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Paula Williams Harris

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

African American High School Graduates' Perceived Academic Success Factors

by

Paula Williams Harris

MA, Cumberland University, 2004

BS, LeMoyne-Owen College

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2016

Abstract

A large number of African American students attending a low performing, urban high school in Tennessee demonstrated a lack of understanding in reading/language arts by scoring below proficient on the end of course (EOC) exam in reading/language arts. The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of 10 African American graduates who scored proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam to seek factors they associated with their academic success. This study was guided by Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. The research question addressed the perceived factors that African American graduates associated with their academic success. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC reading/language arts exam and who were 18 years or older. The data were collected through one-on-one interviews and were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The data revealed that all the participants had a positive adult figure who motivated and encouraged them to continue to succeed. Based on the research findings, a project on mentoring was developed. Implementation of a professional development workshop on mentoring could bring about a positive social change for more African American students because the project provides a mentor for more African American students at this high school, which may lead to more African American students improving their academic success.

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Dedication

First of all, I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke1:37). I would like to dedicate this project in honor of my graceful mother, Christine Williams-Ward (L.C.) I am thankful that she always believed in me, even when I did not believe in myself. She always told us that we could accomplish anything, and I finally believed it. Although she did not complete this journey with me on earth, she called me Dr. Harris before she went home to be with the Lord. I know she is rejoicing with me in the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When things seemed too difficult or challenging, she would always quote Psalm 121:1, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” Throughout my life, she has always exemplified the true meaning of excellence.

I would like to thank my grandma, Wheatie May Ivy, and the rest of my family members who were there when I needed them. I thank my husband, Gerald Davis Harris for all of his patience, understanding, and support. I thank our one and only daughter, April Latrece Harris for being an extraordinary motivator. I thank my two-year-old grandson, Robert Davis Willis for bringing priceless joy in my life and for always lifting my spirit. When I ask him “What does grandma do?” His answer is Grandma loves Robert D! When I asked him what does Robert D. do? His answer is Robert D. loves PaPaand Grandma! I would like to thank my siblings, Sandra, Patricia (Larry), Pamela, and Charles, and my God sent sisters and brothers for their motivation and overwhelming support during my quest toward fulfilling my dream of earning a doctoral degree. Finally I thank my three nieces, Kelly, Kerria and Jazzmyne for all of their enduring support.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Definition of the Problem	2
Rationale	4
Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level.....	4
Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Significance.....	6
Guiding/Research Question	7
Review of the Literature	8
Parental Involvement	9
Mentors	11
Resiliency.....	13
Theoretical Framework.....	14
Implications.....	16
Summary.....	17
Section 2: The Methodology.....	19
Introduction.....	19
Qualitative Design and Approach.....	19
Justification for the Chosen Research Design	20
Participants.....	22

Criteria for Selecting Participants.....	22
Procedures for Gaining Access to the Participants.....	23
Establishing a Researcher-Participant Rapport.....	24
Protection of Participants’ Rights.....	24
Confidentiality.....	25
Data Collection.....	25
Type of Data Collected and Justification.....	26
System for Keeping Track of Data.....	28
Role of the Researcher.....	28
Data Analysis.....	28
Findings.....	32
Theme I: Caring Parents and Grandparents.....	33
Theme II: Caring Teachers and Principal.....	35
Theme III: Mentors.....	37
Theme IV: Leisure Reading.....	39
Participants’ Experience.....	44
Participants’ Advice.....	46
Conclusion.....	48
Section 3: The Project.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Description and Goals.....	51
Rationale.....	51
Review of the Literature.....	52

Professional Development	53
School-Based Mentoring	55
Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory.....	56
Implementation	59
Potential Resources and Existing Supports.....	59
Potential Barriers	60
Proposal for Implementation and Timetable.....	60
Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others	60
Project Evaluation.....	61
Implications Including Social Change	62
Local Community	62
Far-Reaching.....	63
Conclusion	63
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	64
Introduction.....	64
Project Strengths	64
Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations.....	64
Scholarship.....	65
Project Development and Evaluation.....	66
Leadership and Change.....	67
Analysis of Self as Scholar	68
Analysis of Self as Practitioner.....	69
Analysis of Self as Project Developer	69

