generally of good fit with statistically significant F-values and R-squares above 90 percent. The presence of a lagged dependent variable does raise autocorrelation concerns. Only the RX model, however, exhibited the autocorrelation problem. Hence, the results shown for the trade variable Real Exports (RX) are Yule-Walker estimates corrected for autocorrelation. The results shown for Real Imports (RM) and Real Balance of Trade (BOT) are OLS estimates.

As the results in Tables 1 and 2 indicate, the intercept is significant for Real Exports (RX) and Real Imports (RM) but not for Real Balance of Trade (BOT). The RER coefficients are not statistically significantly different from zero, except that of log RX. The literature has indicated weak relationships between trade variables and exchange rates. The short run elasticities (coefficient of log RER in Table 1) are negative for all three trade variables. This implies that, in the short run, as the U.S. dollar appreciates, real exports and real imports decline but the former declines faster subsequently causing BOT to decline. While the impact of RER on RX and RM is more elastic in the long run than in the short run, the reverse holds true for BOT. Hence, the J-curve effect is not observed in these results.

Table 3 presents the results obtained by regressing the investment related variables Direct Investment Abroad (DI) and Portfolio Investment (PI) on RER. Similar to the trade related variable results, the F values and adjusted R-squares are significantly high. The Log DI results are Yule-Walker estimates to correct for autocorrelation. The results show RER negatively related to both Direct Investment Abroad (DI) and Portfolio Investment (PI) with only the effect of RER on PI being statistically significant. The coefficients of lagged values of both DI and PI are positive and statistically significant. In the case of DI the short run elasticity is less than one and in the case of PI it is greater than one. The long run elasticities for both DI and PI are significantly higher.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper examines the relationships between real effective exchange rates and trade variables and investment variables for the U.S. from 1996 to 2007. The trade related variables considered are imports,
exports, and the balance of trade. The real effective exchange rate is found to have a negative but weak relationship to the trade variables.

Regarding the investment related variables, the relationship is negative but weak with respect to direct investment abroad. The elasticity is less than one for direct investment abroad and greater than one for portfolio investment.

In all cases, except BOT, the long run relationship is stronger than the short run as indicated by the higher elasticities. The results of the trade variables and investment variables together confirm the literature summary above.

This study has limited scope and is preliminary in nature. As this study is a pilot study, future research with more observations is needed. Additional considerations such as a time trend and other factors noted in the literature such as real money are also considerations for future research.

References
Table 1. Relationship between Real Effective Exchange Rate and Trade Related Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Coefficient of Log RER&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>Coefficient of lagged Dep. Var.</th>
<th>Adj. R&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Durbin h</th>
<th>Long run elasticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log RX (Exports)</td>
<td>1.016*</td>
<td>-0.434*</td>
<td>0.933*</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>58.47*</td>
<td>-1.689*</td>
<td>-6.478</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.19)</td>
<td>(-6.3)</td>
<td>(11.51)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0001)</td>
<td>(0.0045)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log RM (Imports)</td>
<td>0.598*</td>
<td>-0.207</td>
<td>0.847*</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>147*</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>-1.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.18)</td>
<td>(-1.06)</td>
<td>(16.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0001)</td>
<td>(0.123)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at 5 percent test level
Values in parenthesis:
  - Coefficients: T values
  - F and Durbin h: P values

Table 2. BOT Estimation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>RER&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>BOT&lt;sub&gt;t-1&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>Adj. R&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Durbin h</th>
<th>Short run elasticity&lt;sup&gt;A&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Long run elasticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3.40</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>1.038*</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>80.19*</td>
<td>-0.343</td>
<td>-0.638</td>
<td>-0.225</td>
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<tr>
<td>(-1.66)</td>
<td>(1.24)</td>
<td>(7.80)</td>
<td>(0.0001)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.366)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at 5 percent test level
A. – computed using equation 5
Values in parenthesis:
  - Coefficients: T values
  - F and Durbin h: P values

Table 3. Relationship between Real Effective Exchange Rate and Investment Related Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Coefficient of Log RER&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>Coefficient of lagged Dep. Var.</th>
<th>Adj. R&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Durbin h</th>
<th>Long run elasticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log DI (Direct Investment Abroad)</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>0.983*</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>196.3*</td>
<td>-1.76*</td>
<td>-3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.52)</td>
<td>(-0.34)</td>
<td>(19.26)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0001)</td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Log PI (Portfolio Investment)</td>
<td>2.94*</td>
<td>-1.32*</td>
<td>0.916*</td>
<td>0.880</td>
<td>34.1*</td>
<td>-0.091</td>
<td>-15.71</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.18)</td>
<td>(-2.34)</td>
<td>(6.59)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0002)</td>
<td>(0.434)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at 5 percent test level
Values in parenthesis:
  - Coefficients: T values
  - F and Durbin h: P values
Our schools are a reflection of the ever-increasing changes in our country’s demographics. Today’s educators can expect to teach children who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). As an educator in a small, private liberal arts university in the Midwest, I have listened as pre-service teachers share their experiences or lack thereof with people who are different than them. Some of their comments reveal their apprehensions, their willingness to learn about others, and their desire to do the right thing regardless of their limited exposure to individuals who have varied backgrounds than their own. For example, when discussing their personal experiences, one preservice teacher shared the following, “I come from a small town and I had never seen a person from a different cultural background than my own until I came to college.” Another preservice teacher stated, “I think it’s important to learn about other cultures because I know what I see on TV isn’t the full picture.” Still, another revealed her concerns when she said, “There is literally no diversity in my hometown so I am worried about making mistakes when interacting with children and parents who have different experiences than me.” If these comments are remotely accurate, how then does a teacher education program situated in the Midwest prepare its preservice teachers to understand, relate to, and teach a student population that is becoming increasingly diverse? As teacher educators, how do we create a college curriculum that fully integrates culturally responsive pedagogy into our daily lessons rather than set it apart in a single course? How do we prepare preservice teachers to engage in candid discussions about diversity and reflect upon their own beliefs, values, and biases without making them feel uncomfortable? How do we help preservice teachers understand how their perceptions or beliefs about students with diverse backgrounds can impact their teaching? What experiences, strategies, and/or materials can teacher educators utilize to best prepare preservice teachers to teach all students who are under their care and guidance, no matter their backgrounds? Also of interest was whether preservice teachers would engage in reading and discussing multicultural texts with their peers outside of the college classroom. How would reading multicultural literature affect preservice teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about children of diverse backgrounds?

This study aims to identify midwest pre-service teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about culture and to assess their knowledge of multicultural literature. It also aims to determine whether preservice teachers, if given an opportunity, would agree to participate in reading and discussing multicultural texts with peers in settings other than their college classrooms.

Review of Literature

The willingness to reflect upon one’s beliefs and to challenge the foundation of those beliefs plays an important role in the teaching process (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1983 & 1987; Smith, 2005). To foster reflective thinking, Dewey proposed we engage in personal examination and inquiry so that we might understand the very ideas, thoughts, and images that shape our belief systems and propel us to action. He believed systematic training in habits of observing, questioning, and reflection would help teachers plan and direct their activities with foresight and help them gain greater insight into their decision-making practices. Most recently, the idea that one’s belief system influences one’s actions has received much attention from researchers working in the field of teacher dispositions (Smith, et al. 2005; Borko & Putnam, 1995; Baum & King, 2006; Pajares, 1993).
Research aimed at promoting reflective thinking among pre-service and in-service teachers takes into account both external and internal factors that affect how teachers interpret their professional and personal experiences (Palmer, 1998; Schon, 1983 & 1987; Shulman, 1987). While some studies indicate teacher education programs are preparing preservice teachers to be more sensitive and culturally responsive to the needs of their students (Davis & Turner, 1993; Perry, 2004), others suggest that there is still more work to be done in this area (Delpit, 2003; Banks, 1997 & 2001; Freire, 2005). The question remains whether and how teachers can be trained to examine the social/political and moral/ethical relationships that enter into their instructional decision-making, especially when their decisions interface with the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

An approach used by some teacher educators aimed at helping preservice teachers develop sociocultural awareness and sensitivity towards an increasingly diverse student population is the use of multicultural literature (Wake & Modla, 2007; Woods, 2009; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007). Some studies have found preservice teachers are able to explore different cultures through literature and feel more at ease in teaching students with diverse backgrounds (Wake & Modla, 2007; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007). However, others have noted preservice teachers still remained uncertain about how their own perceptions and cultural biases influence their instructional actions (Wake & Modla, 2007; Law & Lane, 1987; Lowenstein, 2009; Brown, 2004). Woods (2009), for example, concluded that a variety of multicultural books should be used to help teachers understand the complexities inherent in all cultures so as not to promote a monolithic view of the particular culture being studied. He also found that teachers’ personal life histories are often obstacles in bringing about the change in cultural beliefs they hold about others.

Determining how preservice teachers define the term “culture” is necessary for determining their understanding of others. Anthropologists have studied people in every continent and have concluded that cultures are complex social entities. According to Margaret Mead (1937), culture consists of “traditional behavior created by the human race that is successively learned by each generation.” Sociologists define culture in similar terms. Parson & Shils (1951) define culture as a “set of rules or standards.” Multicultural or ethnic studies scholars also share similar views of what culture means. For instance, Banks (1997), a proponent of multiculturalism refers to culture as the “unique values, symbols, life-styles, institutions, and other human-made components that distinguish one group from another” (p. 124). Oxford’s on-line dictionary states culture is “the distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products, or way of life of a particular society, people, or period” (OED.com). Culture is defined as a shared way of life for a group of socially interacting people.

Some scholars make a distinction between the various levels of culture, which can be described as a dichotomy between the external/internal, outer/inner, or surface versus inner elements of a culture (Van Den Bosch & Van Prooijen, 1992; Banks, 1997). Like an iceberg, culture tends to be 10% above water, which includes the more tangible aspects of a culture, and 90% under the surface, which is comprised of the intangible aspects of a culture. The external, outer, or surface level elements of culture are typically those that are visible to everyone such as a cultural group’s food, dress, music, crafts, dance, language, celebrations, language, and games. The internal, inner, or deeper elements are those less visible yet comprise the greater portion of a culture such as rules of conduct, facial expressions, conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, eye contact, body language, touching, patterns of decision-making, preference for competition or cooperation, roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, etc. (Indiana Department of Education, www.doe.in.gov/englishlanguagelearning). These deeper elements of culture are what teachers need to help their students understand so that they are better able to interact more positively with others who have different ways of being and acting. The hope is that this knowledge may help both teachers and students gain a greater understanding and appreciation of others. For purposes of this study, culture is defined as shared values, beliefs, traditions, customs, and ways of communicating and living that a group of individuals transfer from one generation to another.

Similarly, deciding what constitutes as “multicultural literature” is important. Woods (2009) suggests multicultural literature encompasses texts from all cultures by authors who have insider or outsider perspectives of the culture being studied. Others believe only literature written by insiders qualifies as
multicultural literature (Bishop, 1992). This study defines multicultural literature as texts that feature any and all possible cultures and includes either insider or outsider perspectives.

These definitions are important as they set the parameters of acceptable responses to several open-ended questions on the survey. The next section describes the subjects, survey, and analysis procedures used.

Methods

Subjects

A total of 39 pre-service teachers enrolled in courses required for teacher licensure participated in the study. There were six males and thirty-three females [see Table 1]. Three males and eighteen females had completed their third year in the teacher education program. Second year students included three males and four females. First year students were comprised of ten females. In this study, those who were classified as traditional students were 18 to 24 years of age while non-traditional students ranged from 25 to 50 years of age. Five males and twenty-three females were classified as traditional students while one male and ten females were designated as non-traditional. Five males and thirty-three females were of Euro-Caucasian descent and one male participant was African American. Four female participants were seeking a teaching license as their second degree.

Survey

A survey of ten questions was administered to the participants at the end of their 15 week spring full-term courses [see Appendix A]. Participants had approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Sixteen pre-service teachers were enrolled in an introductory Foundations of Education course and twenty-seven in a Social Studies Methods K-8 course.

The pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to decline participation in the study. Two individuals from each course exercised this right, which resulted in a total of four who chose not to complete the survey. Therefore, data for thirty-nine pre-service teachers was collected. The instructor who teaches both courses was selected for several reasons. First, the content of both courses indicated preservice teachers had some exposure to issues of diversity through assigned readings, class discussions, projects, films, and/or field experiences. Second, the Foundations course, which is considered one of the introductory courses to the teacher education program, typically enrolls students classified as sophomores and juniors but has recently expanded to include second semester freshman. The Social Studies methods course only includes junior level students. Since a combination of both courses offered the widest classification of students, it might potentially allow for a comparative analysis of the beliefs and perceptions of freshman, sophomore, and junior pre-service teachers. Finally, the instructor for the two courses agreed to administer the survey.

Two professionals who have an interest and experience with social justice, multicultural education, multiple intelligences, and diversity issues reviewed the survey questions and provided feedback. Five of the ten questions were revised: three were changed from yes/no questions and restated to yield open-ended responses, one was replaced by a new question, and one was revised for clarity.

Analysis Procedures

A template with all the questions pertaining to this study was created using a word processing program. The survey data was read through twice to gain a general understanding of the preservice teachers’ responses. Next, each survey was assigned a number, which was used to organize and track the responses of each participant. The data was then transcribed onto the template under the appropriate question. During this process, each question and its responses were read a third time. A fourth reading of each question and its responses led to a preliminary grouping of similar ideas. Grouped responses were reviewed and regrouped as needed. In particular, responses to questions 1, 2, and 4 were reviewed three or four times to ensure the content of each response corresponded to its assigned group. Grouped data was then assigned a preliminary heading or title to reflect the main theme of the responses. Finally, participant comments were selected as exemplars for the identified themes (Creswell, 1998). Percentages for grouped data were tabulated for each question and analyzed.

Results and Discussion
The results of the study are reported in the order the questions appeared in the survey. (See Appendix A for a list of the survey questions.)

When asked whether they engaged in leisure reading, 87% of the preservice teachers indicated they read a variety of materials including novels, newspapers, magazines, children’s books, electronic texts, the Bible, biographies, and inspirational texts [See Table 2]. While 8% stated they would read if they had more time, 5% of the preservice teachers surveyed did not acknowledge reading beyond their school related assignments. While these results suggest 13% of preservice teachers in this study may be less willing or lack the desire to read texts beyond those assigned for classes, they did offer several reasons such as lack of time, job responsibilities, and family obligations as reasons why they did not engage in leisure reading. Overall, these preservice teachers appear to engage in leisure reading more than has been reported in other studies with preservice teachers and college students in general (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; NAEP, 2009; Bauerlain, 2008).

Approximately 80% of preservice teachers were able to state a definition of culture similar to the one used in this study. This indicates a majority of the respondents appear to understand the deeper elements of culture such as shared values, morals, and beliefs in addition to the surface level elements of culture such as race, language, dress, and food, etc. About 15% provided definitions that indicated they misinterpreted the question and only 5% did not respond to the question. In contrast, when asked to identify all the cultural groups they belong to, 49% listed three or more groups, 40% stated one or two groups, 8% did not write a response, and 3% stated they were unsure [see Table 3]. Those who stated they belonged to one or two cultural groups typically referred to the surface level elements of a culture such as ethnic roots of their ancestors. These results appear to suggest that although a majority of the preservice teachers understood both the surface and deeper elements of culture, when asked to identify the cultural groups they belong to, half seemed to use only the surface level elements of culture. This finding could imply preservice teachers, whether consciously or unconsciously, may tend to notice the surface rather than the deeper levels of children’s cultural backgrounds when interacting with them in classrooms settings. How these conscious or unconscious elements are noted by teachers and how they impact a teacher’s instructional decision-making needs to be further studied.

As when defining culture, similar responses occurred when preservice teachers were asked to define multicultural literature. Responses indicate 80% of preservice teachers defined multicultural literature as it was defined in this study. About 15% provided a response that deviated from a general understanding of what multicultural literature encompasses. Finally, 5% did not provide a response to this question. On the other hand, results indicate only 13% of preservice teachers were able to identify four or more multicultural book titles or authors and 13% listed two or three. A higher proportion, 53% of preservice teachers, did not respond to this question or indicated they did not know any multicultural book titles or authors. Only 21% were able to identify at least one multicultural title or author. Again, these results suggest a gap exists between what preservice teachers know qualifies as multicultural literature and their ability to recall multicultural texts they may have read. It is likely that their inability to recall titles or authors of multicultural literature may impact future decisions they make when selecting literature to share with students. If one cannot recall multicultural authors or titles, it might be assumed that when planning for instruction, these preservice teachers may find it difficult to incorporate multicultural literature that reflects the children’s backgrounds. In other words, teachers cannot teach what they don’t know.

When asked whether teachers, in general, should use multicultural texts to teach students, 92% responded affirmatively. Only 8% either did not respond to the question or indicated they were not sure. Similarly, 92% of the preservice teachers surveyed indicated multicultural texts should be used in Midwest schools regardless of the demographic composition of the communities. Only 5% left this question unanswered and 3% opposed the use of multicultural texts in primarily Midwest homogeneous, Caucasian, middle-class schools. These results suggest a willingness to incorporate texts that reflect students’ diverse backgrounds. Preservice teachers’ perceived Mexican, Latin, and/or Hispanics as being underrepresented in multicultural literature. In addition, African Americans, GLBTQs, religious groups, Indians, Middle Eastern, and Native American peoples were also perceived as underrepresented in literary
texts. Other groups perceived as being underrepresented included the poor, single mothers, and strong males.

Although 22% of preservice teachers stated they had no concerns about using multicultural texts with students, 17% reported being apprehensive about offending others and/or their actions being interpreted as mocking others [See Table 4]. Parental disapproval was also a concern for 15% of the preservice teachers surveyed. Moreover, 10% indicated some concern about how to handle biased, racist, or stereotyped perceptions students might harbor. Equally, 10% expressed worry about how best to establish relationships with diverse students to help promote learning, what to do if some students were unresponsive to multicultural instruction, or how to structure a multicultural classroom and whether they would be perceived as being adequately knowledgeable in this area. About 5% noted concern over providing age appropriate multicultural instruction while 12% did not respond to the question and 9% were unsure. If teacher education programs can capitalize on preservice teachers’ honest concerns related to issues of diversity, then courageous talk related to race, culture, ethnicity, language, etc. may lead to a reflective and deeper understanding and respect for others who are different than ourselves (Singleton, 2006).

Finally, when asked whether they would participate in a book club that would involve reading multicultural texts, 44% of preservice teachers stated an interest in being a part of it while 33% stated they would not participate. About 8% left the question unanswered and 10% noted they might be interested but were not certain. These results suggest a willingness to talk about issues of diversity that may begin to bridge the gap between teachers’ middle class, white, female experiences and the children’s diverse backgrounds (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003; Jackson, 1990; Banks, 2001).

Limitations

One limitation of this descriptive study is that surveys are self-reporting instruments of data collection and are therefore subjective in nature, relying heavily on the participants’ willingness to provide candid information. Although there were no ramifications one way or the other for how the participants in this study responded to the survey, there is often a tendency to represent oneself in a positive manner. Perhaps using a larger sample might balance out this concern. Another limiting factor is the composition of the group surveyed. The sample of preservice teachers used in this study consisted of 99% female and 1% male. Although this is a limitation, it is also a reality that those pursuing professions in education, particularly at the elementary levels, tend to be female. While various scholars indicate the need to attract more males into teaching, the fact that the sample reflected this disparity is consistent with national trends. However, it is important to note that teacher education programs may need to consider the ways in which recruitment of preservice teachers is accomplished so that males are equally encouraged to pursue careers in teaching where salaries for both female and male teachers are competitive with other professions.

Implications

One implication of these findings suggests teacher educators may want to continue to incorporate cultural awareness and culturally relevant pedagogy into their teacher education programs. The challenge for any teacher education program is to determine how it prepares future teachers to reflect upon their knowledge base, personal beliefs, attitudes, and values and the ways in which this type of reflection can assist them in understanding how these factors may impact how they interact and teach children from diverse backgrounds. Another implication of this study’s findings is that preservice teachers appear to have an interest in participating in learning opportunities outside of the college classroom. Teacher education programs may want to capitalize on this and create learning opportunities in alternate venues that may help preservice teachers develop the kinds of dispositional attitudes needed for working with diverse students.

Bibliography


Indiana Department of Education. Office of English Language Learning and Migrant Education. www.doe.in.gov/englishlangaugelearning.


Appendix A: Project Survey

1. What reading have you done recently that is not college related reading?
2. How would you define the term culture?
3. How many cultural groups do you belong to?
4. How would you define “multicultural literature”?
5. What titles or authors can you recall that you would classify as multicultural?
6. Why should or shouldn’t teachers use multicultural literature to teach students?
7. Should teachers who live in the Midwest use multicultural literature since most students attend schools that are comprised of primarily homogeneous, Caucasian, middle-class peers? Why or why not?
8. In your opinion, which cultural groups are underrepresented in literature for young people?
9. What concerns do you have about using multicultural literature with young people?
10. If given the opportunity to participate in a book club to read and discuss multicultural literature on campus with other preservice teachers and the meeting time agreed with your schedule, would you participate? Why or why not?
Table 1: Participant Demographics

![Bar Chart: Participant Demographics](Image)

Table 2: Texts Read by Preservice Teachers

![Bar Chart: Texts Read](Image)
Table 3: Identifying Personal Cultural Groups

![Table 3: Identifying Personal Cultural Groups](image)

Table 4: Preservice Teachers’ Concerns Using Multicultural Literature

![Table 4: Preservice Teachers’ Concerns Using Multicultural Literature](image)
Analyzing Principal Perceptions of Educational Purpose in Southern Belize through Scholar-Practitioner Research

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Peggy B. Gill
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Schools have an important role in the development of children (Jakes & DeBord, 2010). This seems obvious, but schools are often asked to extend upon their role as educators. This means that leaders in schools should have a concept of the overriding purpose, often called the mission, of their organization (Hickman, 2009). This is important so that outside influences that are not aligned with the mission can be minimized or eliminated (Collins, 2001).

In addition to understanding the mission of the organization, leaders must be visionary. Surveys suggest that this characteristic is one that others in the organization value (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). A visionary leader has developed a conception of what the organization should be in the future. This vision must be developed and internalized with other stakeholders to increase the likelihood of success (Donaldson, 2001). This vision can be recognized in characteristics of the product as described in the future.

This suggests that a leader’s perception of the organization’s mission, as well as recognizing the characteristics that represent success, provides an important lens for leadership. This is true within any type of organization, including schools. The purpose of this research is to analyze the mission and perceptions of the principals’ vision of student success characteristics within Belizean schools in the Toledo district. This study is embedded within the scholar-practitioner approach to leadership (Jenlink, 2006), as the researchers were directly involved with the workshop classes that provided the data.

**Belize Education**

Belize was a British colony until 1981 (Lewis, 2000), which was the year in which independence was granted. The imprint of former British rule remains (U. S. Department of State, 2007). The government has a similar parliamentarian system (Jones, 1995), and there is a clear church/state interaction throughout the country (Wainwright, 2008). This is evident within the educational system (Mason & Longsworth, 2005), which has the majority of schools endorsing a particular faith. There are some government schools, although they tend to have a spiritual aspect as well.

Many schools in Belize rely on multi-grade classrooms (Achtem, 2010), often due to the small size of many rural villages. This means that a teacher in a multi-grade classroom has students of different age and educational levels. This environment requires that different educational needs be taught in an organized and effective way (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005). The skills for effective use of classroom strategies in multi-grade classes places an emphasis on quality teaching.

Access to educated teachers often varies based upon the Belizean district in which a child resides. The Toledo district in southern Belize has fewer certified teachers (Teachers for a Better Belize, 2009), which creates limits on creative strategies used in the classroom to increase student achievement. This becomes even more important in Toledo because of the large percentage of students who have English as a second language (Winsor, 2007). Most students in the Toledo district speak something other than English at home. This can vary from the Mayan languages, Kekchi or Mopan, to Creole, which many in Punta Gorda, the largest city in the district, speak (Achtem, 2010). This adds to the challenges faced by teachers in Toledo.
Belize has other issues that are common to developing countries. Resources are limited, and there is often a reliance on humanitarian groups to partner with schools to provide assistance. These groups have good intentions, but there is the possibility that this assistance is not in alignment with the mission of the school. Even the most educationally focused group may not provide the most effective solutions (Achtem, 2010). This could be because of the lack of contextual knowledge on the part of the international partners (Fuller & Clarke, 1994). Schools are tempted to embrace partners who bring in resources even if the approach is less than optimal.

Schools use these resources to assist in increasing student achievement. This is measured on the national level in Belize with the Primary School Examination (PSE), a standardized exam taken by students at the end of Standard VI (Mullens, Murnane, & Willett, 1996), which is approximately the same as the 8th grade in the United States. This is an important measure of student success in schools, but results have been mixed in many regions (Chanona, 2004; The Guardian, 2009).