The Project’s Potential Impact on Social Change.....	70
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research	71
Conclusion	71
References.....	73
Appendix A: The Project	87
Appendix B: Interview Protocol	111
Appendix C: Telephone Protocol.....	113
Appendix D: Transcription Codes	114
Appendix E: National Institutes of Health Certificate of Completion.....	115

List of Tables

Table 1. Tennessee Department of Education 2010-2012 Reading/LA Report Card

Results for African American Students 3

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

African American high school students continue to fall behind academically (Templeton, 2011). The achievement gap, which Noguera (2012) referred to as the difference in the achievement level between African American students and their European American peers on standardized test, has consistently been the same since the 1950s (Roach, as cited in Madyun, (2011). Since the early 1970s, at ages 9, 13, and 17, African American students consistently scored lower in reading than European American students (Donahue as cited in Collopy, Bowman, & Taylor, (2012).

The achievement gap between African American students and European American students is visible throughout the nation. According to The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2013), the achievement gap between African American students and European American students in reading was approximately a 30-point difference. In 2009, African American students had an average reading assessment score of 269, and European American students had an average reading assessment score of 296 (NAEP, 2012). In 2013, African American students had an average reading assessment score of 268, and European American students had an average reading assessment score of 297 (NAEP, 2013). In fact, a similar gap in achievement exists between the African American students and the European American students in a school district in Tennessee.

Definition of the Problem

A significant percentage of the African American students who attend CWW High School (pseudonym) in Tennessee continue to score below proficient on the end of the course (EOC) exam in reading/language arts. Unlike students who perform at the proficient level to demonstrate mastery in the skills specified by the grade/course level content, students who score below proficient demonstrate a lack of understanding of the essential concepts and skills of the content area (Tennessee Department of Education, 2014). Because of the consistent high percentage of African American students scoring below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/ language arts, CWW High School continued to fall short of meeting the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) adequate yearly progress (AYP) goal. CWW High School is an urban Title I high school in Tennessee. CWW serves ninth through 12th grade, and had an enrollment of approximately 700 students in which 99% were African Americans.

For three years in a row, CWW High School African American students had the highest percentage of students scoring below proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam. According to The Tennessee Department of Education (2013), from 2010-2012, African American students attending CWW High School scored an average of 66% below proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam. This average was higher than any of the other African American students in their school district and in the state of Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education [TDOE], 2013). Table 1 shows that a higher percentage of African American students attending CWW High School scored below proficient than African American students in the district and the state. This has

been consistent from 2010 through 2012. Even when the below proficient percentage is high for the district and the state, it is even higher for African American students attending CWW High School.

Table 1

Tennessee Department of Education 2010-2012 Reading/LA Report Card Results for African American Students

Year	Subject	CWW Below Proficient	District Below Proficient	State Below Proficient
2010	Reading/LA	59	51	47
2011	Reading/LA	67	51	48
2012	Reading/LA	73	66	60

Not only do African American students score below proficient at a high percentage in Tennessee, they also score below proficient at a high percentage across the nation. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2013) report card for 12th graders in Tennessee indicated that 88% African American students scored below proficient in reading. The Nation's 2013 report card displayed that 84% of African American students scored below proficient in reading (NCES, 2013). Based on these two reports, there is a need to explore factors that can possibly assist with raising the achievement level of African American students.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The African American students who attended CWW High School in Tennessee continued to score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts at a higher percentage than the African American students in its district and in the state of Tennessee (TDOE, 2014). The gap in the end-of-the-year assessment scores for African American students attending CWW High School need to be reduced. According to the TDOE (2013), in 2010, CWW's annual Reading Report Card indicated that 8% more African American students scored below proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam compared to the African American students in the district, and 12% more scored below proficient compared to the students in the state.