Scholar-Practitioner Approach

Most researchers attempt to control for as many variables as possible, hoping to reduce the system into smaller parts. This reduction may be somewhat decontextualized, but there is value in understanding small components of a system. This reductionism has increased our understanding of the world and has been very successful. Despite this success, outcomes that are not aligned with previous research are common. William James (1896), in a classic statement, recognized this problem. He stated,

Round about the accredited and orderly facts of every science there ever floats a sort of dust-cloud of exceptional observations, of occurrences minute and irregular and seldom met with, which it always proves more easy to ignore than to attend to .... Anyone will renovate his science who will steadily look after the irregular phenomena. (p. 299)

The anomalies of which James alludes continues to be of concern among researchers (Brooks, 2005).

These irregularities are common in social research (Neuman, 2000), and this is exhibited in education. All educational initiatives have multiple variables that impact outcomes. This is illustrated in systems theory (Meadows, 2008), which recognizes that the starting points of any research have a major impact on the final result (Gribbin, 2004). Educational research cannot account for all of the starting variables of each individual involved, which includes environmental experience and genetic predispositions (Hinton, Miyamoto, & Della-Chiesa, 2008). Once the variables of a study changes, the outcome is likely to change. Social science is particularly susceptible to influence from many sources (Neuman, 2000).

Scholar-practitioner research recognizes not only the multiple influences and variables, but also the impact of the researcher on the outcome. Studies suggest that research is impacted by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The classic example of this is the Hawthorne Effect (Sonnenfeld, 1985). The Hawthorne Effect came from a study of industrial productivity that had employee effectiveness increase regardless of the changes made by researcher. The greatest productivity occurred in this study when all changes were reverted to the original state.

The increase in productivity in the Hawthorne studies was due to the presence of the researchers. Scholar-practitioner researchers recognize the influence of their participation and embrace it. This approach of research-based influence has the goal of promoting socially just democratic behaviors within the organization (Jenlink, 2006). International humanitarian efforts provide important evaluative opportunities that benefit from this scholar-practitioner approach.

Method

This research was implemented as a part of a four day training session of principals in the Toledo district of southern Belize. There were 30 primary school principals in the study, and the researchers were presenters in the developmental workshops. This research method represents an aspect of scholar-practitioner leadership. Scholar-practitioners do not attempt to collect and analyze data from outside the system; they acknowledge that they are a purposeful part of the solution (Jenlink, 2006). Effective systemic change requires data, and scholar-practitioners provide this data while creating change for democratic practices that promote social justice (Jenlink, 2005).

The principals in the workshop were divided into focus groups. Focus groups provide a qualitative interview procedure to determine thought and beliefs on particular issues. Researchers in this process
“strive to learn through discussion about conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and processes among various groups” (Berg, 2001, p. 123). Focus group research should have a clear objective, rapport among groups and facilitator, and good organization to ensure that participant discussion stays within the topic parameters (Berg, 2001).

The first topic for the focus groups was to determine the mission of their schools. There was a background lecture to discuss the meaning of the term “mission”, which for our purpose was “the enduring purpose of the school”. In addition, the principals were asked to write what they considered successful characteristics among students who finished primary school, and they were asked to consider the same for a 25 year old former student. This reflection on a student’s characteristics of success was related to the concept of vision.

The different focus groups were assigned through a random process. Each member counted out one through five, and the individuals moved to a designated area; thus, there were five groups. The groups met for 20 minutes and wrote the consensus of their discussion on paper for discussion. The groups were asked to share their results and discuss related issues over the next 45 minutes. The comments that went along with the written comments were included, in part, in the discussion.

Focus group research requires systemic analysis. As Berg (2001) states, “one style of analysis is analyzing the content of the statements made by subjects during the focus group” (p. 124). This provided the first level of analysis as each focus group discussed and selected the most relevant ideas. The second level of analysis occurred as the researchers identified the common themes across the focus groups. The written content that resulted from the focus groups is reproduced in the results section. Other comments from the focus group interviews are included in the discussion.

**Results**

The five groups each produced a written consensus regarding a school’s mission and success characteristics for a student completing standard six and at 25 years of age. The results in Table 1 are recorded verbatim based upon the written responses.

[Insert Table 1]

**Discussion**

Scholar-practitioner research values the relationships and communication that leads to a greater understanding of the system in which they work. Scholar-practitioner leaders participate within the system with the desire of increasing opportunities for democratic dialogue and social justice. An analysis of these principals’ reflections upon their work as it relates to ultimate purposes increases an overall understanding of the educational system within the Toledo district. This democratic dialogue may also provide the feedback necessary for effective systemic change through a greater focus on the mission and desired outcomes of schools.

The principals were fairly uniform in their responses to the mission of the primary schools of the Toledo district in Belize. The responses alluded to several ultimate purposes, but each group used the term “holistic” to describe the mission. The discussion from the principals further clarified this meaning. The mission of the schools was to address the needs of the entire child; not only focusing on academic issues, but also teaching to the spiritual, physical, emotional, and social needs. The mission of schools as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) includes the four pillars: learning to be, to do, to know, and to live together which support and align with the outcomes defined by the Toledo principals (UNESCO, 2001).

This holistic approach was evident in the response to “what a successful student would look like after graduating from standard six”. There were characteristics like decision-making, critical thinking, and creative, but there were also more pragmatic comments regarding the ability to move to higher education or start a trade. In addition, the socio-emotional traits such as being respectful and having high self-esteem were mentioned.

There was a higher standard for success regarding a 25-year old former student. Two of the groups mentioned self-actualization, and the need to be a good citizen was a common theme. Other traits included being progressive, using life skills, and being an experimenter. These themes are consistent with
the Quality Education for All: A Human Rights Issue (UNESCO, 2007), which states that education must be relevant and provide people with the skills to fully employ their rights as citizens.

Although most of the principals in this study do not have the formal credentials commonly associated with school leadership (college degrees and/or certificates), they clearly identified the purpose and mission of school in agreement with those established by UNESCO and Education for All (EFA) (EFA/PRELAC, 2007). In 2000, the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America met in Santo Domingo and agreed to a Regional Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) in which they renewed their commitments to Education for All for the next fifteen years. Within this process these countries (including Belize) committed to a basic education for all and defined this education.

By ‘basic education’, we refer to satisfying learning-for-life needs. These include knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that permit people to - develop their abilities- live and work with dignity- fully participate in the development and improvement of their quality of life make decisions with access to adequate information, and continue to learn throughout life. (p.36)

In addition, these countries committed to the idea that education should provide skills for living and for developing

- a culture of the respect for law,
- the exercise of citizenship and democratic life,
- peace and non-discrimination,
- the development of civic and ethical values,
- sexuality,
- the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, and
- the preservation and care of the environment. (p. 39)

One explanation for the principal’s in this rural and relatively remote area of Belize having an understanding of the mission of education and educational outcomes that so closely align with those established by leaders throughout their region of the world may be the strong incorporation of a national spirit and responsibility in all children. As mentioned before, Belize is a young country with less than 30 years as an independent nation. Many of the principals can remember the time before independence and have great pride in the country. The Belize National Anthem, sung at all school occasions, reflects a responsibility for all citizens to maintain a free and peaceful democracy. In addition, the National Prayer, also spoken at all school functions, specifically reinforces the goals of education, “With Your (God’s) guidance, may all our endeavors tend to peace, social justice, liberty, national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety and useful knowledge.” Thus the foundation upon which the school system rests promotes the values expressed by the principals.

These values were expressed by both what was said, and what was not. An interesting result of this exercise was that no principal mentioned passing the PSE as a characteristic of success. This was brought up by a principal during the workshop, and it was discussed. This discussion uncovered that many of the groups considered adding this as an important component of success, but ultimately, educating a student was much more than a standardized exam. Further, a government mandated exam did not fit within the characteristics that the principals believed was important. Passing the exam, it was stated, did not ensure good citizenship, or even general ability. Students who could not pass the exam were often the most successful citizens. In Belize trust may be placed on education regulation and control through testing with the PSE from the perspective of improving the quality of education. However, achieving better quality education demands more and better definitions in regard to what and how much one needs to know, and more and better tests in order to precisely measure if this was achieved (UNESCO, 2003).

There were other comments about the exam, including the concern about bias. The test questions often addressed situations and experiences of which the students of the Toledo district have no reference. Any question that uses situations of an urban environment may not be understood by a student who has lived their entire life in a small Mayan village. The lack of experiences, and possibly the decontextualized nature of the questions, contributes to poorer scores (Fuller & Clark, 1994).
These concerns occur in many countries. Educators are often worried about the reliance on standardized tests for determining the merit of a student’s achievement in school (Menken, 2008). The Belizean principals addressed an important point: Standardized tests are not related to effective citizenship. Any attempt to be self-actualized requires a personal understanding that transcends simple scores on tests. One might suggest that a self-actualized individual would understand that testing is of minor importance. Most schools tend to encourage the opposite belief. Testing is the political measure of a school’s success, so a strong emphasis is placed on this evaluation in the classroom.

The potential benefits and detriments of the PSE or any government mandated high-stakes testing is beyond the scope of this paper. There are many research studies that provide data related to this issue (Ravitch, 2010). However, an interesting part of this study is that the principals of Toledo recognized the importance of several factors that defined student success, but passing the PSE was not one.

The PSE may or may not be a big concern to international humanitarian groups, but the purpose of the schools should be important. There are well meaning humanitarian initiatives that fail to recognize the disruption that occurs when the approach is not in alignment with the mission. Principals are hesitant to deny anyone access to their school because any group could provide more physical resources. However, poorly aligned humanitarian initiatives may provide more harm than good by taking time away from the school’s mission.

One way an initiative may become harmful is through a poor understanding of contextual factors. Knowledge of context may be developed in minor ways through covert means, but the best way is through development of relationships within the schools being helped. Building relationships provides information important for contextual assistance, but even more important, it provides the foundation for making change.

A scholar-practitioner leader recognizes the importance of change that is directed toward an education that promotes democratic practices and social justice. Relationships provide the foundation for this direction. Scholar-practitioners provide research within the system, in part, to help model democratic practices. Research adds to the voice of the participants in this model, ensuring that those who work within the system are heard.

References


UNESCO. (2002). *Qualitative study of schools with outstanding results in seven Latin American countries*. (UNESCO; Santiago).


Table 1.

**Focus Group Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>School Mission</th>
<th>Standard VI Graduate</th>
<th>25 Year Old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Enhance learning to develop the holistic child intellectually, morally, spiritually and physically.</td>
<td>Produce • good decision makers • critical thinkers • literate • career oriented.</td>
<td>Produce good decision makers who will be functional and contributing members of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Holistic preparation of the child for life long learning.</td>
<td>A student who can move on either to secondary school or learning a trade.</td>
<td>Someone who is able to cope in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>To prepare student for life: (holistically)</td>
<td>appreciate and value self &amp; others, environment • respectful • have aspirations (set goals) • good social skills (inter &amp; intrapersonal skills) • pride &amp; love for country</td>
<td>self-sufficient function within society in a productive manner • progressive • a level of self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>To empower our students holistically to become productive citizens.</td>
<td>• demonstrate independence • demonstrate creativity • demonstrate high self esteem • develop life skills</td>
<td>• applying life skills • experimenting • striving for self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>To instill knowledge, skills, attitudes and values so that the individual can portray positive character. This will enable him/her to become a functional citizen in the society.</td>
<td>Obtain higher ed.</td>
<td>Functional citizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contributing Factors of Assistive Devices Use among Frail Elders with Family Caregivers in 2004 National Long-Term Care Survey

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Introduction

Since ancient times, the equipment humans have used to alleviate declining physical health has been well documented. For example, according to Greek mythology, the Sphinx asked Oedipus, “What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?” Oedipus answered, “A man,” with the assumption that a cane constitutes the third leg. Today, frail elders often rely on assistive devices such as canes and walkers, or assistive animals such as guide dogs to get around due to chronic illness, physical deterioration, and the limitations in activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs).

By the year 2050, the projected proportion of older people in the United States will increase to 20% from the year 2000 proportion of 12% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). However, extended longevity does not automatically guarantee good health. In fact, as elders live longer, the incidence rate and prevalence rate of chronic disorders among them increase. Approximately 80% or more of community-dwelling (meaning those who do not live in institutions such as a nursing home) older people in the U.S. suffer from at least one chronic disorder, while 50% have at least two, and 25% have four or more (Bodenheimer, Wagner, & Grumbach, 2002; Wan, Sengupta, Velkoff, & DeBarros, 2005). Based on the 1982 and 1994 National Long-Term Care Surveys (NLTCS), more than 20% of older people in the U.S. are functionally disabled or currently in need of some form of long-term care service (Doty, 1986; Trout, Krehbiel, & Kocz, 1999). One of the factors contributing to the elders’ long-term care needs is chronic physical impairment resulting from such conditions as osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. Indeed, elders’ physical deterioration contributes to their physical and behavioral dependency as well (Horgas, Wahl, & Baltes, 1996).

According to the Health Retirement Study, the percentage of elders requiring personal assistance progressively increases with age (National Institute on Aging, 2007). Whereas 9.3% of elders aged 65 through 69 years require such assistance, 10.9% of those aged 70 through 74 years do, 18.9% of those 75 through 79 do, 23.6% of those 80 through 84 do, and 45.4% for those 85 years or older do. These elders depend on others for what they could once do for themselves, such as personal care (e.g., dressing, bathing, toileting) and instrumental tasks (e.g., cooking, transportation, shopping) (Stephens & Franks, 1999).

The present study used the framework of the Andersen behavioral model of health service use (Andersen & Newman, 1973) to examine the contributing factors of the utilization of eight assistive devices among 1,505 families with frail elders and unpaid family caregivers. This study utilized the framework to conceptualize the experience of both frail elders and their family caregivers. According to the Anderson behavior model of health service use, an individual’s probability of using medical care service can be influenced by predisposing, enabling, and need characteristics, indicating that assistive device use among elders with caregivers may also be influenced by these factors. Predisposing characteristics include demographic variables such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other such variables. Enabling characteristics, such as economic and social resources, may facilitate or prohibit an individual’s use of medical care. Finally, need characteristics refer to the presence or severity of illness, determined
either by a person’s self-perceived physical/psychological health or by diagnostic ratings. Together, these characteristics may determine whether a person uses a particular type of medical care service. As such, we hypothesize that frail elders with unpaid family caregivers would show variance in terms of utilization of assistive devices. The contributing factors of assistive device use were selected according to previous studies using 2004 NLTCS (Hong, 2010; Presser & Ferraro, 2010).

**Utilization of assistive devices among the older population**

Assistive devices are one of the most frequently used services by older people and family members. Currently, approximately 35% of people age 75 and older utilize at least one type of assistive device, a number that is expected to increase as the numbers of older people in the U.S. increase (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011). Even with the presence of family caregivers, more than 50% of elders age 65 and older use assistive devices (NLTCS, 2004). Previous research findings have clearly suggested that the use of assistive devices by older people with disabilities helps them to stay out of nursing homes, prevents hip fractures, and supports them in living independently wherever they want to live (Cutler, 2001; Manton & Gu, 2001). However, previous studies tend to address the relationship between the frailties of elders and assistive device use without including the variables related to the caregiving experience around these elders. Both the employment of assistive device and the presence of family caregivers are resources for frail elders that enable them to live where they prefer. Thus, the current study will include information from both elders and their caregivers by using the 2004 NLTCS data.

**Methods**

**Data Source, Study Sample, and Measurements**

Data for this study were derived from the 2004 NLTCS sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) (NLTCS, 2004). Only data from a survey involving 1,924 families who had elders with ADLs or IADLs impairments and were living in the community with help from caregivers were included in the current study. The 2004 survey was administered to 1,505 older people with primary unpaid caregiver(s) for persons living in the community and this serves as the definition of caregiver for the current study. The study sample comprises 1,505 families with unpaid spouse (709 = 397 wives and 312 husbands) or adult children (796 = 552 daughters and 244 sons) caregivers.

The dependent variable for this study is the frequency of assistive device use for needs based on 6 ADLs and 2 IADLs among the 1,505 families in the sample. The frequency was measured using eight questions based on the dependent variable of this study: 1) During the past week, did you use special utensils or special dishes to help you eat? (Yes: 7 out of 1,380 respondents); 2) Did you use special equipment like a wheelchair, a walker, or a cane to help you to get into or out of bed? (Yes: 338 out of 1,246); 3) Did you use special equipment like a wheelchair, cane, or other device to help you get around inside? (Yes: 600 out of 1,246); 4) Did you wear special clothing or use special equipment to help you get dressed? (Yes: 18 out of 1,114); 5) Did you use special equipment like a shower seat, a tub stool or a grab bar to help you bathe? (Yes: 469 out of 1,016); 6) Did you use special equipment like a raised toilet, a bedside commode, or a grab bar to help you to use the toilet? (Yes: 398 out of 1,268); 7) When you go outside, do you use special equipment?, or When you go outside, does someone usually help, or provide equipment, like a cane or walker or a guide dog to help you get around? (Yes: 809 out of 1,187); and 8) Is this a regular phone or a phone with special equipment such as an amplifier or an enlarged dialer? (Yes: 154 out of 1,480)

The independent variables of this study can be divided into the predisposing, enabling, and need factors. In terms of the predisposing factors, we included the elder’s age, gender, education level, and racial background; the family caregiver’s age, gender, education level, and employment status and the family relationship between elder and caregiver. For the enabling factors, we included Medicaid, private health insurance, living arrangement, receipt of informal help, care affordability, the availability of respite care, use of nine formal services, the presence of a back-up caregiver, and coping strategies. The availability of respite care is measured by one item with a yes/no dichotomous response. The use of nine formal services was included separately in order to determine which services would be associated with assistive device use. Because of limitations in the availability of NLTCS data, the variable for receiving Medicaid was used as a proxy measurement of income. As usual in any survey, the 2004 NLTCS is
missing many values related to income. Although the eligibility to receive Medicaid is not a precise measurement equivalent to income, it is a practical choice given the circumstances (Mui & Kang, 2006).

In terms of the need domain related to elders, we included elder’s upper body disability (UBD) (Nagi, 1976), lower body disability (LBD) (Nagi, 1976), cognitive impairment, self-rated health, ADLs and IADLs dependency, number of medical conditions, previous admission to nursing home, hospitalization, medical office visit and disruptive behaviors. The elder’s cognitive impairment was measured using the Short Potable Mental Status Questionnaire (SPMSQ), while the elder’s disruptive behaviors were measured using the caregiver’s response to how many days in the past week the caregiver had to deal with any of 15 different disruptive behaviors.

In terms of the need domain related to family caregivers, we included ADLs tasks provided, IADLs tasks provided, length of caregiving, hours of caregiving, caregiver’s perceived overload (i.e., the composite score of four items suggested by Pearlin et al., 1990), the limitations on caregiver’s life, frequency of inconvenient incidence of caregiving, ADLs and IADLs dependency of caregivers, self-rated health, family conflict, physical strain, financial strain and stress. The limitation on the caregiver’s life is a composite score that sums yes/no responses to five dichotomous items about the caregiver’s life.

Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics were initially used to generate a profile of the sample. This information was calculated using the weight variable provided by the University of Michigan’s Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (NLTCS, 2004).

Composite indexes were created for the purpose of data reduction whenever necessary. For multivariate analyses, hierarchical linear regression analyses were used to identify predictors. A simple additive model was used to test the effect of predisposing factors, enabling factors, and need factors on assistive device utilization. Hierarchically, predisposing factors were entered first as controls because they occur temporally prior to other sets of predictor variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Enabling factors were entered second, while need factors were entered third according to the model being used (Anderson & Newman, 1973). Analysis was conducted using SPSS, version 18, with the complex samples add-on module. Sampling weight was applied.

Results

Description of the weighted sample

Table 1 presents the descriptive information of the weighted sample. Observations were weighted to ensure the representativeness at the national level. Standard errors were adjusted by taking the sampling strategies into consideration.

The average of assistive device use in the population was estimated to be 1.84 out of 10 assistive devices. Thus, families with elders and family caregivers were estimated to use approximately two assistive devices. The mean age of elders was estimated to be 80 years old. Thirty-six percent of elders were male. Elders’ education level was a little above the median out of 17 categories. Elders’ racial make-up was 89% white and 11% non-white.

The mean age of unpaid family caregivers was estimated to be 64 years old. Almost 37% of caregivers would be identified as male. Caregivers’ education level was higher than that of elders. The majority of caregivers (56.6%) were juggling the role of caregiver and the role of employed worker.

<Insert Table 1 around here>

In terms of enabling factors, only 17% of elders were estimated to receive Medicaid. However, almost half of the elders had private health insurance. Meanwhile 71% of caregivers were residing with elders. The family respondents reported a high level of informal support, averaging 25.1 supports (range 3 to 32). Almost 80% of family caregivers could afford the family caregiving. Only 1 out of 10 families were estimated to access respite care. The use of formal services was very low. Personal home care and home medication were the most utilized formal services. Only one out of five family caregivers employed coping strategies.

In terms of need factors, elders’ upper body disability average was 2.26 and lower body disability was 4.36. The mean score of elders’ cognitive impairment is comparatively low, and elders with caregivers reported their health to be above the median. The average of elders’ combined ADL and IADL
dependency was 5.48. The average number of medical conditions was 3.23. Less than 20% of elders (17.8%) had been in a nursing home, and 35% of elders had been hospitalized at least once while half of the elders had visited a medical office. The average of elders’ disruptive behavior was 19.3.

On average, more IADL tasks were provided for elders than ADL tasks. The average number of caregiver-ADL tasks was 1.17 while for IADL tasks it was 5.15. The length of caregiving was measured using 8 categories: 1) less than 3 months, 2) 3 to 6 month, 3) 6 months to less than 1 year, 4) 1 year to less than 2 years, 5) 2 years to less than 4 years, 6) 4 years to less than 7 years, 7) 7 years to less than 10 years, and 8) 10 years of more. The mean of the length of caregiving was 5.32. On average, caregivers provided 26.4 hours of caregiving per week, which is the same as working three-quarters time in terms of full-time employment. The mean of the composite score for the caregiver’s perception of overload indicated a moderate overload at 6.85. The mean of the limitations on the caregiver’s life was mild at 1.42. The mean of the caregivers’ perception of inconvenience was mild at 1.19. Eighteen percent of family caregivers reported the family conflict. The ADL and IADL dependency of caregivers was 9.62. Caregivers rated their own health at a mean of 2.87. The family caregivers’ physical, financial strain, and emotional stress were lower.

**Multivariate Analyses**

Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical regression model of assistive device use by the study respondents. Only statistically significant predictors were included in the table. Based on multiple regression analyses, the models (R square = .251) indicate that elders’ age, two formal service uses of caregivers (out of nine), lower body disability, cognitive impairment, ADLs and IADLs limitations, medical conditions, previous admission to a nursing home, and hospitalization were significant correlates in explaining the utilization of assistive devices among elders with unpaid family caregivers. Most variables among the need factors significantly impacted on the use of assistive devices.

Findings indicate that variables in predisposing domain as a set explained 3.6 percent of the variance in assistive device use when entered first. Entered second, the enabling domain variables as a set accounted for an additional 6.9 percent of the variance in the model. The need domain variables as a set added another 14.6 percent variance in the model after predisposing domain and enabling domain variables were taken into account.

**Discussion and Implications**

It is clear from the changing demographics in America that caring for the growing elderly population is an area of social concern. The provision of assistive devices has enormous implications for how and where older people can live, as their use can help older people live where they prefer to stay. The findings of the current study suggest that more formal service use, especially home modification and temporary use are important predictors of more special equipment use. Thus, when health care providers plan for formal service use, it would be prudent to include the need for assistive devices.

The national average for the annual cost of living in a nursing home is $75,109, according to a recent report by major life insurance company (MetLife, 2006). In 2001, the real median U.S. household income before taxes was $42,228 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001), which means it is likely that more than half of American families could not afford the long-term care expense for one elderly family member living in a nursing home. The cost of community services that enable people to remain at home could be lower than the cost of nursing homes according to Russell (1998) and an analysis of Medicaid data by the Center for Personal Assistance Services at the University of California, San Francisco (Lefleur, 2009).

Moreover, 84% of people between the ages of 50 and 64 and 95% those 75 and older agreed with the statement “I would like to stay in my home and never move” (AARP, as cited in Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011). Given the importance of honoring the wishes of older people who prefer to stay in their communities rather than move into a nursing home, it is imperative that factors related to the utilization of assistive devices be identified and well understood.

As the data in the NLTCS indicated, the majority of families of elders with family caregivers used assistive devices such as a wheelchair, a cane, or other device. Medicare covers items considered to be mobility assistive equipment (MAE), which includes canes, crutches, walkers, manual wheelchairs, power
wheelchairs, and scooters (Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2010). However, Medicare does not pay for home adaptations such as the installation of grab bars, shower seats, or transfer benches, all of which can prevent falls. This policy must be changed. It has also been reported that “the most popular modification is to install grab bars in bathrooms in about 30 percent of homes owned by adults 65 and older” (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011, p. 474). Hip fractures, often caused by falls in bathrooms, are of great concern given their correlation with immobility and mortality as well as the cost to society due to the high possibility of hospitalization. Thus, it is imperative that the policy related to Medicare’s coverage for installing devices be modified. We believe that the findings in this study provide important information related to the provision of assistive devices for frail elders and their family members. The identification of contributing factors of the utilization of special equipment can help frail elders continue to reside independently in the places in which they prefer to reside.

**Limitations of the Study**

The selection of variables and the extent of the exploration of contributing factors to assistive device utilization in the current study are limited by the availability of data. In addition, the 2004 NLTCS caregiver survey did not include questions about caregivers’ racial and ethnic backgrounds. The lack of cultural background information on the caregivers precluded consideration of these factors in the models. An income variable for the caregivers could not be included since the NLTCS data set does not have full information about caregiver’s income, a gap that limits the model for this study. Another limitation of the study is the cross-sectional design, making it impossible to consider how changes in respondents’ experiences or circumstances related to assistive device utilization over time may affect their decision-making processes.

**Future Research Suggestions**

There is much left to learn about assistive device utilization. First, information about caregivers’ and elders’ backgrounds should be augmented. Additional information on cultural, ethnic, and racial differences is needed in order to assist social service providers and long-term care service providers in designing culturally sensitive interventions and services. Another study with a large-scale racially and ethnically diverse data set would be helpful for updating information about or comparing stressors across the ever-expanding ethnic diversity of the United States.

The use of other measurement tools will also provide beneficial information to health care practitioners. The measurement tools used herein were partially borrowed from previous research; it would be beneficial to have a more refined research model in order to study such predictors of strain as role captivity, loss of self, management of the situation, and management of the meaning (Pearlin et al., 1990). Knowledge of the role of these predictors, combined with more multidimensional scales for anxiety, strain, and depression as outcome variables with assistive device utilization may give elders the perception of autonomy rather than dependence. It will also be beneficial to utilize longitudinal study designs in order to describe patterns of change in assistive device utilization over time at closer intervals and to establish the direction and magnitude of causal relationships (Menard, 1991).

**References**


National Long Term Care Study (2004). Public use dataset. Produced and distributed by the Duke University Center for Demographic Studies with funding from the National Institute on Aging under Grant No. U01-AG007198.


Table 1. Weighted sample ($N = 2,700,000$ to $2,900,000$) information of elders and unpaid family caregivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean or %</th>
<th>Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Unweighted (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of assistive devices (0-6), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.84 (.04)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predisposing factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elder</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (65-108), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>80.1 (.21)</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1)</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>33.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s education (1-17), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>7.94 (.99)</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (white = 1)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caregiver</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (18-99), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>64.1 (.39)</td>
<td>63.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver gender (male = 1)</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (1-17), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>9.7 (.91)</td>
<td>9.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver working and caregiving (yes =1)</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elder</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid (yes =1)</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private health insurance (yes =1)</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td><strong>Caregiver</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Living arrangement (living together =1)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum of informal support (3-32), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>25.1 (.54)</td>
<td>24.80</td>
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<td>Care affordability (yes = 1)</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of respite care (yes = 1)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial information service (yes = 1)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support group (yes = 1)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary care (yes = 1)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult day care (yes = 1)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal homecare (yes = 1)</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework (yes = 1)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal service (yes = 1)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation (yes = 1)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home modification (yes = 1)</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back up person (1= yes)</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coping strategies (7-44), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>19.9 (.16)</td>
<td>19.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need factors</td>
<td>Mean or %</td>
<td>Confidence Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elder</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s upper body disability (0-12), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>2.26 (.81)</td>
<td>2.10 2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s lower body disability (0-12), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>4.36 (.09)</td>
<td>4.18 4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s cognitive impairments (0 -10), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.48 (.06)</td>
<td>1.36 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s self-rated health (1-4), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>2.33 (.03)</td>
<td>2.28 2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADL and IADL dependency of elders (0-16), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>5.48 (.12)</td>
<td>5.23 5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Medical Condition (0 -10), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>3.23 (.06)</td>
<td>3.11 3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing home (1 = yes)</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>16 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalization (0 -21), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.67 .88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical office visit (0 -25), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>.94 (.04)</td>
<td>.85 1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s disruptive behavior (15-60), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>19.3 (.17)</td>
<td>18.99 19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caregiver</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADLs provided (0-6), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.17 (.05)</td>
<td>1.08 1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IADLs provided (0-10), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>5.15 (.08)</td>
<td>4.99 5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of caregiving (1-8), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>5.32 (.05)</td>
<td>5.22 5.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours of caregiving (1 -168), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>26.4(1.04)</td>
<td>24.33 28.39</td>
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<td>Caregiver’s perceived overload (4 -16), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>6.85(0.09)</td>
<td>6.66 7.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limitations on caregiver’s life (0 – 5), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.42 (.05)</td>
<td>1.33 1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenience (0 - 4), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.19 (.04)</td>
<td>1.12 1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflict (yes = 1)</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>16 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADL and IADL dependency of caregivers (2-11) , mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>9.62 (.33)</td>
<td>9.56 9.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Self-rated health (1 -4), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>2.87 (.02)</td>
<td>2.83 2.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caregiver physical strain (1 -5), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.84 (.03)</td>
<td>1.78 1.91</td>
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<td>Caregiver financial strain (1 -5) , mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>1.65 (.03)</td>
<td>1.59 1.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caregiver stress (1 -10), mean (s.e.)</td>
<td>3.17 (.07)</td>
<td>3.02 3.31</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 2. Contributing factors of assistive devices use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variables</th>
<th>Assistive devices uses</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate (s.e.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predisposing factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>.036 (.010)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary care</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.691 (.253)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home modification</td>
<td></td>
<td>.697 (.126)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s lower body disability</td>
<td></td>
<td>.099 (.022)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder’s cognitive impairments</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.102 (.029)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADL and IADL dependency of elders</td>
<td></td>
<td>.044 (.020)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Medical Condition</td>
<td></td>
<td>.076 (.033)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing home</td>
<td></td>
<td>.539 (.155)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalization</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.077 (.030)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R^2 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.251***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * The only coefficients with statistic significance are presented. * p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001
High School Students and the Freedom of Assembly

Larry L. Kraus
University of Texas at Tyler

Freedom is not something that anybody can be given. Freedom is something people take, and people are as free as they want to be.

*James Baldwin*

Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.

*Rosa Luxemburg*

When the Founding Fathers ratified the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America on December 15, 1791, it concluded over two years of discussion and debate. Disagreements between Federalist and Anti-Federalists, which had been on-going since the 1787 Convention in Philadelphia, threatened to cause the Constitution to not be approved. Most of this debate centered on arguments of whether the new Constitution adequately protected civil liberties. (Exploring Constitutional Conflicts, n.d.)

The original Bill of Rights included twelve amendments, two of which were not included in the final document. (The original First Amendment, dealing with the apportionment and number of Representatives, was never to be a part of the Constitution. The original Second Amendment, limiting the ability of members of Congress to increase their salaries while in office, was finally ratified as the 27th Amendment, in 1992, over two centuries later.) (Resolution of the First Congress, n.d.)

The purpose of this treatise is to examine what became the First Amendment to the Constitution and how the rights of Assembly and Petition have been applied to high school students. Commonly, the provisions of the First Amendment are grouped into three distinct areas. Previous papers by this author have dealt specifically with high school students’ rights to a free press and speech (Kraus, 2008) and religious freedoms (Kraus, 2010). This paper will focus on students’ rights of assembly and petition.

In examining legal decisions related to First Amendment Rights of Assembly and Petition, it is clear that these provisions are not commonly litigated. While a variety of groups, from abolitionists in the 1830’s, to the actions of suffragettes campaigning for women’s rights to vote in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have used assemblies and petitions to seek redress from the government the number of legal cases related to this is relatively small. (Freedom of Assembly, n.d.) Courts have sometimes imposed limitations on time, place, and permit requirements; however, as long as the assemblies and meetings are peaceful, the right to gather and petition has been enforced.

The modern keystone case in this area is De Jonge v. Oregon (1937). Dirk De Jonge, a member of the Communist Party in Oregon, helped organize and conduct a Party meeting in Portland. As the meeting was being held, police entered the meeting and arrested De Jonge for violating an Oregon law that prohibited “any unlawful acts or methods as a means of accomplishing or effecting industrial or political change or revolution.” He was later convicted for selling pamphlets that supported the Communist Party. The Supreme Court of the United States, overturning De Jonge’s conviction, stated that “peaceable assembly for lawful discussion cannot be made a crime.”

Two years later, in Hague v. C.I.O. (1939), the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a city ordinance in Jersey City, New Jersey, that forbade distribution of printed material or holding public meetings in streets and other public places without permits.

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One of the few cases concerning high school students related to First Amendment Assembly rights occurred in 1963, in South Carolina. In March, 1961, a large group of Black high school and college students met at the Zion Baptist Church, in Columbia, SC, and marched from there to the South Carolina State House grounds, which was public property. These students carried placards, mostly expressing disagreement with segregation, and walked in pairs through the State House grounds. Although onlookers gathered to watch the protest, there was no violence or confrontation, nor was there any obstruction of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. However, the students were advised that, if they did not disperse within 15 minutes, they would be arrested. The students responded by singing religious and patriotic songs (including the Star Spangled Banner). Police then arrested 187 of the students and charged them with breach of peace. All of the students were convicted and assessed fines and jail sentences. After the conviction was upheld in the South Carolina Supreme Court, the US Supreme Court considered the case and reversed the convictions. (Edwards v. South Carolina, (1963))

As if to show that the Right to Assemble cuts across the political spectrum, in 1969 the US Supreme Court, in Brandenburg v. Ohio (1969), reversed the conviction of Clarence Brandenburg, a leader of the Klu Klux Klan in Ohio, for advocating violence and criminal syndicalism while participating in a rally that called for a march on Washington, D.C., that authorities believed would lead to violence. In an unusual per curiam (issued by the Court, rather than being authored and signed by individual justices) decision, the Court held that government cannot restrict or punish abstract advocacy of force or law violation.

While surveying the cases related to First Amendment Assembly and Petition Rights, it becomes clear that very few of these cases involve high school students and, even fewer involve schools. While several court cases involving secondary students rights to assembly and petition have been filed, they typically have included other First Amendment and Constitutional grounds. For example, several cases related to student protests have involved both Speech and Assembly issues, and have typically been decided on the elements related to constitutionally protected speech. Likewise, cases involving Religion and Assembly issues have primarily been decided on those elements of the cases related to First Amendment religious issues.

Perhaps the most important legal action related to assembly rights in public secondary schools actually had its genesis at the college level. The University of Missouri at Kansas City, fearing possible legal actions, had adopted a policy in 1972 forbidding the use of its facilities as meeting places for religious services or meetings. A campus group, known as Cornerstone, had previously used the campus facilities for their meetings. In 1977, the group was notified that the facilities would no longer be made available. The students, noting that other campus groups (political organizations, sports clubs, etc.) continued to have access filed suit to force the university to allow them access, stating that they had a First Amendment guarantee to exercise their religious beliefs and to meet together to do so. The U.S. Supreme Court held, in 1981, that the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment did not require public universities to limit access to religious organizations. (Widmar v. Vincent 454 U.S. 253 (1981))

In response to the Widmar decision, Congress passed the Equal Access Act in 1984. Using the reasoning evidenced in Widmar, and extending it downward to the secondary school level, the law stated that

> It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. (20 U.S.C. §§4071-74)

Noting that a “limited open forum” existed when public schools opened their facilities to any non-curriculum related groups during non-instructional time (usually before or after school), the law required that access to school facilities be make available to all groups if any group was granted access. The provisions of the act applied to all public secondary schools, as well as any private secondary schools receiving federal funds.

The law requires that schools allow any clubs requested by students to be organized, provided:
1) Attendance is voluntary
2) The group is student-initiated
3) The group is not sponsored by the school itself, by teachers, by other school employees, or by the government. (This means that school employees may not promote, lead, or participate in a meeting, except for “custodial purposes.”)
4) The group is not disruptive, i.e., it does not “materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school
5) Persons from the community may not “direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups. (Religious Tolerance, n.d.)

The Equal Access Act received strong support from members of the religious right, who saw it as a vehicle to bring Bible study programs to the public schools. And, many of the first cases that litigated the act involved religious groups. One of the first tests of the law came in the 1985, when Bridget Mergens, a senior student at Westside High School in Omaha, Nebraska, filed suit against her school after a group of students was denied the right for form a Christian Bible Study Club. The school administration had expressed concern that having a staff member (which was required for use of school facilities) present at the meeting would violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

When Westside Community Schools v. Mergens (1990)) was decided, the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Equal Access Act was not in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment. (It did, however, allow individual state courts to apply their respective state constitutions to interpretation of the law.) The court refined the definition of “non-curriculum related student group” to mean any group which did not relate to the body of courses taught in the school (in regularly offered courses) and that the group was not a required activity for a particular course or required for course credit. The Court also required that the law be applied equally to all student groups which qualified under the law, including “official recognition, which allows clubs to be part of the activities program and carries with it access to the school newspaper, bulletin boards, public address system, and annual club fair.”

Later lower court decisions extended coverage of the Equal Access Act. For example, the Board of Education in East Brunswick, New Jersey, had a requirement that all extra-curricular clubs and organizations be related to the curriculum and be faculty supervised. When an informal “Bible Club,” which met on Wednesday mornings before school in the cafeteria, requested official approval as an extra-curricular club, recognition was withheld because the “Bible Club” was not related to the curriculum. Noting that other clubs, with a questionable relationship to the curriculum (including Students Against Drunk Drivers and a chapter of Key Club, a service organization) were given recognition, a member of the “Bible Club” filed suit against the school board.

The East Brunswick Board of Education responded that, as none of the clubs were “student-initiated,” the Equal Access Act did not apply. They also stated that the rule requiring a faculty sponsor or advisor precluded them, under the provision of the Equal Access Act requiring that no teacher be allowed to “lead or participate” in a student-led club, from allowing any religious club for fear of violating the establishment clause of the Constitution.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, ruled in 1993 that East Brunswick had, indeed, established a “limited open forum,” as required by the Equal Access Act, and ordered that the district allow the student religious organization to be given official recognition. The court also found that requiring faculty sponsorship of student groups left students vulnerable to having “faculty hostility” preventing establishment of clubs with minority views. (Pope v. East Brunswick Board of Education, (1993)).

At the beginning of the school year in 1993, Emily Hsu, along with her brother Timothy, applied to the administration at Roslyn (New York) High School to form an after-school Christian Bible Club. The proposed Constitution of the club required that all club officers be Christians. The Roslyn Board of Education ruled that the club could not be formed with that requirement and approved the club only on the condition that all club members, without regard to religious beliefs, be eligible for holding office in the club. The requirement was challenged in Federal District Court, which upheld the school board’s actions. Three years later, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, reversed the lower court’s ruling, stating that
We conclude that the club's Christian officer requirement, as applied to some of the club's officers, is essential to the expressive content of the meetings and to the group's preservation of its purpose and identity, and is therefore protected by the Equal Access Act. This application of the Act is constitutional because the school's recognition of the club will not draw the school into an establishment of religion or impair the school's efforts to prevent invidious discrimination. (Hsu v. Roslyn Union Free School District, (1996))

In 1998, Tausha Prince, a student at Spanaway Lake High School, in Bethel, Washington, applied to start a student-initiated, non-curriculum, Bible Club (known as World Changers), which would meet during a time interval, during the school day, set aside by the school for students to receive special instruction, attend assemblies, attend meetings of school-approved clubs or do homework. School officials rejected the club, citing its religious nature. (American Center for Law and Justice, 1998) After the school districts' position was upheld in a lower court, the case was taken to the United States Court of Appeals (Ninth Circuit), which overturned the lower court ruling. Stating that equal access “means what the Supreme Court said in *Widmar*: religiously-oriented student activities must be allowed under the same terms and conditions as other extracurricular activities, once the secondary school has established a limited open forum,”(Prince v. Jacoby, (2002)) the Court ruled that religious clubs did not have to meet after school hours if other non-curricular clubs were not also restricted to this time. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a further appeal, leaving the ruling of the Circuit Court to stand. (Religious Tolerance, n.d.)

The Equal Access Act enjoyed the broad support of Conservative Christian groups in 1984 when it was passed. As a result of the Act, it was estimated that the number of religious clubs in high schools increased from approximately 100 (in 1980) to over 15,000 (in 1995). (Religious Tolerance, n.d.) However, as written, the Act has proven to be a two-edged sword. In many of the same schools where the religious clubs are now allowed, other groups have used the law to create their own student organizations. These groups include clubs supporting atheism, Goth culture, and Satanism and other neo-pagan religions. The only way in which a school can prevent these organizations is to opt out of the Equal Access Act by not allowing any non-curriculum club.

Perhaps the most frequently cited flash-point for debate over application of the Equal Access Act has been in the area of clubs based on sexual orientation. Although not as numerous as the proliferation of “Bible” clubs, the passage of the Equal Access Act also resulted in a large increase in the number of Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in secondary schools. While many school boards have not opposed the formation of these clubs, primarily reasoning that approval was required by the Equal Access Act, a few schools have attempted to prevent these organizations on their campuses. For example, Boyd County School District (Kentucky) refused official recognition of the Boyd County High School Gay-Straight Alliance. The district stated that it feared that other students’ response to the club would cause a “substantial disruption” of the educational process. The Board’s rejection of the club was ruled a violation of the Equal Access Act by a Federal District Court. The court ruled that the School Board did not have the right to deny recognition to the club based on a “heckler’s veto.” (Boyd County High School Gay Straight Alliance v. Board of Education of Boyd Country, (2003)) A year later, the Board agreed to treat the Gay-Straight Alliance as any other club on campus, and agreed to provide training about various types of harassment, including anti-gay harassment. (Hudson, 2010)

Little doubt exists that First Amendment battles related to high schools will continue. In March, 2010, the Texas State Board of Education, by a party-line 7-5 vote, rejected a proposal requiring that high school students be required to “examine” the reasons the Founding Fathers “protected religious freedom in America by barring government from promoting or disfavoring any particular religion over all others.” The majority, identified in the Dallas Morning News as “social conservatives,” contended that separation of church and state is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution or Bill of Rights and that the numerous Supreme Court rulings using the “establishment clause” were simply wrong. (Stutz 2010)
If this action goes unchallenged, it has the potential of a great impact on our nation’s schools. As one of the largest purchasers of textbooks in the nation, Texas has historically had a major influence on the contents of textbooks and other curriculum materials.

The Constitution has always been, and will always be, a living document. Our Founding Fathers, in their collective wisdom, created a document that was specific enough to provide a framework that laid out the philosophy that our government was to be “of the people,” while protecting those who differed with that government. The First Amendment, in particular, was provided to insure that those who did not agree with government policy had a voice in trying to change that policy. This guaranteed that, as times changed, how the Constitution would be applied was also open to change, within that philosophical framework.

Although interpretations of the First Amendment have been relatively consistent over the years, this has not been the case when applied to high school students. Questions related to the age and maturity of these students have resulted in decisions that seem more disparate than cohesive. These unanswered questions have led to frequent challenges on how the First Amendment is to be applied in school settings.

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I. Introduction

Social workers in many settings might have greater success if they can engage the client’s family in the helping process. Family members have both prescribed roles and statuses in a family, and they form affective ties with each other based on their relationships with other people. How family members communicate and relate to each other depends on how comfortably they work together as a group. The study of family dynamics is an important area for social workers.

In the examination of clients’ help-seeking behaviors, especially those which involve family participation, a culturally competent worker needs to investigate who, what and how clients’ families can be included. It is important to understand that there is variation in cultural orientation as values and beliefs change over time, and individuals’ behaviors make adaptation over time and under varying circumstances.

One example is that Chinese clients in this country half a century ago enrolled their children in Chinese schools in some cities with a large concentration of Chinese immigrants, which include New York, San Francisco, etc. Many second-generation young adults can learn Chinese language in public schools and universities. What are the parents’ expectations of their children in learning Chinese? Is learning Chinese instrumental to a globalized economy or does it preserve the Chinese heritage and values? Half a century ago, few Chinese parents could see a globalization of trade where the Chinese language would be instrumental. It must be assumed that Chinese parents would like their offspring to be brought up in a Western society and yet not lose sight of their Chinese heritage.

A culturally competent worker needs to understand whether a client family is operating under the influence of values in which its family members believe. After gaining an understanding of the cultural influence on a client family, a worker needs to evaluate how much of those cultural influences can be incorporated into the work plan for the family.

II. Understanding the Family Dynamics

Four areas are involved in order to gain an understanding of family dynamics. One area is that some families tend to have a greater tendency to hold onto the values and beliefs of their ancestors. The traditions provide some understanding of what and why things have been conducted in a manner that is generally understood by people who come from the same place of origin. The second area is an exploration of the power and control in a family. A family is a unit that distributes resources to its members. Resource allocation is seldom an exercise that is free of politics. Who is in a position to decide who gets what is not a science that is based on formulae, but it is a continuous process based on negotiation and compromises. The third area that is to be explored is that negotiation and compromises in a family rely on the affective ties of the members. In a process where there are no state mandates as to who should do what, the affection and feelings might be the basis behind sacrifices, obligations and commitments that are normally expected and appreciated by family members. The fourth area to be examined is who in the family has the responsibility in ensuring that certain areas of family functioning are functionally operating. In identifying areas with which each family member’s responsibilities lie, a worker can map out a service plan taking into account the territorial rights.

Family–related matters are often intertwined. Those matters involve multiple parties. A culturally competent worker needs to involve family members in the helping process. A successful intervention
requires an examination of the differences between the values and beliefs, the power distribution, the ways family members share their affection and love with each other, and shared responsibility in the family and those of a family in the society.

**A. Understanding of Family Dynamics: Preservation of Chinese Culture**

Are new immigrant parents who have limited English language capabilities more inclined than those who are bi-lingual to enroll their offspring in Chinese schools? Each family might have a different idea about socializing themselves and/or their offspring in a new society. Each family member might have a different experience in being socialized with members of the same culture or members of the society at large. Does this suggest that social workers assisting new immigrant families need to have an open mind and be prepared to have an open dialogue with each member?

Social workers trained to work with families are taught to develop a keen sense of listening to the different agendas and feelings of each family member. Understanding the clients’ feelings and agendas in the client cultural context is the first task for a culturally competent worker.

What does the Chinese family feel about preservation of the Chinese culture? If family members are to be engaged in the help-seeking process, they are expected to have many open discussions of family matters. The worker conducting the counseling sessions needs to have an understanding of the clients’ perspectives or an understanding of the ways and the areas in which family members engage in discussion. In many societies, there is a tendency for the government to leave family matters to the discretion of the family. Unless there is evidence of a child or children being abused or neglected at home, the government does not intervene. The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Act was not passed until 1974 even though children had been sent to work on the farms in the Midwest decades earlier. Social services, especially counseling clients about their parenting skills, communication styles, forms of child discipline, spousal communication, etc., are not necessarily what clients are accustomed to discussing with other family members at the dining room.

A culturally competent worker needs to have the awareness that a family may have a different form of communication with the children. The worker would have an understanding of the form of communication that goes on in a family before educating the family about how they communicate. This understanding, at the very least, shows an interest in the client’s family. Without such an exploration, it would be difficult to convince clients that their opinions and feelings are valued.

**B. Family Dynamics: Power and Control**

In some of the earlier studies, it was noted that Chinese families use “shame” and “guilt” as a form of control. In a way, the family is using the social norms to control individual behaviors. What are the social norms? Is there a uniform set of social norms that all Chinese families observe?

Chinese families place heavy emphasis on their children’s education. From a pragmatic standpoint, having a good education provides their children with some economic stability. Are there occupations that are valued more in the Chinese culture? Are the priorities set in accordance with monetary returns? How much parental influence is there in the choice of their children’s academic paths and career goals?

What do Chinese parents expect from the worker when they seek help from the agency with concerns about their children’s academic performance? Would they expect the workers to tutor or mentor their children? Do they expect the workers to offer day care services? In what areas do they wish the workers would spend more time in discussions with their children? The answers to those questions lead to an important area, that is, the jurisdiction of family. Do the parents feel that they have the full say in their children’s occupations and do they expect the workers to convey those messages to their children?

Do the parents provide the workers with a carte blanche endorsement of the discussion topics or do they feel that there is a boundary as to what can be discussed? This leads to the question of what the parents understand about the counseling session.

In social work training, students are taught early in the program that the precipitating events that lead clients to the agency are often not the real problems. Clients may not correctly see the picture. Clients might deny the existing problems. Clients might be afraid to discuss certain matters in that such a discussion might lead to more severe tension at home. Clients might not even understand that the
discussion of personal feelings is not necessarily in violation of the social norms in their families and in their culture.