In 2011, 16% more African American students scored below proficient on the end-of-the-year assessment compared to the African American students in the district and 19% more than the African American students in the state. In 2012, 7% more African American students scored below proficient on the end-of-the-year assessment compared to the African American students in the district and 13% more than the African American students in the state (TDOE, 2013).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

In 2013, more than 50% of the African American high school seniors in Tennessee scored below proficient in reading. The NAEP (2013) report card for 12th graders in Tennessee indicated that 88% African American students scored below proficient in reading. The NCES (2013) report card displayed that 84% African American

students scored below proficient in reading. Based on these two reports, there is a need to explore factors that can possibly assist with raising the achievement level of African American students.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts to identify factors that may be associated with their academic success. These factors were used to suggest practices that may increase the academic performance of the African American students who score below proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam at CWW High School.

Definitions

African American: Referred to as Black or African American and any person who has ancestors in any group of the African race (United States Census Bureau, 2011).

At-risk: At-risk students are considered students who have a low chance of achieving academic success (Smith, 2013).

Below proficient: Students scoring below 701 and have a raw score below 32 in reading and language arts are considered to lack the knowledge needed for their present grade level on the Tennessee Comprehension Assessment (TDOE, 2013).

Cohort dropout rate: The cohort dropout rate is based on students who enroll in the ninth grade but drop out by the end of 12th grade and do not receive a diploma (TDOE Report Card, 2012).

Low performing schools: Schools that have students who continue to score below proficient on the state's annual assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): A reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which included Title I. NCLB is the government's flagship aid program for disadvantaged students (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Proficient: Students with a scale score of 701-742 and a raw score of 32-45 in reading/language arts are considered as having the knowledge needed for their present grade level on the Tennessee Comprehension Assessment (TDOE, 2013).

Successful citizens: A citizen who has met the high school diploma requirements and earned his or her diploma. A successful citizen also possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and the workplace (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Significance

Improving the academic performance of all students will be beneficial to society. Identifying factors that may assist with improving the academic performance in reading/language arts for African American students on the EOC exam is essential in order for CWW to meet its NCLB AYP goal. According to the TDOE (2013), of the 95 schools in CWW's district, only 31 were in good standing. Identifying the factors that may assist with improving the academic performance of African American students on the EOC exam may assist with reducing the number of schools that are failing in CWW's local school district due to the number of African American students who score below proficient in reading.

Although a high number of African American students score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts, this does not prevent them from graduating.

According to the TDOE (2013), the EOC exam only counted for 25% of the course grade, and students are only required to pass the course, not the EOC exam. This means a high percentage of students are graduating from high school but they are not scoring proficient in reading/language arts. This also means graduates are entering the workforce or college reading below grade level.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts to identify factors that may be associated with their success. These factors can be used to suggest practices that may increase the academic performance of African American students who score below proficient. By sharing graduates' perceptions on their academic success regarding the EOC exam in reading/language arts, this study may provide the present students of CWW High School, its local school district, and the state of Tennessee with practices that may lead to students scoring proficient on the EOC exam in reading.

Guiding/Research Question

Between 2010 and 2012, an average of 66% of the African American students attending CWW High School scored below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts. It is a challenge to raise the below proficient scores of African American students enrolled in CWW High School. The guided research question for the study was the following: What do the African American students who performed at the proficient level on the EOC exam in reading/language arts perceive are reasons for their academic success? African American students scoring below proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam is not just a local problem; it is a state and a national

problem. Therefore, the literature was explored to discover suggested practices that may assist with increasing the academic performance of African American students enrolled in CWW High School.

Review of the Literature

The main reason for conducting a literature review is to identify what is already known about a topic. The purpose of this literature review was to identify suggested practices that can assist with increasing the academic performance of African American students. During the search for suggested practices that can assist with increasing the academic performance of African American students, Walden Library (dissertations and thesis, ERIC, PsycINFO and SAGE Premier) Google Scholar, Ed.gov, and online peer reviewed journals were used. The key words and phrases entered were *successful African Americans* and *increasing student achievement*.

Each time any phrase with African American high school students' success or African American high school students' achievement was entered, articles on parental involvement, mentors, and resilience were among the list. These three themes became the focus of this literature review. In seeking a theory to help guide this study, the four words entered into the search engines were *motivate*, *encourage*, *success*, and *determination*. A list of theories appeared. After reviewing the theories, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this research. Therefore, parental involvement, mentors, resilience, and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory will be discussed in this literature review.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement increases student learning; therefore, schools should seek ways to include poor and minority parents in their children's' education (Karakus & Savas, 2012). Other than a natural parent and a legal guardian, NCLB defines a parent as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child resides with, or a person who has legal custody of the child (U S Department of Education, 2011). Rapp and Duncan (2012) insisted that parents should be treated ethically, equitably, and with confidentiality when interacting with school personnel.

All parents should be provided with an opportunity to participate in their children's' learning. LaRocque, Klieman, and Darling (2011) claimed that when compared to parents with salary jobs, parents with hourly jobs that provide poor health insurance and other poor benefits are unable to be involved in their children's' education. Regardless of socioeconomic status (SES), all parents should be afforded the opportunity to participate in their children's' learning.

Hayes (2011) proposed that parental involvement can be direct involvement in school, such as attending school activities or indirect involvement such as emphasizing the importance of education at home. Hayes examined parental involvement with high school students from two groups of urban African American parents with different levels of socioeconomic status. There were 67 parents in the first group. These 67 parents were from a southwestern school district that consisted of working class to low-income.

The second group consisted of 65 parents from an urban city in the south. They attended a predominantly African American church and their incomes ranged from low-

income to upper middle class. A convenience sample was used to ensure parents from different educational and economic backgrounds were selected. Of the participants in Group 1, 27% of the parents had a college or professional degree, 37% were high school graduates or less with an annual income of \$0 - \$20K. Of the participants in Group 2, 49% of the parents had a college or professional degree, 8% completed high school or less with an annual income of \$60K and up. When combining both groups, 86% urban African American parents, regardless of their SES status, reported high educational expectations for their children. When parents are involved with their children and have high expectations for them, it has a positive effect on their academic success up to 5 years (Hayes, 2011).

Several studies were conducted on parental involvement. One of the studies were completed by Jeynes (2012). Jeynes examined a meta-analysis of 51 studies on several types of parental involvement programs that were designed for urban students in prekindergarten through 12th grade. For this study, parental involvement programs were defined as programs sponsored by the school that require or encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. In this study, a total of 60 databases were used, 73 studies were found that included approximately 13,000 participants and two coders with at least 10 years of experience had a 96% agreement on the studied characteristics. The following two research questions were used in Jeynes study: Do school-based parental involvement programs have a positive effect on prekindergarten-12th grade student academic outcomes? and What specific types of parental involvement programs help those students the most? The answer to Jeynes' Research Question 1 was yes. The

results of Jeynes' research question 2 revealed that, of all the programs included in this study, shared reading programs had the greatest effect on student achievement. When parents are guided by teachers, students are able to achieve more. Parental involvement programs generate positive academic achievement for prekindergarten-12th-grade urban students. In addition to positive parental involvement, mentors can be an asset to students. Mentors provide motivation and build confidence in at-risk youth, assisting them with improving their academic performance (Slack, Johnson, Dodor, & Woods, 2013).

Mentors

Mentoring programs are very popular in the United States. There are over 5,000 mentoring programs that provide service to approximately 3 million youth. Over the last decade, mentoring has been considered as an intervention strategy for children and adolescents (Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). Big Brothers Big Sisters is a mentoring program in the United States. Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, and McMaken (2011) conducted a study on Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program. Herrera et al.'s study included 1,139 (9-16-year-old) students in 10 cities. The participants were randomly assigned, some with mentors and some without mentors.

The participants were observed for 1.5 school years. The participants in the study ranged between the ages of 8 to 18. A total of 63% were minorities, with 18% African Americans, 61% received free or reduced lunch, 39% were from single parent households, and 6% were from three different high schools. Participants were from 71 different schools, 16 each from each school. All of the participants were referred by the

school staff. The measurements of the outcomes from the study were divided into the following three areas: (a) school-related performance and attitudes, (b) problem behaviors, and (c) social and personal well beings. Youth with mentors achieved higher than youth without mentors.

Natural mentors also have a positive effect on students' achievement. Hurd, Sanchez, Zimmerman, and Caldwell (2012) conducted a study on natural mentors. Natural mentors are selected through previous encounters. They are shared relationships agreed upon between the mentor and the mentee without any previous connection through an established mentoring program. Hurd et al.'s study consisted of 541 African Americans who were participants in a larger longitudinal study of high school dropouts.