In some cultures, clients feel more comfortable in talking with others about their sexual relationships than their financial health. In some cultures, the reverse might be true. There are limitations and restraints on the topics for discussion. In a society where government intervention is restrained in areas of family matters, social norms are set by local communities. For better or worse, some communities in rural areas are more homogeneous, and the values systems are less diverse. Some communities are more diverse, and values conflicts are more frequent.

C. Affective Ties

How does a Chinese parent show his/her affection to a child? Family dynamics vary from the place of origin, the amount of power and control to which the family is accustomed, the prescribed statuses and roles in the family, and the affective ties among family members. Do parents like to play out the roles of parents rather than that of their children’s best friends? Would being their children’s best friends meet the expectations of both parents and children? What are the expectations of each family member in relation to the others in the family?

Does a Chinese parent place as much importance as a Western parent on self-esteem, self-determination, self-importance and self-worth? Since it has been written that “guilt” and “shame” have been used, would this suggest that self-esteem is not considered as important in the Chinese culture as in the Western culture? Has this value been changed when a new immigrant family from China begins to make adaptations to the values of the new society?

How does a Chinese parent show her/his affection towards a child? How important is it to a Chinese parent to show his/her affective ties to his/her children? Do children feel that they are not being loved by their parents if their parents fail to articulate the ways in which they show affection to their children?

A culturally competent worker needs to understand that parents from different cultures might assign different weight to certain emotions, such as feelings, respect, love, etc. Parents also might have different ways of showing their affection towards their children. A parent who fails to articulate the importance of self-esteem does not necessarily indicate a lack of respect. What is considered as important in a child’s academic, psychological, and social development should be further explored.

D. Division of Labor versus Division of Jurisdiction

A family is a unit of shared responsibility. The question is whether there is a fair distribution of labor and responsibility. This division of labor is guided by the decision-making power. The question is whether the decision-making power is vested in one person, the elitist group, or is fairly distributed among the family members.

In some studies, it was shown that male Asian clients do not participate in the help-seeking processes as much as their female counterparts. Does this translate into female Asian clients being more capable of articulating their feelings and concerns to a worker than their male counterparts? Does this relate to the level of articulation? Does this relate to certain family matters being considered the domain of the mothers while certain family matters are within the jurisdiction of the fathers?

Families around the world have undergone major changes. Many adults, regardless of gender, need to participate in the labor market out of necessity. Has this affected the traditional views of male and female roles in a family? If prescribed roles have been changed, would this affect the decision-making power of its members? What are some of the changes? Are those changes a result of the changing of economic power of family members?

New immigrants coming to the states expect their children to do well in school and become financially self–sufficient when they graduate from universities. Families move to places that are known to have good school systems. Children soon realize that they can make more money than their parents who work in restaurants and sweat shops. What kind of parental control is operating in those families? Is that control centered around the money-making ability or is it based on some forms of family commitment, obligation and responsibilities?
III. A Culturally Competent Practice

A culturally competent worker examines the ways a client’s family operates, identifies areas in which changes need to take place, locates the people in the client’s family system, assesses the strengths and weaknesses of each participant, educates each participant about his/her involvement in the helping process and sets intervention goals and outcomes with the client and his/her family. If those are the schemes that a worker follows, one would assume that the worker would evaluate the family system in the context that is familiar to the client. This involves assessing the ways family members relate to each other in conforming to rules of the family, show their physical, material, emotional and social support for each other, work collaboratively with each other to make the family unit work and maintain the basic beliefs and values of the family.

After evaluating the client’s family system, a culturally competent worker needs to engage family members in the process. The following questions would be addressed.

1. Is the family values system different from that of the larger society?
2. Are family members familiar with participating in making decisions in the form of a family conference?
3. How do family members show their love and affection towards each other?
4. Is there a clear division of labor or is there room for negotiation?

1) Family Values System

Each family system sets rules and regulations. There might be similarities that are shared among families in the same clan, same region, same town and same country. Most of the time, the rules of the land are similar to the rules among families sharing similar values systems. Does the values system deter a family from discussing family matters to an outsider? Those are some questions that affect the types of reception that a social worker encounters with a family. “It is vital that the professional entering the engagement period be competent in receiving and processing all that the client brings to the situation.” (Caple et al., 1995:161)

In examining the types of cases that a social worker encounters, one cannot ignore that she/he is being asked by the agency to engage a client’s family in the helping process. Often, with the hope of re-establishing a family’s roots in some communities, etc., a social worker is charged with the mission of engaging families and natural support members who have the care-giving responsibility of the sick, the old, the young, ex-offenders, drug rehabilitation participants, mentally challenged individuals, children with developmental issues, homeless individuals and families and victims of domestic violence.

Some families might be reluctant to participate because they lack the ability to provide care. It could be a lack of material resources such as affordable housing. It could be based on too much responsibility as some members are already caring for members of both a younger and an older generation. It could be based on a limited understanding of the conditions, such as mental illness. It could be based on a lack of understanding as to the engagement and participation that was asked of them by the agency or the workers.

2) Familiarity with a Talk Therapy

Before family members are expected to sit in a room and talk about their feelings, one probably needs to ask whether those family members are comfortable in talking about issues in this setting. Studies have shown that some clients have developed a sense of mistrust towards helpers of a different cultural background. Is this based on a prior experience in which they failed to communicate with each other? Maybe, certain issues need no further elaboration in that they are commonly understood by those in the community.

Talk therapists expect clients to go into a session to disclose their feelings about a situation which leads them to the agency at which the therapists are employed. The disclosure of one’s feeling involves self-introspection and one’s relationship with those who have a stake in the situation. It requires parents to examine parenting skills, their roles in their families, their relationships with their children, their perception of the roles and statuses of parents, children, and spouses in the family, the decision-making processes and conflict resolution within the family.
Do the talk therapists expect a Chinese family to discuss those issues at the dining table? What topics are normally discussed at a dining table? Do family members feel comfortable to voice out their feelings, especially if such a discussion involves other family members? This situation becomes more complex if such a discussion is moderated by someone not in the family circle.

Some clients do not trust the authorities because of their prior encountered experiences with people in authority. Clients who have spent months of their time in a refugee camp understand that their daily routines are dictated by the rules and regulations of the camp. Those who spend many hours in welfare offices, employment counseling centers, hospital emergency rooms, etc. feel overwhelmed by rules and regulations.

Hutchinson warned about potential values conflicts between service providers and their clients. People of different cultural orientations tend to find comfort in different ways, and they tend to express their feelings in a different manner.

The social work process relies on an effective communication. Communication is a two way process. Studies find that Asian American clients do not communicate well with their service providers. It is important to service providers to explore what hinders an effective communication. Often, the concern is about the clients. One wonders whether the workers understand their clients well in facilitating a more effective dialogue. One also wonders whether their clients are so overwhelmed by this helping process that they fail to communicate. Those issues are important as social workers are in a profession that deals with many populations with diverse needs, multiple problems and, more than likely, prior stigmatization by the society.

Healy, referenced in an article by Weiss, pointed out that “the profession in the US places greater emphasis on self-determination than Danish social workers, which stress integration. Asian and African social workers view self-determination as problematic and advocate either modifying it or discarding it as irrelevant to the more communal societies.” (Weiss, 2005)

To what extent are individuals comfortable in expressing their opinions with other family members? What conflict resolution techniques have been employed in the client’s family and/or by clients of similar cultural upbringing?

(3) Expression of Love and Affection

Family members are bound by their obligations and commitments and bonded by their love and affection. Some studies indicate that Chinese clients are not good candidates in dealing with self-disclosure. Therapists are frustrated by their abilities in being engaged in self-introspection. If those observations are correct, does that mean that Chinese clients display discomfort in talking about feelings to a therapist or does it translate into their inability to express their feelings at all?

It would be hard to imagine that people have difficulty in expressing their love and affection, especially towards one’s family members. The question is whether the form of expression is similar or familiar to those who render talk therapy services. The way one greets a friend at an airport varies from one culture to another. Some people extend their hands, some welcome with open arms and some offer a kiss. Some express anger with a hard look, and some engage in a direct confrontation.

A worker, especially in a child protective service setting, needs to assess the ways in which the family relationship can be strengthened. The improvement of the parent-child relationship is an important component of the service. How parents show their love and affection towards their children, the ways they confront their children, the way they work out their differences, the way they reconcile and the way they grow together as a family are areas that a culturally competent worker needs to observe.

The following questions should be explored in gaining an understanding of the family relationships and the affective ties in a client’s family.

(1) What do parents show their children with respect to their love and affection?
(2) How do children show their love and affection towards their parents? grand parents? extended family members?
(3) Do children tell their parents about their love and affection towards them?
(4) Do parents tell their children about their love and affection towards them?
(5) How often?
Under what circumstances?

Family’s Ability to Negotiate: Rights and Obligations

How would a worker plan with the family to have a foster care child return home, assist a patient in being discharged home, provide rehabilitation to a client with a chemical dependency problem, etc. without discussing the types of support, the family obligations and the relationship between the client and his/her family? How can such a discussion be useful unless the worker can hear from the family members about their concerns? How can a plan of treatment be effective without hearing from family members how they feel about the plan?

Each family member has her/her roles to play in a family. Each family member has duties and responsibilities that are expected of her/him by the others. Families make adjustments in roles, responsibilities and duties over time. New immigrant families make adjustments to accommodate relocation of places, schools, worksites, etc. Accepting additional caring responsibilities of an elderly family member, a new birth, a member with a mentally challenging condition, a child with greater needs because of developmental concerns or a member with a co-existing condition requires a reassessment of family resources and a re-allocation of duties and responsibilities. Some families make adaptations better than others.

A culturally competent worker needs to explore whether the client’s family has the ability to make the adaptation. Some areas that need to be explored include whether family members are in a position to negotiate and compromise with respect to those changes. After all, many families were referred to a social service agency so that a social worker and the client family can work on a plan to assist an elderly person in living an independent life in his/her own community, to facilitate all the developmental needs of a new born or to assist members with a mentally challenged condition or a developmental concern or a co-existing condition to lead productive lives. This plan involves multiple parties. Some provide material support, some render social support, and some offer emotional support.

IV. Implications to Training of a Culturally Competent Practice

A social worker assisting a family should examine the ways the family operates, the ways family members relate to each other, the ways family members negotiate and compromise on values laden issues, and the ways family members discuss family matters in the presence of someone outside their family circle. Understanding the client’s family dynamics, the worker can assess the ways in which the client family operations diverge from agency expectations of a family system. Identifying the differences, the worker can map out areas in which the family can focus. The plan and expectations should be discussed with the client and his/her family so that client’s expectations of the worker, of the agency and of the outcomes can be heard and discussed.

A. How Family Members Interact

A culturally competent worker needs to find ways for his/her clients to comfortably interact with each other in a family conference. To start with, the worker locates areas in which the client and his/her family find comfort in interactions and discussions with each other. Family members need to have a certain degree of comfort in expressing their opinions and not worry about rocking the boat too much. Although egos might be more of a focus in the West, one observes that Chinese clients might worry about saying things that could lead to a “loss of face” of others. What is the “loss of face?” Is it not associated with the status and authority?

One also wonders what authority is found in a family. Studies have shown that some Chinese clients are not good candidates in a talk therapy because they have too much respect for authority, which is attached to people who have knowledge or people who have the ability to help. One can understand that clients respect their medical doctors as their training is generally considered to be long and complex. People who can master such training should be respected for their knowledge in medicine.

A family needs to have the authority to set rules and to maintain order. Would the agency or the worker be asking family members to participate in the helping process in a manner in which the authority structure is being challenged? Would the family resist an intervention in which the authority structure might be upset? Can the family be functional if there is no authority structure? Those are concerns that a worker should contemplate.
B. Changes in the Family’s Operation Involve Changes in Power and Control

Are the client and her/his family ready to make changes? A culturally competent worker, upon receipt of the information about clients and their family members in relation to discussing issues with someone outside the family, needs to develop a case plan that would provide a certain level of comfort to its participants. How much of the agendas are expressed and shared by those in the family conference?

C. The Process of Making Changes Involves Relationship Issues

Family issues are often mundane in nature. What seems like a reasonable expectation in one family might not be as reasonable in another. What appears to be a healthy, open dialogue in one family might appear to be too confrontational to another. What is an acceptable or reasonable level of confrontation in a family? Who decides?

Changes involve a process, which is filled with negotiation and compromises. The trustful relationship among family members and a trustful relationship between the worker and his/her client and his/her family members would be an important ingredient for a successful intervention.

How do parents express their feelings towards their children? Are the expressions normally in verbal form? How do children express their feelings towards their parents and grandparents? Would doing well in school be a form of showing their gratitude?

Gaining an understanding of the ways clients express their love, affection, anger, etc. towards the spouses, offspring, parents, etc., a worker would be in a better position to offer suggestions. Family members of a new immigrant family are exposed to different circles of friends and associations. In a family gathering, it is common to find adults gathering in groups of four playing mahjong and younger children clustering in another family room playing video games. Does that mean that they fail to communicate with each other?

D. Ability to Make Changes: Conflict Resolution

A culturally competent worker should examine how much flexibility there is in the client’s family and whether there is any room for negotiation. If a worker cannot determine who in the client family can render the types of needed support, the worker needs to prepare the family to make changes in the family. A worker needs to be prepared for a potential resistance to change.

An open minded exploration of the client’s family dynamics in making the needed changes paves the way for the worker to engage and to negotiate his/her clients and his/her family members in an intervention. Unless the worker and the agency are prepared to identify and incorporate the differences of the client’s family into the service plan, one wonders what empowerment practice is being considered.

V. Training of a Culturally Competent Practice: A Practical Guide on Family Dynamics

Below are questions whose answers can provide the workers with some guidance in shaping and enhancing the service encounter.

A. Family Dynamics

1. What do family members talk about at the dining table?
2. Where do they engage in serious talk?
3. Who conducts such a talk?
4. How often do children initiate talk with their parents?
5. Do children feel that they can express their concerns and feelings to their parents?
6. When is the best moment for children to talk about concerns and feelings with their parents?
7. Which parent would they initially approach?
8. What are the reasons?

B. The Client’s Family Values System

1. Does the family have a unilateral relationship among its members?
2. Are there constraints in the ways a child talks to his/her mother?
3. Would one find the same constraints when a child talks to her/his father?
4. Are there constraints in talking to either one of a child’s parents in the presence of a non-family member?
5. What are the sources of those constraints?
6. How much say does a child have in the family?
(7) At what age is a child’s voice taken seriously?
(8) What decision-making power does a child have in a family?
(9) Does a male child have the same decision-making power as a female child?

C. Power and Control
(1) What methods do parents use to control their children?
(2) In what areas do parents feel that they have the rights to intervene?
(3) In what areas do parents feel that they should leave it to their children to decide?
(4) Who decides whose responsibility it is to do the household chores?

D. Ability to Negotiate
(1) Are there clearly defined areas that belong to each member of the household?
(2) Who is responsible to do what?
(3) Do children feel more comfortable talking to their mothers rather than to their fathers?
(4) If so, in what areas are they more comfortable?
(5) Do children feel more comfortable talking to their fathers rather than to their mothers?
(6) If so, in what areas are they more comfortable?

Bibliography

Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues of Accountants Advertising: 
An Empirical Analysis

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Introduction

Professional advertising is a relatively recent phenomenon. Formerly, most professions prohibited licensed members from marketing in order to pursue clients. However advertising by accountants has increased dramatically over the past several years, mainly as a result of the competitive pressures many professions have felt. Advertising has increasingly received the attention of professionals and researchers in many industries and fields. Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) have been free to advertise their services to the public for over 30 years. Thereby, the Rule of Conduct 502 has changed dramatically, and the days of banning advertising are gone (Gamble, Highsmith-Quick, Jones, and Slade, 2000). Although advertising was once felt to be inappropriate, and somewhat unethical, changing times have led many accountants and other professional providers to take a serious look at the advantages of advertising. In general, large firms are more positive about the benefits of advertising because advertising increases public awareness, the number of clients, services offered, and market segments serviced (Griffin, 1999; Rizzo and Zeckhauser, 1992).

During a 1978 investigation of professional accountants by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), state attorneys general attempted to pressure state boards of accountancy to remove their bans on advertising or to stop enforcement of advertising bans (Heischmidt and Elfrint, 1991). As a result of the investigation, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) amended its bylaws, allowing CPAs to advertise their services, but the types of advertising allowed by the AICPA were strictly limited. For example, the AICPA prohibited comparative advertising, testimonials, and professionally undignified advertising (Hulbert and Lawson, 1996; Schwartz, 2002). After another investigation by the FTC in 1985, the AICPA agreed to permit CPAs to advertise their services with the only restriction being that accountants must follow the FTC guides that define and prohibit deceptive advertising (Allen and Arnold, 1991). AICPA Rule 502 on advertising and other forms of solicitation states:

A member in public practice shall not seek to obtain clients by advertising or other forms of solicitation in a manner that is false, misleading, or deceptive. Solicitation by the use of coercion, over-reaching, or harassing conduct is prohibited. (AICPA Code of Conduct, 2009)

For accountants who are currently advertising, as well as those who might be considering doing so, it would be helpful to have some insight as to how the public perceives advertising by accountants.

Purposes of the Study

During the past several years, accountants have become highly competitive in marketing their services to the public, and it has become common to see them advertising their services via a number of media. In the research reported here, the researchers used a survey instrument previously developed by Miller and Waller (1979) and Hite (1982) to determine (a) the public’s attitudes toward advertising by accounting professionals; (b) whether factors such as age, gender, marital status, parental status, family income, and educational level accounted for significant differences in attitudes toward accountants who advertise. The results of this study may be useful to accounting and other professional providers who want to create
more effective promotional strategies and could also provide numerous consulting and employment opportunities for people with promotional expertise, including academicians as well as advertising and public relations firms (Freeman and Moser, 2009).

**Background and General Research Questions**

Recently many accountants have begun to question the effectiveness of their marketing and advertising efforts. Advertising by accountants has opponents as well as proponents. The opponents insist that advertising wastes money, is intrusive and manipulative, will lower the quality of accounting services, causes accounting practices to compete with each other, and creates unnecessary demand. On the other hand, the proponents maintain that advertising improves the satisfaction of the target market, pricing, communicating, and delivering those services efficiently (Hodge, Brown, and Lumpkin, 1990). Often, accountants do not have well-defined products and services to offer the community. They have strategic directions but no products. Although some research indicates that there is identifiable individual demand for accounting advertising, in the past it primarily consisted of image building designed to raise awareness of the accountant among the general public. Now the challenge is to implement a brand strategy, to identify and promote whatever makes one uniquely better than the competition (Gamble, Highsmith-Quick, Jones, and Slade, 2000; Scott and Rudderow, 1983).

During the past 30 years, courts have often reviewed the issue of constitutional protection for professionals who advertise. The cases have addressed such issues as solicitation of clients in person, listing of professional practice specialties on letterheads, use of illustrations/pictures in ads, and use of targeted direct-mail solicitations. A review of these cases demonstrates that, while the courts have permitted some state limitations on accounting advertising, the right of professionals to engage in truthful commercial advertising has consistently been upheld (Garner and Garner, 1985; Brownlow, 1997).

It is fairly common in most parts of the country for people to see one of the many thousands of advertisements shown on television every day, receive a spam e-mail advertisement, view one of the many hundreds of yellow pages ads while using the telephone book, or see some of the hundreds of highway billboards promoting professional services permitted in some areas of the nation (Blotnick, 1985). According to a study by Flesher and Carpenter (1984), yellow-pages advertisements have been one of the most popular forms found among CPAs who advertise their professional services. A study conducted by Butler and Abernethy (1996) revealed that every month approximately 21.6 million adults in the United States refer to the yellow pages before obtaining professional information, although Reade and Ratzan (1987) found that yellow pages are potentially misleading to the public.

While the attitude of accounting professionals toward advertising is mixed and the attitude of most state regulators has generally been negative, the attitude of the general public has historically been fairly positive (Moser, 2008). Today professional advertising has become commonplace, and many professional association sponsored and academic studies have measured individuals’ and professional providers’ attitudes toward advertising. However, the results of a study conducted by Moncrief and Bush (1988) revealed that the public felt television advertising by professionals was not as acceptable as television advertisements for other forms of services. Still another technological change occurring in the United States is the dramatic increase in the use of the Internet as an information source for the general public. In 1986 a guide to developing a marketing plan by Helgeson and Birrer suggested that an accounting firm “might advertise its services through mass media—such as newspapers, magazines, radio, or television—or by direct mail.” No mention was made of the Internet. About ten years later, a study by Elfrink, Bachmann, and Robideaux (1997) reported that many marketing departments at accounting organizations now view the Web as an effective medium for being more proactive in marketing accounting programs and services to present and potential clients.

The question of whether advertising by accountants attracts new clients has been the focus of several academic studies (Stanny, Anderson, and Nowak, 2000; McNamee, Dwyer, Schmitt, and Lavelle, 2000). The answer has been a definite “yes.” These studies show most professionals who advertise will likely see an increase in the number of middle- to lower-income clients. Accountants who advertise discover quickly that while advertising is usually very expensive it works if done properly and ethically. One
study found that the return on dollars invested by professionals in advertising was four to six times the cost (Freedman, 2001).

The above discussion shows that professional advertising usually works (producing an increase in client flow and yielding a good return on accountant advertising dollars) and is protected by the First Amendment. It shows that historically the public has not always had a positive view of accountants who advertise but believe accounting advertisements provide useful information.

This study explores opinions regarding the informational function of, importance of price in, presence of deception in, future of, and appropriate media for accounting advertising. Specifically, this study examines attitudes of the public concerning whether accounting advertising would (a) provide useful information to the public, (b) increase the costs of accounting services in the future, (c) increase the quality of accounting services in the future, (d) help the public make more intelligent choices between accountants, (e) tend to lower the credibility and dignity of their services, and (f) make the public more aware of the qualifications of accountants.

**Methodology**

**Data Collection**

Much of the initial planning of this study was based on Hite’s study at the University of Arkansas (Hite, 1982). Hite’s research instrument and the instrument developed by Miller and Waller (1979) served as bases for the questionnaire used in this research. The organization and writing style of Hite’s study served as the model for this article.

The first section of the questionnaire, used to collect the data, focused on demographic characteristics of the respondents, including city of residence, occupation, age, sex, race, marital status, number of children in household, total family household income, and education.

The second section of the questionnaire included 19 statements designed to measure how favorably individuals perceived advertising by accountants. The respondents were asked to indicate the strength of their agreement on a scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Tables 1 through 5 contain these 19 statements.

The researchers asked the Marketing System Group to draw a random sample of 4,000 individuals from the seven metropolitan statistical areas in Tennessee: Memphis, Nashville, Clarksville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Jackson, and the Tri-Cities (Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City). Appropriate numbers from each city were drawn according to the ratio of each city’s population to the total population of all seven urban areas. The research instrument was mailed to these individuals, and 528 usable questionnaires were received and used in this study. This sample of 528 respondents represents a subset of the United States, more specifically a subset of the residents of the state of Tennessee.

**Statistical Test and Findings**

The data obtained from the 528 respondents were initially analyzed by tabulating the frequency percentages for each item on the questionnaire. Cross-tabulations were calculated between the demographic factors of age, education, income, occupation, and sex as well as the 19 attitudinal statements in Section II of the questionnaire. Chi-square tests were performed to detect any significant differences between the cross-tabulations. In general, the chi-square analysis is employed when researchers want to determine whether there is an association between two or more populations or variables on a specific characteristic being studied.

The point at which a relationship is significant lies between 0.0 and 1.0. Values closer to zero have greater significance. Therefore, a smaller level of significance (i.e., 0.05) means a conclusion is correct between 95 and 99 percent of the time. Chi-square probability of 0.05 is commonly used by social scientists doing business research (Lind, Marchal, and Wathen, 2005). The level of significance for all statistical tests for this study was set at 0.05.

**Results**

The data obtained from the 528 respondents were initially analyzed by tabulating the frequency percentages for each item on the questionnaire.

**The Public’s Attitudes toward Advertising by Accountants**
The percentages given in Table 1 illustrate the distribution of the responses to five statements in the questionnaire concerning attitudes toward the image of accountants’ advertising. With regard to statement 9, 78.4 percent agreed they presently have a high image of accountants, 13.6 percent had no opinion, and 7.3 percent did not have a high image. In general, respondents indicated a somewhat favorable attitude toward accountants.

In response to statement 10, 45.6 percent of the respondents did not agree that their image of accountants would be lower as a result of advertising, and 5.1 percent strongly disagreed. However, 38.6 percent of respondents said their opinion of accountants would be lowered. The percentage of respondents who agreed it is proper for accountants to advertise was 54.3 (statement 4), while 23.7 percent disagreed. Further, 47.7 percent disagreed with statement 15 that advertising would lower the credibility and dignity of services provided by accountants. However, 39 percent of the respondents agreed. Finally, when asked (statement 19) if they would use the services of accountants who advertise, 53.2 percent agreed, while 20.9 percent said they would not use these services. The percentage of respondents who were undecided was 24.4. These results, like those of other studies, suggest that many respondents may initially have a positive attitude toward advertising by accountants. However, with 24.4 percent undecided, a well-conceived, professionally designed advertising program could gain the approval of the majority of the general public. On the other hand, a poorly designed program could cause accountants’ image to suffer.