All participants were required to have an eight-grade grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or lower. Out of the 541 participants, 63% had a natural mentor. Within that 63%, 54% had a natural mentor who was a family member other than their mother or father. The other 46% had natural mentors who were nonrelatives. The nonrelatives were teachers, ministers, family friends, godparents, or god siblings' friends. There was a positive connection between high school students with natural mentors and academic achievement. Natural mentors encourage and motivate high school students to have a positive attitude toward education. Not only do mentors assist students with developing a positive attitude toward learning, but interacting with mentors help cultivate resilience within academically at-risk African American youth (Hurd et al., 2012).

Resiliency

Resilience is the ability to respond in a positive manner when faced with adversity (Herman et al., 2011). Resilience is not one thing in particular that a person possesses. It is the ability a person has to continue to overcome obstacles in the face of adversity to achieve a positive outcome (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). Academic resilience is being able to achieve academic success by overcoming barriers and obstacles that can cause academic failure (Martin, 2013). Williams and Bryan (2013) conducted a qualitative multi case research study to identify factors that contribute to the academic achievement of urban high school graduates.

All of the graduates were from single parent homes with low incomes. The following research question guided Williams and Bryan's study: What experiences do African American high school graduates from low-income, urban backgrounds report as contributing to their academic success? The participants were eight African Americans (four men and four women) between the ages of 18 and 21. They either lived with their mothers or grandmothers. Their cumulative high school GPAs ranged between 2.75 to 4.20 on a 4.0 scale. All of the participants grew up in comparable environments. Data were collected through individual and focus group interviews that revealed home, school, and community factors that influence students' academic success. These factors working together were essential in fostering the resilience and the determination of the urban African American students' academic success.

Theoretical Framework

Deci and Ryan's (2011) self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on the internal and external motivation of humans. SDT incorporates five mini theories: cognitive evaluation, organismic integration, causality orientations, basic psychological needs, and goal contents (Deci & Ryan, 2011). Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) deals with the intrinsic motivation that is based on the satisfactions of a person's own behavior. Organismic integration theory (OIT) focuses on extrinsic motivation that aims towards outcome to the behavior itself. Causality orientations theory (COT) focuses on how people are different and the different ways they react to the same environment. Basic psychological needs theory (BPNT) explains the concept of psychological needs and their relations to mental health and well-being, and goal contents theory (GCT) focuses more on intrinsic goal satisfaction and their impact on personal motivation and wellness. Of the five mini theories embedded in the SDT, I focused on OIT's extrinsic motivation.

Motivation is an emotion that encourages a person to exert energy to achieve a goal (Hyland, 2011). Motivation is desires that individuals seek to satisfy. The motive for these desires can be intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external). Intrinsic motives are for personal satisfaction and gratification while extrinsic motives are to receive praise or rewards from others (Morgan, 2013). In this study, I sought to identify suggested practices that can assist with increasing the academic performance of African American students. Therefore, having knowledge of what motivates successful African Americans students to succeed can possibly assist the African Americans students attending CWW High School with increasing their academic performance.

With limited knowledge on successful African American students who are able to achieve success in the face of adversity (Williams & Bryan, 2013), my study may assist with identifying suggested factors that are connected to academic success. Any positive communication with parents continues to be of importance in student achievement. Yet, teachers are not always receptive to parents being involved because they feel it is easier to do their jobs without them (Karakus & Savas, 2012). McKenna and Millen (2013) disagreed with Karakus and Savas (2012). McKenna and Millen emphasized that any communication with parents is important, whether it is verbally or their presence on campus. Communication forms parent engagement, and as the relationship between parents and school increase, so does student achievement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). But, when parents are not available to participate in their children's learning, mentors can be assets.

There is a positive link between mentors and students' academic success. Having an adult mentor, whether it is a natural mentor, school personnel, or through a government agency, mentors have a positive connection with students' academic achievement. Recruiting successful adults who graduated from CWW High School can make a positive difference in students' learning. Students desire to have a mentor who shares the same ethnic background (Syed, Goza, Chemers, & Zurbriggen, 2012). At best, mentors can help stimulate factors endorsing resilience.

A majority of at-risk students are unable to overcome adversity to achieve academic success. Home, school, and community are protective factors in promoting resiliency. These protective factors can determine how a child responds to difficult

situations (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). Even if children have positive parental involvement, a mentor, and protective factors that promote resilience, they still have to be motivated. If students are not motivated to learn, it is difficult for them to make educational gains (Usher & Kober, 2012).

Implications

Between 2010 and 2012, 59% or more African American students attending CWW High School scored below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/ language arts. With such a great percentage of African American students scoring below proficient, CWW High School failed to meet the NCLB AYP goal. Failure to meet AYP successively can cause a school to be placed on the improvement list (Hsieh, 2013). Schools placed on the improvement list face consequences that can possibly lead to the school undergoing restructuring (Riddle & Kober, 2011). After failing to meet AYP 2 or more years, CWW High School can benefit from the assistance of peers, parents, and the community. Students given the opportunity to interact positively with teachers, administrators, parents, neighbors, or any other successful adults in their community have a chance of learning something constructive from these adult (Nelson, McMahan, & Torres, 2012).

Interviewing the successful African American graduates of CWW High School may provide insight on practices that can increase the academic performance for students who score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts. Recruiting these graduates to form a mentorship or tutoring program at CWW High School may assist with motivating and encouraging the present students to strive to raise their achievement

level. As mentors or tutors, these graduates can share their personal experiences with students as to how they overcame perceived barriers in order to achieve success.

Summary

A high percentage of the African American students attending CWW High School continue to score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts to identify factors that may be associated with their success. These factors will be used to suggest practices that may increase the academic performance of the African American students attending this low performing high school who score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts. African American students who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts were interviewed to explore factors that may have had a positive effect on their academic achievement.

In conclusion, Section 1 identified that a high percentage of African American students enrolled in CWW High School continue to score below proficient on the EOC exam in reading/ language arts. Section 1 provided information about the local problem and the rationale for investigating the problem. Section 1 defined important definitions, discussed the significance of the problem, and provided questions that will guide the research. The review of the literature was divided into sections, focusing on parental involvement, mentors, resilience factors, and Deci and Ryan's SDT. Finally, Section 1 discussed implications of what is expected from investigating suggested practice that may assist with increasing the academic performance of African American students.

Section 2 describes the research design and justification for choosing the design. Section 2 identifies the population and the sample size. Section 2 also clarifies how participants were selected. Finally, Section 2 explains how the data were collected and analyzed as well as presented the findings from the analyzed data.

Section 3 provides the review of the literature for the completed project. Section 3 includes a full description of the project, the resources, the implementations and the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the project. Section 3 includes an evaluation of the project and the implications for social change.

Section 4 identifies the project's strengths and limitations. Section 4 includes recommendations on alternative ways to address the problem based upon the information included in the study. Section 4 analyzes what was learned about the scholarship, the project development and evaluation, and the leadership and change. Section 4 also includes an analogy of what was learned about the scholar, the practitioner, and the project developer. Finally, Section 4 includes an overall reflection on the importance of the work and what was learned, the implications, the applications and the directions for future research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate African American high school graduates of CWW High School who scored proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam between the years 2010-2012. The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge of perceived factors associated with CWW's African American graduates' academic success on the reading/language arts EOC exam. These perceived factors may be used to assist the present and future students of CWW High School with experiencing academic success. The research question that guided this study was the following: What perceived factors do the African American graduates who scored proficient in reading/language arts on the EOC exam contribute to their academic success? The responses to the questions in the interview protocol (Appendix B) were used to gain an understanding of the experiences of the African American graduates at CWW High School and the perceived factors they associated with their academic success.

Qualitative Design and Approach

A qualitative, case study design was used in this study. Qualitative designs afford researchers an opportunity to interact in close proximity with participants to gain an understanding of participants' feelings and behaviors by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, using the participants own words (Berg, as cited in Ho,(2012). Qualitative researchers provide thorough details of participants' behaviors and feelings and an in-depth account of human experiences (Khan, 2014). One primary way qualitative researchers attempt to reveal human experiences is through interviewing.