**Information Function of Advertising Accounting Services**

The percentages given in Table 2 illustrate the importance of information in accounting advertising and show that opinions are somewhat mixed in this area. The results show that 44.4 percent of the respondents agreed with statement 1 that the public would be provided useful information through advertising by accountants, while 36.5 percent disagreed. Also, 65.3 percent of respondents felt that advertising would be a useful means of informing potential clients about accounting services and specialties (statement 5). Further, 50.4 percent agreed and 37.3 percent disagreed with statement 16 that advertising makes the public more aware of the qualifications of accountants. Finally, 42.5 percent disagreed with statement 11 that advertising would help the public make more intelligent choices between accountants, while 36.7 percent agreed. These results indicate that members of the public view accountants’ advertising as a reliable source of information but still not more reliable than word of mouth.

**Importance of Price in Advertising Accounting Services**

The percentages given in Table 3 illustrate the importance of price in accounting advertising. Opinions are somewhat mixed in this area. In response to statement 7 that it is good to deal with accountants who offer the lowest price for routine services, 63.6 percent disagreed, only 19.5 percent agreed, and 16.5 percent were undecided. However, 87.9 percent agreed it is better to deal with a reputable accountant than one who merely offers the lowest price (statement 18). With regard to the effect of prices as a result of advertising, 58.5 percent of the respondents disagreed with statement 13 that when accountants advertise prices are lowered due to more competition. Respondents also believed (72.4 percent) that prices were increased rather than lowered because of the costs of advertising (statement 2). It would appear that the primary benefit of accounting advertising is not the communication of price information but providing information regarding services.

Even though these responses indicate the respondents feel that advertising leads to higher prices, the responses also strongly indicate the belief that it is better to deal with the most reputable accountants than the one that offers the lowest price.

**Deception in Advertising Accounting Services**

The percentages given in Table 4 illustrate the distribution of the public’s responses to statements in the questionnaire concerning deception in advertising accounting services. In response to statement 6 that advertising by accountants would be more deceptive than other forms of advertising, 73.1 percent disagreed, and 7.2 percent agreed. The percentage of respondents who were undecided was 19.3. Also, 53.9 percent of the respondents disagreed with statement 12 that they would be suspicious of accountants who advertise. And finally, 45.3 percent agreed with statement 17 that advertising by accountants would
benefit the uninformed citizenry. Respondents agreed (76 percent), however, with statement 8 that people can rely more on what friends tell them about accountants than on advertising. The responses indicate that members of the public feel the image or reputation of accountants is more important than price-specific information. This suggests that one of the primary benefits of accounting advertising is the communication of information about service rather than price.

These results indicate that while respondents view advertising by accountants as potentially no more deceptive than other forms of advertising, personal recommendation was a more reliable source of information.

The Future of Accounting Advertising

The percentages given in Table 5 illustrate the public’s responses to statements in the questionnaire concerning the public’s attitude toward the future of accounting advertising. Opinions were somewhat mixed when members of the public were asked if they would like to see more advertising by accountants (statement 14). Of the respondents 50.2 percent disagreed, 19.1 percent agreed, and 29.5 percent were undecided. In addition, respondents did not feel that advertising would increase the quality of accounting services in the future (statement 3); 63.8 percent disagreed, and 16.7 percent agreed.

Impact of Demographic Characteristics on the Public's Attitudes

Significant differences in attitudes were found with regard to education, total family income, parental status, and occupation of the consumer. Since the cross-tabulations of age, gender, race/ethnic origin, and marital status were not significant for any of the 19 statements, it appears that the perceptions/attitudes within these demographics toward accounting advertising is similar to the responses for all respondents. Findings follow for cross-tabulations for education, total family income, parental status, and occupation for all statements for which significant differences (.05 level) in attitudes were found.

Education of Respondents and Advertising by Accountants

The 528 respondents were divided into two groups based on the respondents’ level of education, a low-education group and a high-education group. The low education group was defined as having less than a college degree and the high education group as having a college degree.

There were two significant responses to statements in this study with regard to education, and in both cases the more educated individuals had stronger responses. Nearly 67.3 percent of the more educated group (compared with 51.9 percent of the less educated) disagreed that advertising would increase the quality of accountants’ services (statement 3). In response to statement 13, the levels of disagreement regarding whether prices are lowered when accountants advertise due to more competition are similar; the less educated group had a greater percentage of agreement (26.9 percent), while the higher-education group had a greater percentage that were undecided (24.6 percent).

Income of Respondents and Advertising by Accountants

The sample was divided into two groups based on the level of annual household income: families earning $45,000 or less and families earning more than $45,000. As shown in Table 7, there were several areas in which groups disagreed overall. Regarding statement 1, both groups tended to agree that the public could be provided useful information through advertising by accountants, but the percentage of the respondents agreeing was higher in the low-income group (56.3 percent) than in the high-income group (40.9 percent). On the other hand, both groups tended to disagree with statement 3 that advertising would increase the quality of accountants’ services. However, the percentage of disagreement was larger in the high-income group (68.8 percent) compared to the low-income group (43.8 percent). Similarly, both groups tended to disagree with statement 14: “I would like to see more advertising by accountants,” but the high-income group’s percentage (53.8 percent) exceeded that of the low-income group (38.9 percent). Also, substantially more of the high-income group (45.6 percent) than the low-income group (30.5 percent) disagreed with statement 11 that advertising would help the public make more intelligent choices between accountants. With regard to statement 10 that their image of accountants would be lowered as a result of advertising and statement 15 that advertising by accountants would tend to lower the credibility and dignity of the profession, the percentage of agreement in the high-income group was markedly higher than that in the low-income group. For statement 10, 42.3 percent of the high-income group agreed compared to only 27.4 percent for the low-income group, and for statement 15 the percentage of
agreement for the high-income group (44.6 percent) was more than double that for the low-income group (22.1 percent).

**Parental Status of Respondents and Advertising by Accountants**

As shown in Table 8, the sample was divided into two groups based on parental status (with or without children). Respondents without children (64.1 percent) and those with children (63.5 percent) disagreed with statement 7 that it is good to deal with accountants who offer the lowest price for routine services. However, respondents agreed with statement 17 that advertising by accountants would primarily benefit the uninformed citizenry (53.3 percent of families with children and 42.4 percent of families without children). Similar responses were found for statement 18, that it is better to deal with a reputable accountant than one who offers the lowest prices, with 91.8 percent of the families without children and 84.0 percent of families with children agreeing.

**Occupation of Respondents and Advertising by Accountants**

The 528 respondents were divided into two occupational groups: professional and non-professional. As shown in Table 9, a significant difference between the attitudes of the two groups existed in only two areas (statements 12 and 15).

In response to statement 12, that “I would be suspicious of accountants who advertise,” non-professionals disagreed more strongly than professionals (60.5 percent to 48.5 percent). For statement 15, 54.1 percent of the nonprofessionals disagreed that advertising by accountants would tend to lower the credibility and dignity of their services, while 43.8 percent of the professional respondents agreed. It appears that professionals regard trust/credibility issues as more important than do nonprofessionals.

**Conclusion**

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. Accounting firms must be cautious in their approach to advertising. While the public views advertising by accountants positively, it is clear that advertising by accountants will pose some questions for the public. The public considers advertising by accountants a useful means of informing potential clients of services but relies more on friends than on accountants’ advertising when selecting an accounting firm. The public does not think the quantity of accountant advertising should increase but is not particularly suspicious of accountants who advertise.

These results indicate that the approaches and types of advertising selected are critical decisions for accountants. Advertising that informs the public about services provided, qualification of accountants, and locations of offices would be acceptable, while advertising based on price likely would not be accepted by the public. Survey results indicate that lower prices for routine services are not a selling point but that the reputation of the accountant is more critical. There is some indication that higher-income respondents and those with professional positions believe that accountants who advertise have lower credibility than those who do not advertise. This provides more evidence that accountants should choose informational advertising rather than price advertising.

There is a clear indication that respondents in the low-income group view advertising by accountants more favorably than those in the high-income group. Perhaps accountants who advertise should select media such as free shopper newspapers that sell used items that would appeal more to low-income workers. It is clear that fewer low-income workers would hire accountants than high-income workers. For this reason, it is likely that advertising to low-income workers should be limited to tax and estate services. The credibility issue should make accountants less willing to advertise to the high-income group. However, if advertising is targeted to high-income public groups, accountants should ensure that useful information is provided and that the advertisements are very professionally done so that the firm’s image is not damaged.

The public has specific concerns related to image, deception, price, and the information function of accounting advertising. The selection of media, such as newspaper, magazine, or television, is not the critical issue for accountants who are developing marketing plans and an advertising budget (Shepherd, 1997). The primary advertising issue is maintaining a highly professional approach to advertising that informs but does not endanger the credibility of the accountant. It appears from these results that the AICPA has reason to be concerned about the types of advertising accountants select in promoting their
services. According to the AICPA (1998), “it is important for accounting firms to build strong relationships with existing clients due to their impact on future business through referrals and the possibility of losing clients to competitors” (Barr and McNeilly, 2003). Accountants who select inappropriate approaches to marketing their services could have a negative impact on the profession as a whole. Accountants who can find the balance that the public perceives is necessary in terms of reputation, credibility, image, and the information function will likely be successful in their advertising efforts.

References


Table 1

Frequency Percentages of Public’s Responses to Attitude Statements About the Image of Accountants’ Advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. It is proper for accountants to advertise.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I presently have a high image of accountants.</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In general, my image of accountants would be lower as a result of advertising.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Advertising by accountants would tend to lower the credibility and dignity of their services.</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I would use the services (if needed) of accountants who advertise.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Frequency Percentages of Public’s Responses to Attitude Statements About the Informational Aspect of Accountants’ Advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The public would be provided useful information through advertising by accountants.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Advertising by accountants would be a useful means of informing potential clients about services and specialties.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Advertising would help the public make more intelligent choices among accountants.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Advertising makes the public more aware of the qualifications of accountants.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Frequency Percentages of Public’s Responses to Attitude Statements About the Importance of Price in Advertising Accountants’ Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. When accountants advertise, the costs are passed on to their clients through higher prices.</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is good to deal with accountants that offer the lowest prices for routine services.</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When accountants advertise, prices are lowered due to more competition.</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. It is better to deal with reputable accountants than with one who offers the lowest prices.</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4
Frequency Percentages of Public Responses to Attitude Statements About Deception in Accountants’ Advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Advertising by accountants would be more deceptive than other forms of advertising.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. You generally can rely more on what a friend tells you about accountants than on advertising.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I would be suspicious of accountants who advertise.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Advertising by accountants would benefit the uninformed citizenry.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5
Frequency Percentages of Public’s Responses to Attitude Statements About Future Aspects of Accountants’ Advertising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Advertising will increase the quality of accountants’ service in the future.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I would like to see more advertising by accountants.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6
Differences in the Public’s Attitudes toward Advertising by Accountants Based on Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Attitude Response</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree or</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Advertising will increase the quality of accountants’ services in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Agree or</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree or</th>
<th>Overall Chi Square</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>31 (29.2%)*</td>
<td>20 (18.9%)</td>
<td>55 (51.9%)</td>
<td>0.00043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>57 (13.6%)</td>
<td>80 (19.1%)</td>
<td>282 (67.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. When accountants advertise, prices are lowered due to more competition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Agree or</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree or</th>
<th>Overall Chi Square</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>28 (26.9%)</td>
<td>18 (17.3%)</td>
<td>58 (55.8%)</td>
<td>0.01650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>65 (15.6%)</td>
<td>103 (24.6%)</td>
<td>250 (59.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Parentheses indicate row percentages.
Table 7
Differences in the Public’s Attitudes toward Advertising by Accountants Based on Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Attitude Response</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree or Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Overall Chi Square Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The public would be provided useful information through advertising by accountants.

Low | 54 (56.3%)* | 18 (18.8%) | 24 (25.0%) | .01145 |
High | 164 (40.9%) | 76 (19.0%) | 161 (40.1%) | |

3. Advertising will increase the quality of accountants’ services in the future.

Low | 23 (24.0%) | 31 (32.3%) | 42 (43.8%) | .00002 |
High | 58 (14.5%) | 67 (16.7%) | 276 (68.8%) | |

10. In general, my image of accountants would be lower as a result of advertising.

Low | 26 (27.4%) | 21 (22.1%) | 48 (50.5%) | .01406 |
High | 169 (42.3%) | 55 (13.8%) | 176 (44.0%) | |

11. Advertising would help the public make more intelligent choices among accountants.

Low | 41 (43.2%) | 25 (26.3%) | 29 (30.5%) | .02449 |
High | 142 (35.6%) | 75 (18.8%) | 182 (45.6%) | |

14. I would like to see more advertising by accountants.

Low | 22 (23.2%) | 36 (37.9%) | 37 (38.9%) | .03383 |
High | 72 (18.1%) | 112 (28.1%) | 214 (53.8%) | |

15. Advertising by accountants would tend to lower the credibility and dignity of their service.

Low | 21 (22.1%) | 19 (20.0%) | 55 (57.9%) | .00011 |
High | 178 (44.6%) | 41 (10.3%) | 180 (45.1%) | |

* Note Parentheses indicate row percentages.
Table 8
Differences in the Public’s Attitudes toward Advertising by Accountants Based on Parental Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Status</th>
<th>Attitude Response</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree or</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is good to deal with accountants who offer the lowest price for routine services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Children</td>
<td>78 (22.6%)*</td>
<td>46 (13.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>23 (13.5%)</td>
<td>39 (22.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Advertising by accountants would primarily benefit the uninformed citizenry.

| No Children     | 145 (42.4%) | 62 (18.1%) | 135 (39.5%) | .04163 |
| Children        | 90 (53.3%)  | 30 (17.8%) | 49 (29.0%)  |             |

18. It is better to deal with reputable accountants than with one who offers the lowest prices.

| No Children     | 314 (91.8%) | 19 (05.6%) | 9 (02.6%)  | .02745 |
| Children        | 142 (84.0%) | 19 (11.2%) | 8 (04.7%)  |             |

* Note Parentheses indicate row percentages.

Table 9
Differences in the Public’s Attitudes toward Advertising by Accountants Based on Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Attitude Response</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree or</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I would be suspicious of accountants who advertise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>96 (36.9%)*</td>
<td>38 (14.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofessional</td>
<td>72 (29.6%)</td>
<td>24 (09.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Advertising by accountants would tend to lower the credibility and dignity of their service.

| Professional     | 114 (43.8%) | 35 (13.5%) | 111 (42.7%) | .03519 |
| Nonprofessional  | 87 (36.0%)  | 24 (09.9%) | 131 (54.1%) |             |

*Note: Parentheses indicate row percentages.
Professional development is fundamental to the teaching profession. It is a key element that constitutes what teachers do in their professional lives. Lately, because of the heavy emphasis on standardized testing mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (California Department of Education, 2009), professional development equals teaching to the test. Darling-Hammond (2003) suggests that teachers are not pleased with this emphasis and it has lead to an increase in teacher attrition. Teachers and administrators should determine professional development agendas in public schools as a collaborative effort with moral purpose (Fullan, 2001) as the foundation. This would assist teachers in remaining motivated and informed while assisting in the retention of experienced and novice teachers.

The purpose of this study is to examine what teachers find useful when professional development is implemented and how moral purpose can be a driving force for reform in this area of their professional lives as they work with the demands of high stakes testing placed upon them.

Research Framework

Main Participant

From 2000 to 2004, there was a study conducted on Barbara Ellston (Padilla, 2004). In this article, Ellston (pseudonym), was a union leader during the year 2000, which sets the timeline for my study of her leadership contributions. Padilla (2009) stated that:

[Barbara] had previously been an elementary schoolteacher for seventeen years for the Southwest Municipal School District (SMD) where this study was conducted, but after a contentious staff meeting in which her comments and opinions were not respected; she decided to seek counsel from her local union, the Southwest Teachers Federation. As she worked in various roles within the union, her knowledge of the benefit unions could contribute towards better learning situations for students and improved working conditions for teachers grew. (p. 213).

The questions that are the premise for this research study concern how Ellston, as the union president of a large urban district in Southwest New Mexico understands the role that teachers can play in improving the conditions of teaching. They focused, too, on redefining the union’s mission beyond salaries and benefits to support education reform. The intent has been to identify, describe, and analyze themes that emerged from this inquiry that helped illuminate issues and ideas related to quality education and education for social justice.

The end result of this study has been biographical in nature. As stated by Denzin (1989), “The interpretive biographical method...involves the studied use and collection of personal-life documents, stories, accounts, and narratives which describe turning-point moments in individuals’ lives....the subject matter of the biographical method is the life experiences of a person” (p. 13).

I posed some specific questions to Ellston, which contributed significantly to the study. The questions posed were part of a series of in-depth personal interviews, which varied in length depending on the topic and time given to me by Ellston and other participants. Some of these interviews were paired with observations of Ellston in her daily work environment, as well as her involvement with union meetings occurring locally or in the state capital. I familiarized myself with union documents such as the monthly
newsletter, Teachers Voice, and other documents composed by Ellston to further my understanding of her work.

Data Collection/Procedures and Criteria
In the original dissertation research (see Padilla, 2004), the participants for this research design were relatively easy to select due to the nature of information I needed to extract from the in-depth interviews. As stated in Padilla (2009):

The main informant was Ellston, and secondary informants were those who were recommended by her and had first hand knowledge of her work. I purposely asked for names of informants who had worked with her on the administration side of her work responsibilities. I began by conducting three in-depth interviews with Ellston as described by Seidman (1998). These interviews lasted ninety minutes. It was mutually agreed we would continue to dialogue by arranging meetings twice a month and/or communicate by phone and e-mail in order to maintain contact and so I could also share my findings with Ellston. A fourth, hour-long interview was conducted at the end of my study. I formulated some questions and began to ask for clarifications on these. It served to conclude the study and to offer Ellston a chance to understand what I had learned about her work. I asked Ellston for additional names of people who knew of her work and might grant me an interview. I asked for a list of people from various roles within the public school system and union organization. I specifically wanted to interview administrators who had worked with Ellston while she served as the local union leader. (p. 209-210).

I also interviewed teachers in the field and teachers who occupied teacher-leader roles as Federation Representatives (FR’s).

Ellston provided me with the following list of people: an emeritus professor and former Dean of Education at Southwest University, two principals, three teachers, two FR’s and the former union president, all of whom I interviewed at some length. “All local interviewees requested they remain anonymous” (Padilla, 2009, p. 210).

Padilla (2009) also stated that:

The informants all had some connection to Ellston’s leadership role in education. In this way, they assisted me make connections to the major themes involved in this study: leadership, teachers working conditions, and union efforts at reforming the educational standards. By interviewing participants who were familiar with educational reform, union activity and Ellston’s contributions to these concerns, I was able to construct a more authentic biographical narrative.

Purposeful sampling was the basis for my data collection. According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling is based on the assumption the investigator plans to discover, understand, and gain insight regarding a certain subject. Therefore, “an investigator must select a sample from which the most can be learned. A unique sample, such as those who are familiar with Ellston’s work, provided insight into the view of education I sought to capture and record” (Padilla, 2009, p. 210).

I read widely and informed myself regarding Ellston’s professional accomplishments (Padilla, 2004). I learned Ellston was influenced by Darling-Hammond (1994, 1997; & Sykes, 1999) and Deborah Meier (1995), women who are considered experts in education renewal with educational equity as foundation for their ideas (Padilla, 2004, 2009). I studied biographical documents produced by local newspaper articles, and the union newspaper (Padilla, 2009). I uncovered the ideas and philosophies, which drove her leadership approach and the manner in which she implements change within the union. “In this way, a more meaningful interview and dialogue was accomplished…” (Padilla, 2009, p. 210).

Data Analysis
The interviews were tape-recorded which ensured accuracy of topics discussed and in recalling the large amount of information gathered. By listening to the recordings, questions were formulated regarding subjects that seemed interesting and relevant to my study. This helped to initiate a follow-up interview on a subject of interest.

Coding
The data was coded as it emerged with specific themes that were salient and relevant. According to Merriam (1998):
Coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data. Coding occurs at two levels, identifying information about the data and interpretive constructs related to analysis. (p. 164)

Marshall (1998) refers to a process called “winnowing” in which an investigator gathers what makes sense based on connections to salient themes. The investigator is then able to gather “chunks” of information from the transcripts in this manner (as cited in Seidman, 1998). In the words of Mostyn (1998) “what is required in responding to interview text is no different from what is required in responding to other texts— a close reading plus judgment” (as cited in Seidman, 1998, p.100).

Making and Analyzing Thematic Connections

As stated in Padilla (2009), “[a]fter going through the process of coding and winnowing of relevant information, categories were created based off the information, which emerged from the data” (p. 212). In addition, Seidman (1998) stated that “[t]he researcher then searches for connecting threads and patterns among the excerpts within those categories and for connections between the various categories that might be called themes” (p. 107). This process describes the research methods used to gather and interpret data for this study (Padilla, 2009). I have adopted the work of Fullan (2001) as a framework to understand the leadership work of Ellston.

Some of the questions guiding this examination include: What do current-day teachers consider important in terms of professional development? How do today’s teachers remain motivated and informed in the profession? How can a collaborative work environment grounded on moral purpose assist in the retention of experienced and novice teachers?

Professional Development Today

Early teacher-preparation efforts were prompted by social changes that were occurring in the country as it grew in population. Professional development needs were met, for the most part, at gatherings where experts shared their experience. Teachers in the ranks were hardly ever considered experts, but that has changed some today, after years of struggling to professionalize teaching and to grasp the right to have a say in the working environment (Fuller, 1982). These efforts have also led to more activism within schools.

Activism and Involvement in Retention

An increase in activism by teachers today is the result of an acceptance of responsibility and a willingness to work collaboratively with others and administration. Battling the constraints of bureaucratic fetters, which take away control of their schools and classrooms and make their teaching efforts more impersonal, has served to empower teachers by giving them greater autonomy.

Such changes in school structures and the shifts in power relationships would seem to imply a net loss of control for principals, as well, but instead should be viewed as a “transformation through which more teachers become confident and knowledgeable practitioners” that are able to contribute to decisions in schools and enhance the effectiveness of principals (Maeroff, 1993, p. 10).

One such example was Barbara, who had many experiences that shaped her views on teaching and learning in the profession. She placed much importance on listening to teachers and perhaps those views can be better understood through the experiences her father went through while he was teaching. In my interview with him he described what a waste of time a district in-service could be for a veteran teacher. In one particular in-service involving stress he said, “I didn’t want to be there, the fact that they could assume that because I’m a teacher I’m automatically under stress, I thought it was insulting and it really bothered me, and I didn’t realize that so many of these in-service programs are a waste of time” (C. Ellston, personal communication, September 24, 2002).

Other relevant experiences included attendance at union meetings. In the course of attending these union-sponsored meetings and gaining information, she gained new insights into the possibilities of union work. This early exposure also began a mentoring relationship with her predecessor that allowed her to gain key insights into the workings of the union structure. Initially she recalls significant statements made by the union president that influenced her early thoughts:

…she talked about a workplace in which teachers had meaningful discussions about teaching and learning and made decisions about what and how they would teach based on these
discussions…teachers, in collaboration with principals, staff and parents, made significant changes in their work place because they knew what was best for the students they taught. (Educator’s Voice, 15, 1999, n. p.).

These statements of belief about teaching and other possibilities for improving education opened her natural curiosity towards considering a variety of reforms for enhancing the profession of teaching. What Barbara experienced supports what Darling-Hammond (1997) states about teachers and how they acquire new knowledge: “teachers learn just as their students do: by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers…and by sharing what they see” (p. 319).

When Barbara became the secretary of the union she had many opportunities for growth and learning at a national level and eventually became the executive vice president. This was an exciting time for the union, as Al Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, was playing a prominent role as elder statesman for focused and popular educational reform efforts.

What Shanker set out to do in the early eighties was in response to political forces that began to undermine public education. He not only influenced Barbara’s perspective but also the perspectives of many locals who were affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). He “was one of the country’s most influential voices on education reform, a leader for human and civil rights in the United States and abroad, and a relentless defender of democracy and freedom” (Shanker, 2002, p. 9).

The 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence called A Nation at Risk, which condemned unions for being too adversarial, prompted AFT to make a more concerted effort to work collaboratively with school districts in order to improve public schools. For many AFT affiliates, such as the one here in the Southwest, this call to work collaboratively laid the foundation for “developing the supports and resources needed to turn the call for higher standards into an action plan for class professionals” (Shanker, 2002, p. 9).

Shanker was acknowledged for exercising important leadership. He understood the need to respond to the call for greater shared responsibility on the part of teachers and realized, too, that the more positively teachers’ organizations responded the more likely they would benefit from the “call for federal, state, and local authorities to fulfill their responsibilities to adequately support public schools” (Shanker, 2002, p. 9). The AFT could stand back, complain, do nothing, or become part of the solution. Shanker (2002) chose to become more active in the campaign to improve public schools and to develop greater influence in policy and legislative circles.