When participants were interviewed, it allowed them the opportunity to share their personal experiences about a phenomenon (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

A case study is a strategy of inquiry where a researcher is engaged in close proximity with research participants to collect data related to the research topic. A case study provides the researcher with an opportunity to collect detailed information in a real world setting through interviews, using open-ended questions and probes to gain as much knowledge as possible from participants about a phenomenon (Yin, 2013). By using a case study, I was able to acquire a thorough understanding of the participants' perceived factors associated with their academic success.

The informal interviews allowed the participants to speak freely, sharing details about their experiences at CWW High School without stipulations and restrictions. The participants provided a detailed description of their experiences. I was able to witness the participants' facial expressions and body language as I investigated the guiding research question.

Justification for the Chosen Research Design

A qualitative case study was the best fit to examine the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language to identify factors that may be associated with their success. In a quantitative design, the data collected are numerical. Quantitative designs deal with variables and theories. Quantitative researchers usually verify a theory (Punch, 2013). On the other hand, qualitative research provides the researcher an opportunity to interview the participants in their natural surroundings. By participating in an interview, the participants are afforded

the opportunity to provide detailed information about the reality of their perception (Charmaz, as cited in Dworkin, (2012).

A mixed-method methodology was not chosen for this research study. A mixed-method methodology is a combination of a qualitative design and a quantitative design. A mixed-method methodology offers the researcher a better outcome by combining qualitative and quantitative information instead of limiting the results to either qualitative data or quantitative data (Ponterotto et al. as cited in Fassinger & Morrow, (2013). A mixed-method methodology could have been used to correlate exam scores with socioeconomic status, equate the level of parental involvement, or compare a variety of other factors. Nevertheless, a mixed-method methodology was not used for this study because a qualitative design explained and provided a detailed explanation of the phenomena (Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011). A qualitative design provided rich descriptive data to answer what I wanted to learn from investigating the research question.

There were other qualitative approaches I could have chosen to investigate this phenomenon. Creswell (2013) presented four other qualitative approaches along with case study, but a case study was the most appropriate for the phenomena being studied. Ethnography was not appropriate because an entire cultural group was not the focus of this study. Only 10 African American high school graduates were selected to participate in this study. Grounded theory was not used because it involves the constant comparison of data to build a theory, which was not the intent of this study. This study did not call for the constant comparison of data; therefore, themes developed were based on the

participants' answers to the interview questions listed in the interview protocol (see Appendix D). A phenomenological study was not the best fit because it requires the researcher to study for a long period of time in order to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. Time was limited, and no patterns and relationships of meaning were necessary to investigate the guided question. A narrative approach was closer to fit this study than any of the other rejected approaches. Narrative research is similar to case study research. In narrative research, the stories have to be told in chronological order, which is not necessary in case studies.

After examining the quantitative designs, mixed-method concept, and other qualitative designs and approaches, a qualitative case study was the best fit to examine the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient in reading/language on the EOC exam to identify factors that may be associated with their academic success. After a qualitative case study design was selected and justified, the participants for the study had to meet certain criteria. Indeed, to gain a thorough explanation of this phenomenon, the right participants had to be selected.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Ten African American graduates were selected to participate in the study in an effort to reach data saturation. Data saturation is reached when no new information has emerged from interviewing the selected participants (Dworkin, 2012). Data saturation was reached when the participants' responses to the research questions became repetitive.

If I had continued to receive new information from each participant, I would have recruited more participants for the study until no new information was received.

The participants were chosen through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is when individuals are purposefully selected because they have met the criteria that will assist the researcher with the phenomena being investigated (Suri, 2011). In an effort to receive an understanding of the perceptions of the African American graduates who scored proficient in reading/language on the EOC exam to identify factors that may be associated with their academic success, 10 graduates were chosen to participate in the study. The participant criteria were the following:

- 18 years of age or older
- Graduated from CWW High School
- Scored proficient on the reading/language arts EOC exam between the years 2010-2012

Procedures for Gaining Access to the Participants

To gain access to participants, I used a gatekeeper. The principal at CWW High School acted as the gatekeeper for this research. Gatekeepers are individuals who can provide entry to a site and can assist the researcher with locating potential participants who meet the criteria for the study (Brink & Benschop, 2014). After a letter of cooperation from the principal and IRB approval, the following steps were taken to gain access to the participants:

The principal provided contact information for a list of potential participants who met the research criteria. I used a telephone protocol (see Appendix C) to make initial

contact to recruit 10 participants to join in the study. After contacting 22 potential participants, 10 agreed to be in the study and a researcher-participant rapport was established. Once the participants signed an informed consent form, an interview was scheduled. All interviews were held at CWW High School.