Some of Barbara’s most stimulating professional opportunities came about through the Leadership for Reform Institute (LRI) that Shanker had organized. In these meetings many other progressive union leaders took the time to discuss alternative ways to work with the school districts towards educational renewal. Barbara enthusiastically singled out one of the guest speakers sponsored by the institute. “Lauren Resnick is an educational researcher, and it’s not like I know her work that well, but I remember sitting and thinking, ‘I am learning so much from this person’” (Shanker, 2002, p. 9). Resnick’s engaging and compelling approach to applications of learning research left a lasting impression on her career as a teacher-leader. From that time on, learning remained a central theme of her work.

Early Beliefs/Teaching is a Political Act

Barbara believes that public education policy is a huge arena that requires specialization order to be competent in one specific area. She believes you cannot be a competent generalist because there are so many issues facing public education, teachers, and children. She acknowledged that the way school policy is administrated is complex and political, requiring the best and most specialized thinking available.

In her words, “teaching is a political act, what you choose to teach and how you choose to teach is a political act…I agree that teachers as a group don’t embrace that concept.” This is a point she made as she pressed her argument against “social and educational policies that negate [heavy emphasis on this word] the profession of teaching, the professionalism of teachers, negate the intellectual work of teaching, [and] chooses to see it as a menial task that can be done by anybody as long as they follow a script” (B. Ellston, personal communication, September 6, 2002).

She referred to a reading program entitled, Success For All (SFA), as an example. It is highly scripted. She takes issue with the American Federation of Teachers whose leaders support this reading program as
a legitimate and sustainable way to reform public education. She feels that it only serves to de-
professionalize and de-skill teaching and give kids a very poor education. She feels that to accept such a
program and at the same time have the philosophy that teachers are professionals and worthy of respect
leads to a stark contradiction.

Many who advocate for this program, which includes teachers and administrators, often mention to
Barbara that this is a program for teachers who don’t know as much as she does. She responds to this by
stating that her development as a teacher came about through regular engagement with students and with
a variety of curriculum materials. A lot of her initial work was trial and error and she made a lot of
mistakes. But through those mistakes she began to understand her strengths as a teacher and the best way
to reach her very diverse group of students. In other words, it was only through trying out many ideas,
being a risk taker and paying close attention to what worked that she developed skill and judgment as a
teacher.

As a teacher, Barbara had a high level of intellectual engagement, constantly learning and growing to
be better able to meet the needs of her students. She said “I don’t believe I would have found my
professional voice if I had not had those opportunities…if my teaching had been scripted, if my ability to
engage in new practices had been limited; I don’t think I would have stayed in the profession and I would
not have been able to grow professionally and intellectually in the profession” (B. Ellston, personal
communication, September 13, 2002).

Nationwide, teachers have embraced and supported reform initiatives that give them more say in
decisions involving their schools. In fact, more than 70% of teachers reported that their schools were
engaged in a variety of reforms, including greater involvement of teachers in making decisions related to
curriculum, personnel, scheduling, and budgeting (Grant, 1999). So, in one sense, increased autonomy,
caused by activism resulting from an increase in constraints, has served to bolster the perception teachers
have of themselves, thus increasing confidence in their abilities, leading to more involvement, and
helping to retain teachers overall.

In one of her first messages to the membership after assuming the role of president, she stated her
belief that the only way to improve education in the district was by encouraging all teachers and union
members to work closely together as colleagues. Barbara also asserted that union members and the school
district’s administration must coexist more collaboratively in order to benefit everyone involved,
particularly students. She also felt that by modeling collaborative change, the union’s work would serve
as a model for other school districts.

Her method of achieving this goal would be through increased democratic participation within the
membership. She spoke of the vision and purpose of an effective union and how this was part of their
mission also. She said she wants “…to create an organization which collectively works to defend public
education and the rights of teachers, emphasizes professionalism and has a commitment to children and
community” (Educator’s Voice, 1999, n. p.). She emphasized the importance of teachers’ professional
knowledge and abilities to bring this effort to the forefront, while acknowledging that there are many
bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of attaining an equitable and quality education for the public.

Union Reform/Union Culture

Barbara particularly believes in education reform efforts driven by teachers. The union and her staff
are constantly working on building the membership and conveying this message. As she discussed ideas
about reform and including teachers in the process, she produced a flier that was to be distributed to
members throughout the district. She was particularly proud of the play on words she used, “We think it’s
time for the teachers to reform the system not the system to reform teachers…AFT Educator’s Reforming
the System, the way it should be [at the bottom of the flyer]” (B. Ellston, personal communication,
September 13, 2002). This flyer seemed to be symbolic of how she envisions the purpose of the union and
the inclusion of teachers in decision-making.

Barbara’s education reform ideas are based on her beliefs and her extensive knowledge from research
about how children and teachers learn. She believes teachers learn by becoming reflective practitioners
and having opportunities to improve their practice through relevant professional development. Children
learn from ideas that build on their prior knowledge and that nurture their curiosity for further inquiry.
Children learn best from creative, resourceful teachers who reject scripted programs that are intended to water down the learning process for children, and stifle the creativity of the teacher.

Inviting teachers to reflect on their practice and encouraging them to articulate their educational philosophies revitalizes and enriches teaching and renews their commitment to teaching effectively and serving children well. This is an important part of Barbara’s vision and is enthusiastically shared by the union Vice President. During an interview with her, she revealed that professionalism and unionism go hand in hand and Barbara has gone to great lengths to get the membership to believe in this partnership and philosophy. As the VP explained, “she is really trying to help teachers see the union as a professional organization [and] she wants teachers to believe that unionism is professionalism and part of that vision is building the union hall to be a place where teachers come to study and learn” (Vice President, personal communication, September 18, 2002). Barbara provides opportunities and opens many avenues for teachers to clarify and to practice what they believe in. In a conversation with one of the Federation Representatives (FR), it was possible to understand the great lengths that Barbara goes to make this happen. This FR is a teacher-leader in her own right as she has been a Milken Award teacher for Journalism. She is also a National Board Certified Teacher, prompted by Barbara to complete this process. As a dedicated high school teacher, she made the point to emphasize it is always difficult for her to leave her classroom for professional development but she sees this as necessary to carry out the vision of teacher-leader that both she and Barbara hold dear.

Initially she was not interested in the work that unions do. However, because of Barbara’s energy and enthusiasm, she came to realize that Barbara’s leadership was authentic. As she recalled in reference to union work, “there’s the professional development, they are looking at quality teaching, they are looking at situations in the classroom…Barbara has provided more leadership in this area and is supportive” (Federation Representative, personal communication, October, 22, 2002). With these words, support for issues that are important to teachers comes across clearly and there is a feeling of mutual respect and understanding between this FR and Barbara.

As a member of New Mexico Press Women, she (FR) understands what it takes to develop good public speaking skills and effective sound bites. She is particularly happy that Barbara possesses the skills to represent the interests of teachers cogently and convincingly. She shared an incident where the integrity of teachers within the district was at stake and Barbara set the record straight before withdrawing her participation from a meeting of the local chamber of commerce. The FR recalled,

She is not afraid to speak out, if she thinks a program by the chamber of commerce makes teachers look bad and is detrimental to education, she just says it right there…They may not like what she says but they never question if she means it. (Federation Representative, personal communication, October, 22, 2002).

Because of the FR’s involvement with the New Press Women and professional journal writers’ circles she frequents, she has been told that Barbara’s credibility comes from her strong commitment to kids and teachers. They believe that Barbara has no ulterior motives and what she says is accurate and as the FR recalled, “we know when she tells us, that’s the way it is” (Federation Representative, personal communication, October, 22, 2002).

Barbara’s experiences and reflective thought and actions sit well with teacher retention and is good for morale. Most teachers are surprised with the bureaucracy when they enter the field and more so the lack of input asked of them in their schools. This is likely in direct conflict with the image they had of teaching when their decision to teach was made.

When teachers enter the profession, they already have a sense of identity and understanding of what the work is all about, “unlike other professions, teacher professional identity begins in childhood” (Collay, 1998, p. 131). They have a personal history and relationship with the notion of being a teacher and helping children.

The time spent at school with her father on weekends helped to shape Ellston’s thinking. Although she may not have realized it then, she came to see her father as a teacher who was also a thinker, an intellectual. Like her predecessor in the union, she came to depend on her father for helping her think through difficult and intellectually challenging issues. She believes that her interest in children and the
time spent with her father motivated her to want to work with children in the future. She often tells people that she made up her mind to become a teacher in the fourth grade and then waited to change her mind, which of course never happened.

When she described how she came to that conclusion, she mentioned how many children make similar decisions in the same manner. As Barbara explained,

I’ve heard from a million kids as a teacher, ‘I want to grow up to be a teacher’…I see in them that they have formed an attachment to their teacher, they have joy in school, they like being there…and they have some kind of role model, respect for the teacher that’s engaged with them” (B. Ellston, personal communication, September 6, 2002).

Barbara related her own childhood experience: “the social aspect has always been huge along with the fact that I can remember my relationship with my third grade teacher and when I had lunch with her last week she remembered me” (B. Ellston, personal communication, September 6, 2002). She described two other significant relationships with teachers as she recalled the nurturing and caring manner in which they interacted with her and other students.

Teaching then, is something that forms and develops early and becomes the main identity of the teacher’s career. As Barbara stated, “teachers’ primary identity and primary concern are the kids in front of them everyday…and I understand that because that’s where the joy is, and that’s where the work is” (B. Ellston, personal communication, September 6, 2002). Barbara accepts this statement, as she knows from experience the nature of the relationship and the strength of the bond that is formed within the classroom between teacher and student. Indeed, it is the work involving children that keeps many teachers in their positions regardless of the seemingly endless scripted demands placed on them through the curriculum in the name of education reform or accountability.

Motivation for Staying

A collaborative study with a group of seven urban teachers in Boston’s public schools helped identify what qualities they possessed to aid them in successfully dealing with students of diverse backgrounds. Their participation in this study group is indicative of the interest in improving their craft as “they have received numerous awards [and] they are active in professional organizations, writing and reading groups, and other professional activities” (Nieto, 2003, p. 16).

This study also found that teachers who stay in the profession have a love for the students they teach that is manifested by the high expectations they place on their students. This love then “is a combination of trust, confidence, and faith in students and a deep admiration for their strengths” (Nieto, 2003, p. 16). These are examples of teachers who have mastered and secured an interest in a long-term tenure in the profession.

This is not the case for many school districts as they deal with high attrition among novice teachers and low morale among staff members. “Since the 1990s, the annual number of exits from teaching has surpassed the number of entrants . . . less than 20% is due to retirement” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 9). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires highly qualified teachers to be hired in public schools. This is a bigger challenge in inner city schools and poor rural areas where working conditions often cause many novice and veteran teachers to leave because of poor funding and/or lack of support from the district.

This makes supporting teachers within the district all the more important. In the case of the district in this study, Barbara felt district officials who treat teachers condescendingly fuel the general public’s negative perceptions of teachers. She spoke of how disheartened she feels when teachers are not given the message that they are intelligent human beings capable of working with others, not just being worked on. She said “the tone… is one of overseer and manager of people to make sure that they’re doing their work; it’s just pervasive…I can’t imagine them being treated the way that they are treating us” (B. Ellston, personal communication, December 19, 2002).

Barbara described the way teachers are viewed in terms of a factory model in which teachers are told what to do and both teachers and students go through a process of learning that is passive and mindless. She knows that there are better ways to run schools and teach students. But the bureaucracy is so entrenched that it would take a special collective effort by teachers to bring about this change.
The kind and level of support provided by the district and the immediate school site administrator is a strong determining factor of teacher success in the profession. These include “feelings about administrative support, resources for teaching, and teacher input into decision making” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 9). Certain other factors that are often expressed by teachers as most important while conducting their work and choosing to remain in the profession include salaries, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring in the early years (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

**Moral Purpose and Decision Making**

Teachers mentioned in the previous section of this study are what public schools need for today’s students. Fullan (2001) would say their work was fueled by a moral purpose—“To strive to improve the quality of how we live together is a moral purpose of the highest order” (p. 14). Teacher-leaders and school administrators could use moral purpose as a platform where knowledge is gained and shared by all and learning is enhanced for students in particular.

Fullan (2001) believes that moral purpose sustains organizations through difficult times, even when others may want to give up. A strong moral purpose can give an organization a reason to keep going despite continuing challenges. He observes that “effective leaders exploit this tendency and make moral purpose an ally . . . it will only flourish if leaders cultivate it” (p. 27).

Teacher-leaders believe that in order to improve education, all stakeholders must be included in important educational decisions. They believe this will translate into a better, more democratic education for their students and a more satisfying and sustainable system for the adults who devote their lives to teaching.

Professional development that focuses on such involvement and on developing a good working relationship within the school community stands to contribute the most toward support of teachers, increases in knowledge building, and learning for students. An ethos will pervade the system or district that seeks to reap the benefits from the building of knowledge. Fullan (2001) observes:

> . . . effective leaders understand the value of and role of knowledge creation, they make it a priority and set about establishing and reinforcing habits of knowledge exchange among organizational members . . . to do this they must create many mechanisms for people to engage in . . . new behavior and to learn to value it . . . knowledge activation is about enabling not controlling. (p. 87).

Building relationships within a school community requires an organizational perspective that “pay[s] as much attention to how we treat people . . . as we now typically pay . . . to structures, strategies, and statistics” (Fullan, 2001, p. 27). These are the very actions that successful teachers employ within their classrooms while building learning communities that stimulate learning. It is important to develop an instinct or thought pattern associated with one of the reasons they stay in the profession: intrinsic rewards from student interaction.

**Empowering Leaders and Building Community**

School administration and principals must convey and encourage their people of the urgency and importance of continuing a high level of cooperation between the two parties. It must also be pointed out that change is done steadily by allowing those involved to take ownership of problems and to find ways to support them in moving ahead with their chosen course for the long run. As Argyris (2001) has said, “Internal commitment derives from energies internal to human beings that are activated because getting the job done is intrinsically rewarding” (as cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 8).

This was demonstrated by the positive change in the working relationship developed between Ellston, the administration and the school board. One of the measures of success came in the form of an agreement between the union and school board. Barbara had been advocating for a different system of performance measures for teachers that was developed around compensation, evaluation, and professional development. As she stated in the final interview, “now the board and the superintendents have formally said, ‘We’re following through. We’re going to start working with you. It’s going to be collaborative, and we’re going to agree to it formally’” (B. Ellston, December 19, 2002). These ideas have been advocated by her all along and are similar to many of the locals associated with the Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN Exchange, 2002).
The other aspect of this working relationship that must be put in place is building the capacity of the district to develop leaders—both administrators and teacher-leaders—who can attack complex problems and generate a variety of creative and workable solutions. Fullan (2001) states, “In today’s complex society, there has not been enough emphasis on skills development in concept formulation and communications,” so it has become increasingly important for leaders “to mobilize the collective capacity to challenge difficult circumstances” (p. 136).

Such changes cannot occur without a pervasive sense of trust. Such trust is impossible without establishing and sustaining long-term relationships among teachers, principals, and central administration. Fullan (2001) makes the connection clear: “Good relationships purge a knowledge-creation process of distrust, fear, and dissatisfaction, and allow organizational members to feel safe enough to explore the unknown territories” of innovative ideas, untried strategies, and underused technologies (p. 82).

The ideas represented here could be an ideal model to create a working, learning, and nurturing environment where all public school stakeholders benefit. Teachers who enjoy their work saw themselves as educators long before they entered the profession. They have a strong sense of the necessary combination of skill, knowledge, and nurturance needed to build community in the classroom (Charney, 2002).

Everyone would benefit if they extended what teachers already know to the larger school community; if they adhered to a sense of moral purpose for improving the quality of lives in schools. This would assist in the support and retention of the teacher workforce, especially as it deals with the increasingly stressful work demands being placed upon it through heavy emphasis on standardized tests. It would allow public schools to keep one of its original goals of creating citizens that can participate in a Democracy.

References


Data Literacy for Student Achievement

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Background

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation (2001), school districts have used student assessment scores to track and report areas of strength and weakness to the public. More recently, the U.S. Department of Education announced its hope to increase state-wide initiatives that promote data-informed decision making in public schools. In November 2009 Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced the final application for the Race to the Top Fund, a statewide competition to link student performance data with student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). States responded to the competition by creating longitudinal data systems that track student achievement (Aarons, 2009). In January 2010, the House and Senate of the Tennessee General Assembly passed a bill that allows Tennessee’s Value Added student achievement data (TVASS) to be used as part of teachers’ evaluations. In March 2010, The U.S. Department of Education announced that two states, Tennessee and Delaware, won the first round of Race to the Top grant money, an award based partially on their use of student achievement data in school reform.

In October 2009, Duncan had focused his comments on teacher education programs. In an October 2009 press release (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b) Duncan suggested that teacher education programs should be accountable for student outcomes. He cited the accountability model used in Louisiana in which student test scores could be linked to teachers, who are then linked with the institution in which they received their teacher training (Noell & Burns, 2006). Accountability for student test scores, it seems, has come home to teacher training institutions. As a result, teacher education programs will benefit by directly addressing student achievement as an intended outcome of the training they provide to candidates.

This article examines a practice to implement data-informed decision making strategies within a teacher education program. The Data Literacy Project is a performance based assessment used in an assessment course. It models school district practices for analyzing high-stakes testing student performance data. The intent of the Data Literacy Project is to engage in a data-informed decision making practice so that when teacher candidates enter school systems as first year teachers, they are familiar with implementing data-informed decision making into their daily instructional choices. The Data Literacy Project promotes data comprehension, interpretation and use. Using local school district student achievement data, teacher educators learn to create formative and summative assessments and instructional strategies as interventions to increase student achievement. For the purposes of this article, “teacher candidates” refer to the students in the teacher education assessment course. “Students” refers to the students in the local school district whose achievement data are being analyzed. “Instructor” refers to the university assessment course teacher.

Data Comprehension, Interpretation and Use

The U.S. Department of Education supports the use of data-driven instructional choices to improve student achievement. In a recent report, the U.S. Department of Education examined the ways in which school staffs use data systems to inform instruction in the United States. The research found that while data informed-decision making is occurring in schools, those decisions have little effect on teachers’ daily instructional decisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2009c). Practicing teachers may not have the training to bridge their analysis of the data and the changes required in instruction based upon that data. Their school districts may not provide the needed supports and educators’ own teacher training may not
have provided instruction in making data driven instructional interventions. Teacher training on effective uses of data-supported decisions may help to bridge this gap and support daily use of data to inform instruction.

Possessing competence in data comprehension, interpretation and use are central skills of making data informed decisions in schools. The U. S. Department of Education (2009c) analyzed which data systems were available to teachers and how teacher use the data. Along with knowing where data can be found and asking good questions about data, their research cited the following essential skills for data informed decision making by teachers:

[See Table 1]

Comprehending, interpreting and understanding the ways data should be used for instructional interventions are all necessary to make informed data driven decisions in schools. Teacher candidates need to practice each skill within their education programs so that new teachers begin their careers with data use literacy and competence. Colleges of education can make these skills a priority in their programs by addressing them in their assessment courses.

**Seven Steps to the Data Literacy Project**

How can teacher education faculty teach future teachers to practice the three skills of data comprehension, interpretation and use? One way is to use the Data Literacy Project in teacher candidate assessment courses. The Data Literacy Project requires that teacher candidates analyze current student assessment data, discover the strengths and weaknesses of the data set, determine which formative and summative assessments should be used in the upcoming year before the next district or state assessment is given and create a plan for instructional strategies to deal with weaknesses. The Data Literacy Project allows teacher candidates to collaborate in a group to reach competencies in data comprehension, interpretation and use. There are seven easy steps to the Data Literacy Project:

1. **Enlist support from the local school districts.** Local educational agencies collect data annually on their students. Data that can be rendered anonymous or public use data are appropriate for teacher educator candidates. Data sets may include district, school or individual classes. Create positive relationships with school personnel who understand the value of data use literacy in teacher education and recognize that such literacy will enhance the competency of incoming teachers. Provide copies of those data sets to teacher candidates in the assessment course for review.

2. **Create grade level or content oriented teams.** In practice, teachers in local school districts may meet in grade level or content level teams to analyze school data. Replicate this process with teacher candidates, allowing for elementary and secondary divisions, or teams based upon content for teacher candidates at the secondary level. Teams of 4-5 people are ideal as they simulate grade or content level teams. Students will collaboratively analyze the data set that was selected for their grade level/content area. In contrast, the instructor may provide several content areas and grades and ask the teacher candidates to take several days to generate a general understanding of all the data sets provided, finally settling on one data set to analyze for the Data Literacy Project. The instructor might consider providing a research day for students to research the test itself. Allow time for teacher candidates to understand the nature of the assessment (Dibels, Stanford Achievement, End of Course Assessments, State Tests, etc.). Ask the teacher candidates to understand how the tests are used in schools, when they are given, and general characteristics of the test.

3. **Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the data set.** The data sets from the school district may vary in reporting style, depending on the assessment. State assessments may designate standards and level of proficiency (advanced, proficient, below proficient). Other assessment data may include Average Reporting Category Performance Index (RCPI) where whole state data is compared to system or school data. Ask the teacher candidates to analyze the data for strengths and weaknesses, using numeric data to support their analyses. Ask them to provide numeric charts and graphs and a narrative, describing why they have chosen a particular strength or weakness. If a particular data set shows high proficiency, ask the teacher candidates to address
areas that may be improved from proficient to expert levels. In addition, ask the teacher candidates to identify smaller groups of students who are exhibiting non-proficient student achievement levels and who may be targeted for instructional interventions. Ask teacher candidates to include sub-groups in their analyses of strengths and weaknesses.

4. *Use state standards and local curriculum guides.* Before the next step of creating assessments based upon weaknesses in student achievement data, teacher candidates must become familiar with the state standards that apply to their data set. Ask the teacher candidates to research the standards that apply to their data set generally and the sub-standards for weakness areas, if given. The assessment data they are analyzing may report specific content areas. Where are these content areas found in the state standards? Are there sub-standards? When should the standards be addressed according to local curriculum guide calendars or pacing requirements? These resources are often found online and are helpful for teacher candidates to practice working within a system that requires instructional interventions grounded in state and local standards and curriculum pacing guides.

5. *Create both formative and summative assessments.* Using formative assessments to inform teaching promotes student learning (Stiggins, 2005). In this step of the Data Literacy Project, students think about the assessment procedures they will incorporate as interventions based upon the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment data. After student weaknesses have been identified, teacher candidates create assessment ideas for the period leading up to the next high stakes testing period. Ask the teacher candidates to brainstorm weekly formative assessments and monthly summative assessments to gauge student learning in the determined weakness areas. The assessments they create serve the purpose of increasing student learning through the school year so that when the next standardized tests are given, perceived weak areas have been directly addressed through both summative and formative assessments. State standards should be correlated to each assessment.

6. *Create specific instructional strategies as interventions to address weaknesses.* Once weaknesses have been identified and assessments have been constructed to gauge student achievement, the teacher candidates must decide how they would address those weaknesses within the classroom. Which instructional strategies might be used to specifically address the weakness area? When will the district teachers use the instructional intervention? Determine a minimum amount of instructional strategies that each team must identify. Ask the teacher candidates to detail each instructional strategy and why that strategy will impact the designated area of weakness. The research supporting the instructional strategy choice should be cited, thus promoting the use of research based instructional strategies. Instructors might require teacher candidates to detail differentiated instruction for each identified weakness. Instructional strategies should be correlated to state standards.

7. *Write a final report.* Practicing teachers are often required to create a report of their data analyses and plan for their administrator. Require the same report for the teacher candidates. Teacher candidates may download a common report format and individually create a professional report, based upon the collaboration of their Data Literacy Project group. The report includes:

- data literacy group members
- the type of data set
- the specific test
- when the test was given
- strengths and weaknesses of student performance
- numeric, graphical and narrative descriptions of the weakness areas
- formative and summative assessments to be given prior to the next testing period and instructional strategies for interventions.
the final report should include professional language. The instructor of the assessment course plays the role of the school administrator in evaluating the data analyses and instructional interventions.

[See Table 2]

This Data Literacy Project may best work as a capstone performance assessment, after students have mastered supporting concepts from the assessment class such as the use of standardized testing, measures of central tendency, validity and reliability, norm and criterion referenced tests, measurement data, and formative and summative assessments. In addition, the assessment course may best be sequenced concurrently with an instructional strategies course, as both content areas are necessary for successful data literacy competence. In many states, teacher candidates should also be versed in value-added data use. Analysis of these data offers a different perspective into achievement data accountability than the traditional criterion or norm referenced measures given in many states. Individual teacher effect data are not generally available but some districts report local and school-site valued added effects to the public and those reports provide rich data for teacher candidate analyses. Each data set offers unique insight into the varied ways the teacher candidates may be evaluated or evaluate their own students when they begin teaching.

Conclusion

Teachers may be the single most important factor in student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996: Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). Teachers who use student achievement data report an increase in the identification of student needs and increased self efficacy in the classroom (Heritage & Chen, 2005). Helping future teachers understand the impact they will have on their students’ achievement should be a central concern of teacher education. Teacher training programs should focus on preparing teacher candidates to learn the uses of data driven decision making in their classrooms. The Data Literacy Project is a capstone exercise aimed at promoting data comprehension, interpretation and use for the purpose of increasing student achievement. It uses a seven step process to enhance teacher candidate data use literacy. When teacher education addresses student achievement as a central outcome of their programs, their teacher graduates will enter the field of education with competency in data informed instructional interventions.

References

Table 1
Data Literacy Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Comprehension</th>
<th>Manipulates data from a complex graph to support reasoning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maps between the data and a prose representation of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maps between a figure and a prose representation of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands a histogram as distinct from a bar graph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interprets a contingency table</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidences data comprehension monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Interpretation</td>
<td>Understands the advantages and disadvantages of using disaggregated subgroup data vs. individual student data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attends to distribution and extreme quartiles, not just mean or portion above cut score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciates effect of a few extreme scores on the mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realizes that more items on a scale or members in a sample produce more precise, reliable estimates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands measurement error and variability; results not identical on every testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands that student cohorts differ from year to year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Use</td>
<td>Understands how to differentiate instruction based on data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeks subscale and item data that can be mapped to the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands value of formative assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modified from the U. S. Department of Education, 2009c
Table 2
Data Literacy Steps to Promote Student Achievement

1. Enlist support from LEA's
2. Create teams
3. Analyze strengths and weaknesses
4. Use standards
5. Create formative and summative assessments
6. Create instructional strategies interventions
7. Write a final report
INTRODUCTION

Storytelling is a powerful tool which can be used to positively influence the learning environment. It creates a focus on real, personalized information, with glimpses of real-life experiences, and affords a connection with a particular topic as the learners recognize similarities to their own personal knowledge and experiences. Through the emphasis of key concepts, learners can make connections between different topics. This is possible because of the emotional dimension of an issue and the teller’s story. It enables the learners to vicariously focus on the experiences of others, while internalizing their own personal issues and giving them legitimacy. Thus, storytelling develops ways of knowing and talking about issues, which can affect the way students will later deal with their professional practice (Lordly, 2007).

Storytelling can be defined as the tradition of relating knowledge by using narrative. It is utilized in all institutions within a society to reduce depersonalization (Abrahamson, 1998). The most basic method of doing this is by utilizing a relevant introduction, a challenge, and a climax, which then provides the lesson. This concept has been used successfully in a number of professional practices. Physicians use storytelling to instill professional attitudes and values in interns, to encourage them to reflect and analyze their own actions critically, and to validate their emotions and appropriately plan for individualized care based on the data received from the family and the members’ concerns (Lordly, 2007). It is important for doctors to respect, encourage, and facilitate the stories of their patients. Such consideration can result in greater quality of life for these individuals.

Nursing and social work, along with education, utilize the benefits of storytelling. Through the personalization of a story, critical thinking skills are increased, as a context between meanings and connections is established (Abrahamson, 1998; Lordly, 2007). With the creation of both cognitive and emotional connections, a greater respect is gained for fellow students’ experiences. This also provides a technique for problem-solving, and encourages skill development, as well as the ability to perceive injustice and view differences (Abrahamson, 1998; Lordly, 2007). In the education environment, storytelling enables students to have insight into what they consider important as well as their role in the education process. Students value storytelling, and perceive it as an enhancement to the traditional teaching methodology (Lordly, 2007). This pedagogical tool can be considered the foundation of the teaching profession (Abrahamson, 1998).

Through her study of the impact of storytelling in the classroom, Lordly (2007) found three themes emerged. One was the “aha” moment, when students identified with the scenario, and felt empathy. Being able to live vicariously through the characters in the story gave students the means to reflect and construct their own meaning from another person’s story. Another theme found in the study related to the various aspects of the situation, or the different perspectives possible. This enabled the students to see other views, and to be more compassionate. This form of emotional learning is important for teachers, to enable them to have a greater understanding of a concept (Lordly, 2007). The third theme dealt with the disconnect between what professionals know and what they may actually practice. Through storytelling, they are able to internalize, reflect, and ultimately develop greater understanding and acceptance.
By sharing stories, students and teachers validate their own learning. They are able to empathize with others, and see the world as others see it, which creates greater understanding. Stereotypes and myths can be challenged. Stories have the power to bridge different realms of existence, and connect people as well as information (Lordly, 2007). By listening to the stories of others, students are inclined to reflect and reevaluate their own perspective, which leads to a more critical analysis of their actions. They realize that multiple perspectives exist, and that they must be considered. This awareness can improve their ability to work with diverse social and cultural groups.

CAROL’S STORY

“My name is Carol Jackson and I am a beautiful and intelligent Black woman. After years of having a lack of self-confidence and esteem, I can now say that with pride. I am the first high school and college graduate in my family and I will be the first in my family to earn a graduate degree. I can make this prediction with confidence based on my success in the past, my constant pursuit of excellence and my willingness to do everything in my power to achieve my goals. I have learned that to be a survivor, I must never allow life’s unforeseen obstacles to defeat the spirit or the soul. Throughout the years, I have strived to do that by overcoming countless difficulties and adversities. I possess a relentless desire to seek a brighter tomorrow and become the best person I can possibly be.

My father was born in 1913. He was the ninth child in a family of eleven brothers and sisters. At thirteen, he left home with a pack on his back and a fifth grade education. After serving 17 years in the army, he retired, but was drafted in 1941 and served as a Master Sergeant in an all-Black regiment in World War II. During that time he fought against three foreign enemies: the Italians, the Germans and the Japanese, and one domestic enemy: racism. While on the front lines, my father was injured several times and received an honorable discharge.

My mother was, and currently is, the matriarch of our family. She did not finish high school, but eventually earned her Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). She, like my father, experienced prejudice first hand when she encountered segregation in schools, public restaurants, and restroom facilities in the 1950s and 60s. Both parents, particularly my mother, were very powerful influences in my life. They always encouraged and supported us, and believed in our ability to weather any situation we faced as we were growing up.”

Numerous studies have been conducted on the influence of the mother in the family (Drillien, 1964; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Scarr-Salapatek, 1971; Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Bronfenbrenner (1992) is best known for his study of the bioecological model. In this model, the ongoing behaviors of the mother, referred to as proximal processes, are found to be the most significant engines of development. During the formative years, it is critical that there be a close affectionate tie between the mother and child. This enables the parent to better understand the child and be more responsive to its needs and desire for attention. This results in the child developing the ability for self-control as well as the capacity to defer instant gratification in order to pursue and achieve longer range goals. Bronfenbrenner refers to this process of transition as internalization (1992). This proximal process, maternal responsiveness across time, is the most powerful predictor of a child’s developmental outcome. This concept is further supported by Flouri and Hawkes (2008), who found that mothers’ expectations for their children’s educational success are positively correlated with their children’s educational and occupational attainment. These researchers also found that mothers’ expectations of girls at the age of 10 were positively correlated with the daughters’ sense of control at the age of 30, regardless of ethnicity or educational attainment, among other variables (Flouri & Hawkes, 2008).

“As a child living in a culturally diverse community in Southern California, I cannot recall any racial hatred directed toward me. My family always supported my goals and aspirations and made me feel like a person of worth. Even though we frequently struggled financially our house was filled with love. I recall several instances where my family and I collected aluminum cans out of trash bins in order to provide food for the family. For the first few years that we resided in Southern California, my father often walked seven miles to and from work to provide for his family after our car had been destroyed by fire from an undetected oil leak.
Despite the hardships, my family always had hope and believed that life is what you make of it. I understood then why I was so resilient and determined to live a great life. However, my perspective of the world abruptly changed when my family moved to the state of Maine. It was there that I encountered racism for the first time, and realized how dissimilar I was from everyone else. I discovered that my color made a difference, and for the first time in my life, I realized I was different from the other people in the town.”

Racism has a long history in American culture. Distinctions between Black and white people were originally created by the white people in a position of power, to create and maintain the culture of slavery and insure the continued wealth and power of the white men. An adversarial relationship between Black and white people evolved, with a history of disharmony between the two. Carol’s skin color embodied this negative historical relationship (Brown-Spidell, 2009).

“My parents had long desired to move closer to their family, who resided on the East Coast, so that is why they decided to move to Maine. During the two week trip from California we visited places such as Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore. When we arrived in Maine, I recall how beautiful it was. We lived near a lake and I can vividly remember the placidity of the water and how the sun bounced off of the lake like a thousand diamonds. I remember how brilliant the green evergreens appeared against the bold blue sky, and how I never wanted to leave.

When school began I felt that my first day was exceptional! My siblings and I were treated like celebrities by virtually all of the students, faculty and staff. Many of them had not seen a “real” Black person before, except on television. They were intrigued by my presence, and the texture of my hair and my dark brown skin. However, as time went by, their interest in my “newness” dissipated, and I began to feel alienated from them. On numerous occasions, I was ostracized and called a “nigger” and was explicitly instructed to “go back to Africa because your parents baked you in the oven too long.” Eventually, the parents of my classmates forbade their children to approach or speak to me for fear that I might intentionally inflict harm towards them.

I spent many nights wondering if someone would physically assault me, encroach upon my property and erect a fiery crucifix on my front lawn, or burn down my home while I slept. Fearing for my safety and the safety of my family, my parents moved to Delaware. They felt that it would be an excellent place for me to reaffirm my self-esteem, gain acceptance and be treated humanely because of the community’s racial and ethnic diversity. Unfortunately, racism was overtly present, and I faced even more distress when I was bused from the rural town where we resided to the middle school I was compelled to attend.

I again felt anguish when many of the other children shunned me, including a young Black girl who would not allow me to sit next to her because I was “too dark” and “could not be seen.” Because of this, my brother and I attend the same middle school, and were only permitted to sit in the back of the bus on the way to and from school. This was the first time I had encountered this form of discrimination. For sometime afterward, I did not want to associate with or befriend anyone, particularly a Black person, because I did not want to ever again feel the disconcerting, humiliating pain of not being accepted by someone of my own race.

A few years later my parents decided it was time to move and escape the provincial discrimination of Delaware. We packed up our belongings and moved to Tulelake, California, where family friends resided. Once again, we were the only Black family for miles, which made it difficult for us to assimilate into the culture that called Tulelake home. I remember running with my siblings through the former Japanese internment camps that were now converted into public housing developments and feeling a sense of American history, because the Japanese exposure to discrimination was something that I could relate to.

After a short stay in Tulelake, my family returned to Southern California. Despite my long history with racial slights and injustices, I felt like I was home. To my surprise, I was once again teased for being different. The friends I once had as a child no longer desired my attention, and now that my parents were divorced, I once again felt alienated, worthless and alone. The most profound incident occurred in high school when I was living in a two-room hotel in Southern California with my mother and two sisters. My
sisters and I decided to pick up dinner and left my mother alone. My mother grew tired of hearing the cockroaches scamper across the floor at night when we would turn on the lights, so she decided to spray a repellant to kill the intruders. When we returned, to our amazement the floor, walls and ceiling were carpeted with cockroaches. It was from that point on that my mother swore to never allow her children to live in such horrific conditions.”

The development of an individual’s gifts or abilities is influenced by a number of factors, including culture. This is particularly true of minority groups in the United States. In a study of gifted Islamic women in the United States, Al-Lawati and Hunsaker (2002) found there were five key aspects affecting the development of gifts. The first was a sense of social motivation; the second, a sense of spiritual motivation; the third, a focus for change; the fourth, a role for study and learning; and finally, the barriers to change. All of these factors were present in the case of Carol and important in the development of her gift for academic achievement and her intense motivation to rise above her present circumstances and encourage others to feel empowered to do the same.

As an adolescent, the process of submitting college applications and applying for financial aid seemed overwhelming. Most of the universities were seeking individuals with a substantial amount of extracurricular activities. I did not participate in any because of circumstances beyond my control. My parents divorced when I was a junior in high school. We only had one car and my mother needed it to drive to and from work. My mother often worked overtime to take care of my younger sisters and me, and therefore could not provide transportation for me. As a result, I walked six miles roundtrip to school each day. Money was scarce and there were many times when my mother had just enough to provide subsistence for us with biscuits and lentils for food. I often shopped at the local thrift stores for clothes and shoes.

Despite my hardship, my peers at Ontario High School appointed me to the acting role of Assistant City Manager for the city of Ontario. I was also awarded several certificates for being a member of the Principal’s Honor Roll and received two Academic Letters for my exceptional performance. In addition, I received an Outstanding Achievement Award for four years of perfect attendance and was the first recipient of an academic Scholarship Achievement Award from the Claremont Area Chapter Links, Inc., which helped pay for my community college education. I was also the recipient of the American River College Foundation Scholarship and the American River College Retirees Scholarship.”

On a global level, academically gifted women share many similarities in their motivation to achieve. One of their internal characteristics is the determination to succeed. Some of the external characteristics are family encouragement, as well as the recognition of their potential by teachers and advisors (Al-Lawati & Hunsaker, 2002).

“IT took me twelve years to attain my college degree in communication studies, due in part to working full-time while caring for my father before his untimely death. However, the time spent at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) inspired me to work towards attaining an advanced degree. While an undergraduate student, the professors at CSUS were instrumental in assisting me with my research projects. I found them to be patient, understanding and extremely supportive of my educational and professional goals. Their professionalism, compassion and passionate desire to educate far exceeded my expectations. Although I was employed full-time and enrolled in as many as 17 units, I made the Dean’s Honor List and was a member of the debate team. During a debate competition I was recognized for my exceptional extemporaneous speaking abilities and was awarded third place for the competition.

Being on the debate team gave me the confidence to speak publicly. It was because of these successes that I began to regain confidence in myself. My life could have gone in any direction, but I believe because my communication skills were enhanced through education and positive circumstances and because I set achievable goals for myself, I was able to view the possibilities of my life from a whole new perspective. I have always been goal oriented, and because of that I believe I was able to overcome many of life’s adversities and focus on making my future what I wanted it to be. As a middle child I was the person who held things together, and I do believe that that had an impact on my life. However, now I am a person who focuses on my life and my future. My goal as a counselor is not to save the world, but to help guide those who want to save themselves.
My mission statement as a community college educational counselor is to assist students in determining their direction through times of stability as well as change, to not only help them shape and manage their lives, but to encourage transformational change. As a counselor I will inspire, encourage, support and motivate students through adversity and success. I will empower others, by helping them to develop their skills and encourage others to do the same for someone else. When a counselor has been successful, those students whom they have guided begin to discover the leaders within themselves. That is my goal, my mission: to empower all students to find their internal, intrinsic motivation.”

SUMMARY

A theory for enhancing individuals’ self-efficacy to improve their motivation is to share vicarious experiences, and use verbal persuasion as a way to help strengthen the beliefs of struggling learners toward their academic abilities and encourage them to tackle academic tasks (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). By sharing her story with students, Carol can help them to believe they can succeed, and encourage them to persevere in their academic goals. Beliefs can change behavior (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Teachers and counselors have the power to strengthen or manipulate student self-efficacy by getting struggling learners to believe they can succeed. Self-efficacy is the judgment students make about their ability to succeed on a task or tasks. By using verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences, a teacher or counselor can positively affect student success. The greater the credibility of the message giver, the more likely the students will believe and relate to the vicarious experiences, and the more likely they will believe they, too, can succeed at their tasks. Thus, teachers and counselors can help struggling learners develop an optimistic attitude and an improved sense of self-efficacy, and set students on a more satisfying and productive life path (Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

References


The stress associated with attending college is often burdensome due to the many developmental challenges that students encounter such as striving for academic excellence, transitioning into adulthood, forming new friendships, and making career decisions. Negotiating these factors can sometimes result in maladjustment via psychological distress or academic difficulties for many college students (Berk, 1998; D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Kalsner & Pistole, 2003). These developmental challenges may be exacerbated for students of color as these students experience more difficulties that their Caucasian peers, namely racial discrimination and/or pressure to conform to a lifestyle that differs from their traditional experience (Kalsner & Pistole, 2003). To help students of color overcome these difficulties, it is imperative that protective factors be identified to facilitate academic and personal success for students of color. Research has indicated that the presence of family support has a positive effect on numerous indicators of adjustment such as psychological adjustment, social adjustment, and academic performance among college students (e.g., Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Jay & D’Angelli, 1991; Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005; Maton, Douglas, Coras, Vieira-Baker et al., 1996; Negga, Applewhite, & Livingston, 2007; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002). As such, it has been proposed that family support can assist in protecting individuals from stressors associated with college (Kalsner & Pistole; Love, 2008). Family characteristics such as cohesion (Walker & Satterwhite, 2002) and support have been known to contribute to students’ ability to adjust to the new stressors associated with the college environment (Jay & D’Angelli, 1991) and to enhance their academic performance (Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). For example, parental support predicts low anxiety, and low anxiety predicts greater self-efficacy and better academic performance (Cutrona et al., 1994). In addition, familial support facilitates the development of healthy interpersonal relationships, which are important to developing the psychological resilience necessary to cope with the stressors involved in adjusting from the safety of the individuals’ home to the independence associated with the university lifestyle (e.g., Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005).

Although research has identified risk and protective factors regarding students’ adjustment to college, the bulk of the literature has focused on “traditional” European American students (e.g., Quimby & O’Brien, 2006). Not much attention has been given to the unique experiences of students of color, particularly African American college students (Heiss, 1996; Jay & D’Augelli, 1991; Maton et al., 1996; Negga, Applewhite, & Livingston, 2007; Walker & Satterwhite, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of this
study is to examine the influence of family support on African American students’ adjustment across a variety of domains such as psychological adjustment, social engagement, and academic performance.

**Family Support**

Attachment theory is a major theory that critically discusses the formation and influence of family support systems. Attachment refers to the unique bond that forms between individuals and their caregivers (Bowlby, 1977). Parental attachments are formed between infants and caregivers during infancy and childhood and continue through adulthood. An attachment is an affective bond formed between the infant and caregiver and its behavioral manifestation is typically reflective of the care the infant receives from him or her parent (Ainsworth, 1989). The quality of the attachment is especially affected by the emotional responsiveness of early caregivers (Mallinckrodt, 1992) and the consistency with which caregivers respond to the needs of children (Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Caregivers who are warm, supportive, and responsive prime their children to develop positive views of themselves and others that are reflected by high self-esteem, psychological resilience, and health interpersonal relationships, known as attachment security. Conversely, caregivers who are emotionally alienating and physically unresponsive or inconsistent prime their children to develop negative views of themselves as others, known as attachment insecurity, which is characterized by low self-esteem, psychological maladjustment, and interpersonal difficulties.

Attachments formed in infancy and childhood have lasting implications for future attachments (Ainsworth, 1989; Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). For example, a child who exhibits secure attachments in childhood with their primary caregivers are more likely to develop healthy, secure attachments with friends and romantic partners in adulthood, thereby being more socially adjusted and engaged. In addition, it has been proposed that individuals with insecure attachments, or those who are insecure in how they relate to others, appear to be more susceptible to many stress related issues in adolescence and adulthood (Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). While some may believe that perhaps family attachments become less influential as individuals become more autonomous and have greater proximity to peers and romantic partners, research has shown that parental support continues to be a stronger predictor of academic performance than peer support (Cutrona et al., 1994).

**Racial Considerations of Family Support**

As noted previously, much of the past research on family support and college students’ adjustment has not focused on the differing experiences that African American students encounter. In addition to the typical stressors related to life adjustment and school stress that many undergraduate students face, it has been found that African American college students are faced with inadequate social and dating opportunities, which often lead to difficulty forming on-campus social and community support that may lead to feelings of alienation, prejudice, and loneliness (Jay & D’Angelli, 1991). Such an occurrence has the potential to create psychological distress, foster social alienation, and hinder positive academic performance. However, as previously mentioned, family support may buffer the negative effects of such occurrences.

While some have proposed that African American families would be able to give less support to students due to the high incidence of one rather than two parent homes, most findings have not supported this hypothesis as studies have shown no racial differences in the academic support provided by caregivers (Heiss, 1996). For example, Tyler and colleagues (2005) found that some African American families emphasize values such as communalism and support rather than popular individualistic societal values such as competition and individualism (Tyler, Boykin, Boelter, & Dillhunt, 2005) that lead to positive outcomes. This focus on communalism and support could potentially be a much-needed asset within African American families as they support their college-aged children. However, aspects of family support need further exploration with African American college students.

**Study Overview and Hypotheses**

This study will build upon past research in the area of family support by examining the impact that parental attachment has on African American students adjustment in a variety of domains such as psychological adjustment, which we conceptualized and operationalized as self-esteem (Lent, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2001), social engagement, and academic performance, via students’ grade point average.
Many past researchers have not looked at the unique experiences of African American college students or have had a very small African American representation in their sample. Thus, findings from such research are limited in the ability to generalize to this student population. This study recruited African American college students as a way to advance understanding of the associations between familial support and various adjustment outcomes. It is expected that attachment relationships would predict reports of self-esteem, social engagement, and academic performance.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 127 African American undergraduate and graduate students from three public institutions in the South. Women accounted for 49% of the sample. The average age was 20.60 years ($SD = 4.05$). Freshmen and sophomores comprised 38% and 25% of the sample, respectively. Juniors (17%), seniors (10%), and graduate students (8%) were the remaining portion of the sample. Participants’ average annual income was $9,259.71, while the average parental income was $54,350 ($SD = 6,265.09$). Forty percent of the participants reported that they grew up in a single parent household with their biological/adoptive parent (mother or father) or in a two-parent household with their biological/adoptive parent (mother and father). Eleven percent of parents were from a single parent home with someone other than their biological/adoptive parent (e.g. aunt or grandmother), 6% were from stepfamilies, and 6% were from a two-parent home with parental figures other than their biological/adoptive parents (e.g. grandparents, aunts, and uncles).

**Procedures**

Potential participants were approached by master’s students from a local university to complete a self-report survey. Some participants were approached in their classes after receiving prior permission from the professor to ask their students for participation, while others were solicited by researchers in university student centers. Each participant was informed that participation was strictly voluntary and was given written information about the study as well as contact information for the professor supervising the project that served as informed consent for participation. The survey took most participants 30-45 minutes to complete and each participant was compensated $5.00 after survey packet completion.

**Measures**

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire that solicited information such as their age, race, gender, parental income, and GPA. In addition, participants completed the parent portion of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) to measure parental attachments, the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987) to measure social engagement, and the Global scale of the Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Dubois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996) to measure self-esteem.

**Parental Attachment.** The parent portion of the IPPA measures three dimensions of the attachment relationship: trust, alienation, and communication. Higher trust scores reflect higher levels of understanding, warmth, and respect. Higher communication scores reflect greater amounts of parent-child communication. Both of these characteristics of the parent-child relationship reflect higher levels of attachment security. However, higher alienation scores reflect greater emotional disconnection and interpersonal isolation, which is indicative of lower levels of attachment security. Participants were instructed to pick the one person that they considered their primary parental caregiver, as to minimize bias against individuals who only had one attachment figure or a figure other than their biological/adoptive parents.

Participants rated 28 statements about their parental figure on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = almost never/never true to 5 = almost always/always true). The researchers scored the subscales by averaging across items. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) found support for the construct and criterion validity of the measure along with adequate reliability coefficients in a previous sample (alphas ranging from .86 to .91). In the current study, the alpha coefficients for scores on the parental Trust, Communication, and Alienation subscales were .86, .84, and .88, respectively.

**Psychological Adjustment.** This study measured psychological adjustment with the Global subscale of the Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ; Dubois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996). The SEQ is a 42-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure individuals’ sense of worth and
acceptance in six domains: school, family, body image, sports/athletics, and global worth. The Global self-esteem subscale measures individuals’ overall thoughts of self worth and acceptance. Participants rate their level of agreement with statements using a 4-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The authors calculated scores for each subscale by averaging items; higher mean scores represented higher levels of self-esteem in each specified area. Adequate reliability and validity statistics have been reported for the measure (Dubois et al., 1996). The alpha coefficient for participants’ scores in the present study was .80.

Social Engagement. Family support was measured through the Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russell, 1987). This measure is based off the six social provisions proposed by Weiss (1974). The 24 item measure is designed to determine the degree that an individual’s social relationships provide various dimensions of social support such as attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance, guidance, and opportunity for nurturance. Each dimension is represented by a subscale in which both the presence and absence of each type of support is explored (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). Each subscale is scored by averaging items within the scale. Higher scores represent higher levels of the construct being measured. Alternatively, an overall measure of “general support” can be calculated by averaging all items. For the purpose of this study, select subscales were utilized.

While the SPS has been normed with college populations, it had not been normed for low income, minority populations (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). Cutrona & Russell have reported an alpha coefficient of .93 on the overall scale in a previous study, with alpha coefficients ranging from .59 to .78 among the subscales. Cutrona & Russell (1987) report that due to the high reliability of their measure it should be an appropriate choice for low income and minority populations. The alpha coefficient for scores on the Social Integration subscale was .63.

Academic Performance. Academic performance was measured by looking at how well an individual was performing in their classes. Since academic performance is often indicative of a student’s level of adjustment to university life, academic adjustment was measured by self-reported undergraduate grade point average (GPA).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and bivariate correlations of all study variables are presented in Table 1. We included parental income and gender in our correlation matrix because the literature has identified them as confounds to academic performance and academic adjustment. Gender was significantly correlated with social integration, so we included gender as a control variable in all subsequent analyses. Furthermore, we conducted a power analysis to determine if our sample size would sufficiently support the analyses we planned to conduct. With four predictors (gender, parental trust, communication, and alienation), a p value of .05, and a power level of .80, to detect a large effect ($f^2 = .33/R^2 = .25$), which is what we anticipated, 41 participants per regression would be required (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, to conduct the three regressions necessary for this study would require 123 participants; sample of 126 participants was sufficient.

Primary Analyses

To examine the affect of parental attachment on psychological adjustment, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis with gender in step 1 as a control variable; trust, communication, and alienation were entered in step 2 as the main effects (see Table 2). These attachment factors significantly predicted 27% of the variance in self-esteem, $F(3, 117) = 13.73, p < .001$, with communication ($\beta = .37; t = 2.9; p < .01$) and alienation ($\beta = -.38; t = -4.02; p < .001$) emerging as unique predictors. Participants who meaningfully communicated with their parents and frequently engaged in communication reported high levels of self-esteem, whereas reports of alienating experiences with parents significantly predicted low levels of self-esteem.

To examine the influence of parental attachment on social engagement, we conducted the same hierarchical regression analysis with social integration as the criterion. Attachment significantly predicted social adjustment, $F(3, 117) = 5.97, p < .01; R^2 = .23$, with women ($\beta = -.17; t = -1.95; p < .05$) being
more socially integrated than men, and those who experienced low levels of emotional alienation ($\beta = -0.31; t = -3.12; p < .01$) from their parental figures reporting high levels of social integration.

To examine the influence of parental attachment on academic performance, we conducted another hierarchical regression analysis with G.P.A. as the criterion. The proportion of variance that gender, trust, communication, and alienation explain in G.P.A. was small ($R^2 = .06$), $F(3, 110) = 2.83, p < .05$, and no unique predictors emerged. As such, we concluded that parental attachment did not meaningfully contribute to students’ G.P.A.

**Discussion**

This study explored the associations between familial support and various adjustment outcomes such as psychological well-being, social engagement, and academic performance. It was expected that increased attachment security would predict self-esteem, social engagement, and academic performance. As predicted, attachment security predicted high reports of self-esteem. Individuals who engaged in meaningful communication with their parents and were emotionally supported and connected to their parents reported high levels of self-esteem. This finding is supported by attachment theory, which asserts that positive parenting practices primes individuals to develop positive, cognitive working models of themselves that results in psychological resilience and high self-esteem (Bowlby, 1977). Likewise, this finding supports the cross-cultural applicability of attachment theory and is consistent with other studies in the literature (e.g. Arbona and Power, 2003; Armsden & Greensberg, 1987).

Attachment theory suggests that parental attachment relationships serve as a template for relationships that individuals develop later in life with others such as peers, intimate partners, and even instructors (Bowlby, 1977). As such, students with high levels of attachment security are more likely to be socially connected and engaged with their peers. This study found support for this assertion as participants who were emotionally connected to their parents reported high levels of social engagement. The findings were aligned with previous research where attachment security predicted greater social adjustment and social integration (Rice, Cunningham, and Young, 1997).

In relation to academic performance, the three aspects of parental attachment did not predict students’ academic performance. While research has shown the parental attachments significantly contribute to academic adjustment among in middle school and high school (e.g., Wong, Wiest, & Cusick, 2002), the results of the current study indicate that parental attachments do not significantly contribute to college students’ academic adjustment. This finding may be such for a variety of reasons. Developmentally, college students are attempting to master numerous tasks such as developing new friendships, engaging in romantic relationships, and connecting with faculty (Berk, 1998). Students may focus the majority of their attention on these developmental tasks, which are heavily influenced by the parental attachment relationship, to the extent that the influence of parental attachment on academic adjustment may be masked by the importance that students’ place on other aspects of their experience.

**Recommendations**

It is clear that attachment relationships significantly contribute to a variety of adjustment outcomes for African American college students. Students who reported high levels of trust, engaged in open, meaningful conversation, and were emotionally connect to their parental figures reported high levels of self-esteem and social engagement. Students who do not have such security can rely on “supplemental” figures such as faculty members, peers, or even a counselor for a supportive relationship that provides a sense of security and help foster positive outcomes (Mallinckrodt, 1992). Faculty can reach out to students to provide a supportive relationship for African American students. Administrators may consider establishing peer-to-peer mentoring programs in which students can establish secure “supplemental” relationships with their peers as a way to enhance their self-esteem and level of social engagement. Furthermore, clinicians can serve as a secure attachment figure that provides students with warmth and support, while encouraging them to be independently functioning and autonomous. Being a positive supplemental attachment figure can have significant implications for students’ sense of self-esteem, and the client-therapist relationship can serve as a positive model for interactions that students experience with their peers.
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although we demonstrated associations between parental attachment and various adjustment outcomes, due to the descriptive nature of the data, causality cannot be inferred. Therefore, the authors are not at liberty to attest that parental attachment relationships cause high reports of self-esteem, social engagement, and grade point averages. Furthermore, the results of this study are limited to African American college students attending four-year institutions. The literature has shown that the campus climate can contribute to students’ level of social engagement (e.g. Kalsner & Pistole, 2003; Tinto, 1975), and should therefore be factored into future studies. As such, this study should be replicated with African American students from other institutions such as community college and/or historically Black colleges to see if the results hold. Furthermore, the study should be replicated with students from other racial groups to determine the consistency of the results, and identify the unique experiences of other students of color. Other limitations include our sole reliance on self-report questionnaires to measure our constructs of interest. Self-report questionnaires are subject to recall bias, and we were not able to verify the accuracy of the reports. Gathering information about the parental attachment relationship from both students and their parents would provide additional insights about the relationship and provide a way to “crosscheck” the information gathered. Future studies should incorporate accounts of the parental attachment relationship from both the child and parent perspective.

References


Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Internal Consistency Reliabilities, and Bivariate Correlations among All Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parental Income</td>
<td>54,350</td>
<td>6,265.09</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Parental Trust</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.51</td>
<td>.78**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Parental Communication</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Parental Alienation</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-Esteem</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Social Integration</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Grade Point Average</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01

Table 2
Parental Attachment Predicting Self-Esteem, Social Integration, and Grade Point Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Social Integration</th>
<th>Grade Point Average</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.12</td>
<td>.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Trust</td>
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<td>.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Alienation</td>
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<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01
Analysis of Competing Mexican Restaurants Using the Marketing Carnival Approach

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Ameen Kazerouni
Adam Szaruga
Armando Ramos
University of West Georgia

Introduction
This study’s main focus was two Mexican restaurants located on 1601 Maple Street, GA, 30118. Both of these restaurants are within a block of each other, and had two distinct dining types. The Border is the older of the two restaurants and is a successful sit-down, family restaurant. The Grillage on the other hand, is a newer restaurant and at the time of this writing had been open for about a year and a half. The Grillage is a much faster paced restaurant, designed along the line of a Subway or Moe’s.

The reason these two restaurants were used for the study was that no other Mexican restaurant had managed to remain open on Maple Street because of the competition provided by The Border. Surprisingly The Grillage had not only remained open, but was doing exceptionally well. Using these two restaurants, this study determined what factors are important when it comes to running a Mexican restaurant outside of a college campus.

Methodology
The major method of data collection was a direct structured questionnaire. In addition, an innovative method of data collection called the “Marketing Carnival” was setup. The “Marketing Carnival” approach is used to set up a fun and energy filled environment, to attract students to fill out the survey. The carnival also had games via which students answered three of the question on the survey. In exchange students were rewarded with prized and free goodies.

The Questionnaire
The survey was developed in such a way that the responses provided enough scope for the required statistical analysis. The survey was broken up into three main types of question.

Demographic questions: These questions were used to collect basic information about the participant and were later used to create various market segments on which tests were performed.

Generic questions: These questions asked the participant about his/her preferences when it comes to dining out in general and a few questions specific to Mexican restaurants. At this point the names of the two restaurants in question were not introduced in the survey. These questions were statistically analyzed to answer specific questions and were used to create more specific market segments for further testing.

Questions specific to the border and the grillage: These questions were the most specific questions. A set of features were chosen and their importance and representation in each restaurant were rating on a 1-5 scale. These ratings were then analyzed individually and then correlated back to the market segments obtained from the initial questions. These ratings also formed the bases of the regressions performed during the data analysis.

Marketing carnival
This study not only included determining the important features and presenting them to the clients, but also implementing an innovated method of data collection called “The Marketing Carnival”. The carnival provided a fun atmosphere with games and various prizes to entice students into participating in the
survey. Three games were developed for the purpose of the carnival, namely, a timed puzzle solve, a ring toss, and water balloon throw.

Analysis

As a result of the method of data collection described, 403 complete questionnaires were collected. The data from these surveys were then broken down into variables and stored in an electronic data base. The data was then extensively analyzed using SPSS (Software capable of advanced statistical procedures).

The first calculation performed was to determine if there were enough surveys to maintain a 95% level of confidence. As per the calculations, 385 surveys were required to maintain this level of confidence.

\[
 n = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.25)}{h^2}
\]

Because of the innovative nature of the marketing carnival, the sample size obtained was enough to be 95% confident of the percentages reported, with a margin of error no more than 4.88 percentage points in either direction.

The tests performed on the data included descriptive statistics, segmentation analysis using independent sample t-tests, hypothesis tests of one sample mean and analysis of relationships between variables via cross tabulations, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

The gender analysis showed that 53.67% of the sample was Female and 46.37% was Male. This percentage was significantly different from the University of West Georgia population as a whole. However, a very large majority of the participants were undergraduate students. The results of the hypothesis test of one proportion performed showed that the sample population was indeed representative of the University of West Georgia undergraduate population. This holds at the 0.01 level of significance.

As expected the majority of the sample is between 18 and 23 years old.

![Age distribution histogram of the participants](image)

Figure 1. Age distribution histogram of the participants

We observed that 96.51% of the participants were students of UWG. This means that the statistical analysis is valid for UWG students but may not be for other segments of the market.
T – Tests were performed on each of the individual variables in Figure 1. The results showed that Healthy food, quick meal, cheap meal, expanded menu and pleasant dining had ratings significantly greater than 3. Seafood and alcohol on the other hand had ratings significantly less than 3.

**The Border Analysis**

Out of the 403 participants, 258 (64%) had visited The Border while 145 (35.5%) have not. The following calculation was performed to approximate what percent of the UWG population has visited The Border.

At the 95% confidence level, the calculated percentage of the UWG population that has visited The Border lay between 59.3% and 68.7%. This shows us that The Border has scope to expand its clientele within the UWG population.

A hypothesis test of one mean was performed to determine if the sample mean of 3.54 was greater than 3.4. The test results tell us that the mean overall rating of The Border is greater than 3.4. This conclusion is significant at the 0.02 level.
T-tests were performed on each of the individual variables. The results determined that the mean rating of ‘Cheap meal’, ‘pleasant dining experience’, ‘Variety and Expanded Menu’, ‘Availability of alcohol’ and ‘overall rating’ were significantly greater than 3 [Neutral]. ‘Seafood’ and ‘Regular at The Border’ were found to be significantly less than 3 [Neutral]. ‘Quick Meal’ and ‘Healthy food’ were found to be not significantly different than 3 [Neutral].
The dimensions that need corrective action are the ones to the far right of the Diagonal. These points represent features whose performance rating is lower than its importance ratings. This implies more focus needs to be given to these aspects of the restaurant. In the case of The Border, ‘Pleasant Dining Experience’, ‘Expanded Menu’, ‘Healthy Meal’, ‘Cheap meal’, ‘Quick Meal’ needs working on:

Segmentation Analysis:

An independent sample t-test was performed to determine if there was a gender segment. The test results showed that there was no significant difference that maintained a margin of error under 5%. An independent t-test was then performed to determine if there was a drinking age segment. These results showed that there was in fact a significant segment.

Further T – Tests were performed on each individual variable. They showed that people over the age of 21 gave The Border a higher overall rating than people under the age of 21. ‘Quick Meal’, ‘Cheap meal’, ‘Variety and Expanded Menu’, ‘Availability of alcohol’, ‘healthy food’ and ‘Seafood’ were given a significantly higher performance rating by people over 21 years old [5% chance of being wrong]:

Heavy User Segmentation:

An independent t-test was performed, with a Heavy User defined as someone who eats out 5 or more times a week. The t-test proved that The Border had a heavy user segment. [5% chance of being wrong]

Cross Tabulation Chi- Square Analysis:

A chi square test was run using “Ever been to The Border” and “Drinking Age” as the variables. With a level of significance at the .01 level it can safely be concluded that there is a relationship between drinking age and having ever been to The Border. This confirms the earlier drinking age segment.

Another chi – square was run with “Where do you live” and “Ever been to The Border” as the variables. With a level of significance at the .01 level it can safely be concluded that there is a relationship between where one lives and having ever been to The Border. This gives a possible segmentation, but because ‘live’ is a nominal variable, this cannot confirm that with other tests.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation was run to confirm a heavy user segment for The Border. The correlation showed two clear positive correlations. Firstly, the more often one eats out the higher is the overall rating of The Border. Secondly, the more often one eats out the more regular one is at The Border. Both these correlations confirm the previous independent sample t –tests. They clearly show us that there is heavy user segment in favor of The Border.

Regression Analysis

A regression analyses was performed with overall rating of The Border as the dependent variable and the following independent variable: Availability of seafood, quick meal, health food, cheap meal, availability of alcohol, pleasant experience and variety and expanded menu. Only Variety, quick meal, pleasant experience and alcohol turned out to be significant in the regression. Using the coefficients obtained a regression equation was formulated. The R^2 value was .609, which means that this equation has explained 60.9% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Overall Rating of the Border = .588 + .0452* Variety in Menu + 0.225* Pleasant dining experience + .102 * Quick Meal + 0.88 * Availability of alcohol

The Grillage Analysis

Out of the 403 participants, 153 (38%) had visited The Grillage, while 250 (61.75%) have not. The following calculation was performed to approximate what percent of the UWG population has visited The Grillage.
At the 95% confidence level, it was calculated that the percentage of the UWG population that has visited The Grillage lies between 33.3% and 42.7%. This shows us that The Grillage does have huge scope to expand its clientele within the UWG population.

We performed a Hypothesis test of one mean to determine if the sample mean of 3.18 was greater than 3. The test tells us that the mean overall rating of The Grillage is greater than 3. This conclusion has is significant at the 0.005.

Performance Rating

T – Tests were performed on each of the individual variables. It was determined that the mean rating of ‘Cheap Meal’ and ‘Overall Rating’ were significantly greater than 3 [Neutral], ‘Regular at The Grillage’, ‘Availability of Alcohol’, ‘Healthy Food’ and ‘Seafood’ were found to be significantly less than 3 [Neutral], Quick Meal’, ‘Pleasant Dining Experience’ and ‘Variety and Expanded Menu’ were found to be not significantly different than 3 [Neutral]
The dimensions that need corrective action are the ones to the far right of the Diagonal. These points represent features whose performance rating is lower than its importance ratings. This means more focus needs to be given to these aspects of the restaurant. In the case of The Grillage, ‘Variety and Expanded Menu’, ‘Cheap Meal’, ‘Pleasant Dining Experience’, ‘Healthy Food’ and ‘Quick Meal’ need working on. It is important that The Grillage keeps in mind that there is a bit of a trade-off when it comes to Expanded Menu and Quick Meal. the suggestion would be to try and get both closer to the diagonal without compromising too much on either.

Segmentation Analysis

An independent sample t – test was performed to determine if there was a gender segment. The test results showed that there was no significant difference that maintained a margin of error under 5%. Another independent sample t – test was performed to determine if there was a drinking age segment. The results indicated that there was in fact a significant segment. Further T – Tests were performed on each individual variable. It was found that people over the age of 21 gave The Grillage a higher overall rating than people under the age of 21. ‘Regular at The Grillage’, ‘Quick Meal’, ‘Pleasant Dining Experience’, ‘Variety and Expanded Menu’, ‘Availability of alcohol’ and ‘Healthy food’ were given a significantly higher performance rating by people over 21 years old [5% chance of being wrong]

Cross Tabulation Chi-Square Analysis

A chi – square test was performed using “Ever been to The Grillage” and “Drinking age”. With a level of significance at the .01 level, it can be safely concluded that there is no relationship between drinking age and having ever been to The Grillage. This confirms there being no drinking age segment.

Another chi – square test was performed using “Where do you live” and “Ever been to The Grillage” as the variables. With a level of significance at the .01 level it can be safely concluded that there is a relationship between where one lives and having ever been to The Grillage. This gives a possible segmentation, but because ‘live’ is a nominal variable, it cannot be confirmed with other tests.
Correlation Analysis

A correlation was performed between Age and the Overall rating of The Grillage. This correlation showed one clear positive correlation. The older one is, the more likely one is to visit The Grillage.

Another correlation was performed with “The overall rating of The Grillage”, “The performance rating of Variety for The Grillage” and the “Performance of health food at The Grillage”. This correlation showed us two clear positive correlations. Firstly, the overall rating of The Grillage has a strong positive relationship with the variety available at The Grillage. Secondly, the overall rating of the Grillage has a strong positive relationship with the availability of health food at the Grillage. From this correlation it can be concluded that The Grillage needs to focus on variety and health foods. The Grillage should also keep in mind that expanding the menu should have a minimal effect on the quickness of the meal. [Discussed earlier]

Regression Analysis

A regression analyses was performed with overall rating of The Grillage as the dependent variable and the following independent variable: Regular at The Grillage, availability of seafood, quick meal, health food, cheap meal, availability of alcohol, pleasant experience and variety and expanded menu. Only Variety, quick meal and cheap meal turned out to be significant in the regression. Using the coefficients obtained a regression equation was formulated. The R^2 value was .664, which means that this equation has explained 66.4% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Overall Rating of the Grillage = .429 + 0.519*Variety in Menu + 0.214* Quick meal + 0.167 * Cheap Meal

Comparative Analysis

A hypothesis test of one mean was performed for the variable “Preference for The Border”. The test was meant to determine if the sample mean of 3.39 was greater than 3.25. The test showed us that the mean overall rating of the preference of The Border over The Grillage is greater than 3.25. This conclusion has 2% margin of error.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation was performed using “Preference for The Border”, “Importance of a quick meal”, and “Importance of alcohol” as the variables. This correlation showed us two clear relationships. Firstly, Quick meal seems to have a negative relationship with the variable, indicating that it has a positive relationship with Preference to The Grillage. Importance of alcohol seems to have a positive relationship with the variable indicating a positive relationship with Preference to The Border.

Regression Analysis

A regression analyses was performed with Preference to The Border as the dependent variable and all the importance rating questions as the independent variables. Only the following two independent variables turned out to be significant: Importance of Alcohol and Importance of a Quick Meal. Because of the nature of the Question a negative Coefficient implies a positive impact in favor of The Grillage and a positive Coefficient implies a positive impact for The Border. In this regression it is seen that availability Alcohol acts in favor of The Border while availability of a Quick Meal acts in favor of The Grillage. Using the coefficients obtained a regression equation was formulated.

Overall Rating of the Grillage = 3.528 + 0.166*Importance of alcohol - 0.136*Importance of a quick meal.

Limitation

A major limitation was that the format of the carnival itself resulted in a convenience sample rather than a truly random sample.

The location outside the TLC building on the UWG campus and the fact that the carnival ended at 4:30pm limited us to mainly undergraduate students. This is because a majority of classes held in the TLC are of the undergraduate level and the few graduate courses that are conducted are later in the evening. This resulted in the sample not being representative of the UWG population as a whole.
The "Regular at The Border" and "The Regular at The Grillage" could have been phrased more appropriately. These questions were very self-defining. Having a better structured question may have given us more scope for more powerful analysis.

The "price over quality" question could have been asked as two different questions. Forcing the participants to choose between price and quality may have resulted in some inaccurate results.

The use of the word "inexpensive" instead of "cheap" may have yielded better results. This is because the word “inexpensive” has a less of a negative connotation associated with it.

**Recommendations**

**The Border**

A series of statistical tests were performed on the two main questions that could help find out how important seafood is: 1) Importance of seafood, 2) Performance of seafood. The T -Test performed on the importance of seafood showed that the mean rating was significantly less than 3. The same result was obtained from the Performance ratings of seafood at The Border. The suggestion to the client would be to not focus on seafood to much since the clientele does not seem to think it is very important. The already existing seafood menu could be better exploited with better publicity since it seems that most of The Borders clients are unaware of the seafood menu.

The importance – performance analysis gives some specific aspects of the restaurant that had a high importance rating but a low performance rating. It is important that The Border focus on these aspects: 1) Pleasant Dining Experience, 2) Expanded Menu, 3) Pricing of the meal, 4) Quickness of the Meal, and 5) Health Food options.

The regression analysis managed to explain 60.9% of the variance in the dependent variable, which was The Overall Rating of The Border. The regression confirmed the information obtained from the Importance – Performance Analysis. Based on this regression, it is recommend that The Border focus on the variety in menu, the atmosphere and providing a pleasant dining experience and improving the quickness of the meal and availability of alcohol.

The independent sample tests confirmed that there is a drinking age segment for students who visit The Border. The study found that people over 21 years old prefer and frequent The Border more than people below 21. It was also found that people above 21 rated alcohol higher than people below 21 did. These tests suggest that the implementation of a happy hour, i.e. a time period during the day where alcohol is available cheaper than usual, would satisfy The Border’s current clientele more.

Various tests were performed to determine whether The Border has a heavy user segment or not. The correlation and independent sample tests returned positive results. “Heavy user” as someone who eats out more often than 4 times a week. This is a great opportunity for The Border to implement frequent buyer cards and other incentives. It is important that The Border keep these clients satisfied since the revenue they bring in is a lot more than a less frequent client.

There seems to be a great scope for catering to the Female segment of the population at The Border; an increased variety and better advertisement of the seafood menu could increase the inflow of female clients substantially. This recommendation is an assumption based on certain facts. First of all, females have given the importance of seafood at a Mexican restaurant a higher rating than males have. Also, females have given sit down meals with family and with friends more importance than males have. Finally, all these features are fairly well represented at The Border according to the performance rating graph.

**The Grillage**

Various tests were performed to determine how important Health foods and variety was to the Overall Rating of The Grillage. The correlation analysis showed that there was a strong positive relationship between health foods and variety and the Overall Rating of The Grillage. The regression confirmed that variety was the most important factor when it came to determining the variance in the Overall Rating. Even the importance – performance analysis proved that health foods and variety required working on. Unfortunately another very important feature at The Grillage is the ability to get a quick meal. Trying to maintain the quick nature of the service while expanding the menu at the same time may prove to be a
problem. The suggestion in this case would be to try and increase the variety as much as possible without compromising on the quickness of the meal.

The importance – performance analysis showed that some specific aspects of the restaurant that had a high importance rating but a low performance rating. It is important that The Grillage focus on these aspects: 1) Variety and Expanded menu, 2) Cheap meal, 3) Pleasant dining experience, 4) Healthy food, and 5) Quick Meal.

The regression analysis managed to explain 66.4% of the variance in the dependent variable, which was The Overall Rating of The Grillage. The regression confirmed the information obtained from the Importance – Performance Analysis. Based on this regression, it is recommended that The Grillage focus on the variety in menu, the availability of a quick meal and try and improve on the pricing of the meal as well.

The statistical analysis showed that the Overall rating of The Grillage was greater than 3. Although The Border scored higher on the final question, the Overall Rating of The Border could not be equated to anything greater than a 3.5 and neither could the mean on the final questions be equated to anything over a 3.4. Comparatively, The Grillage is a smaller restaurant that has been open for a far shorter period of time. With better publicity it is possible that The Grillage could obtain a huge inflow of new clients and tap into the vast majority of the population that seems to have not visited The Grillage at all.

Although a drinking age segment for the population that frequents the village was found, it is not recommend that The Grillage start serving alcohol. It has been a past trend that any Mexican restaurant that tried to compete against The Border on Maple Street has failed miserably. It is assumed that the reason The Grillage is doing so well is that it differentiates itself from The Border. In addition to this, none of the other statistical analysis suggests that alcohol would result in significant positive outcome.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna for his constant support and guidance throughout the duration of this study. Also, they would like to thank the owners of The Border and The Grillage for the free prizes and information needed to make this study possible. And lastly, the authors would like to thank Melanie Hildebrandt, who informed them of the conference and walked them through the application process.