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Rapport

Rapport building with participants was necessary in order to develop a personal relationship that allowed the participants to feel comfortable with sharing their personal story (Alvesson and Deetz, as cited in Qu & Dumay, (2011). Rapport building included displaying an interest in the participant's conversations, showing respect and empathy, and being truthful and committed to the welfare of the individual (Townsend, Amarsi, Backman, Cox, & Li, 2011). A rapport was established between the participants and me through a sufficient number of phone calls, texts, and e-mails. This continued communication (a) ensured everything was well with the participants, (b) confirmed they were still interested in participating in the research study, and (c) to schedule and reschedule interview times due to work hours or other engagements.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Once the participants agreed to engage in the study and before any recorded interviews commenced, signed consent forms were collected and reviewed with the participants. I also ensured the participants had an understanding of the purpose of the study; they had the choice to withdraw from the study, and they had an understanding of my role and responsibility as the researcher. The signed informed consent forms acknowledged that participants freely agreed to participate in the study and

acknowledged their rights will be protected as well as the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any other obligation or penalty (Creswell, 2012). Other ways I ensured participants' rights were protected are as follows: (a) provide detailed information about the purpose of the study, (b) be completely honest about everything related to the study, and (c) share information with participants (including the role as the researcher) and maintain confidentiality (Creswell, 2012).

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, all interviews took place in CWW High School library or a secure office on campus when unexpected events were scheduled in the library. The participants' identity was protected using pseudonyms (Bimrose, 2012) and numbers. I assigned each participant a number, and I used a pseudonym chosen by the participants. The pseudonyms chosen by the 10 participants were as follows in alphabetical order: Alpha, Baller, Dannie, Jay, Jean, Key Key, KP, Marshmallow, Sam, and Tavo. I am the only person who has access to the participants' pseudonyms, other than the participants. The data with the pseudonyms and numbers are stored in a journal, on a passcode laptop, and a USB flash drive in a locked safe in at my home. The data with the actual names and numbers are stored in a locked safe in a different location in my home. After 5 years, all data will be destroyed.

Data Collection

Before data were collected, Approval #05-21-15-0125961 was received from Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). On the day of the interviews, I arrived at least 30 minutes early to ensure that the library was available, and my audio

equipment was working properly. Once the participants arrived, they were greeted and escorted to the library or to a secure office on campus. When the participants were seated, I reviewed the signed consent forms with them again to ensure they had a full understanding of the study and reiterated that they could withdraw from the study at any time without further obligations or penalty.

Type of Data Collected and Justification

I used one-on-one interviews to collect data from the participants. I used an interview protocol (See Appendix B) to engage each participant in an interview that lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes, including before and after conversations. The interview protocol was used to engage each participant in a one-on-one recorded informal interview. Interview protocols are steps that help guide the researcher through the course of the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). One advantage of a one-on-one interview is it affords the participants an opportunity to give in-depth information about their lived experiences (Goering & Streiner, 2013). In the one-on-one interview, only the researcher and one participant at a time were present.

The questions on the interview protocol were created based on the sources found during the review of the literature. Interview protocols are created to assist the researcher with staying focused on the research topic in order to solicit quality information from the research participants. Interview Question 1 was used as the easiest question on the interview protocol. Questions on the interview protocol should be arranged in order of difficulty, starting from the least to the greatest (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The purpose for this is to gradually gain the participants' trust.

Interview Questions 2-7 were created based on Deci and Ryan's SDT's mini theory: organismic integration theory (OIT), which focuses on extrinsic motivation that aims towards outcome to the behavior itself. All of the participants were motivated by someone at some point during their quest to continue to experience academic success. The participants were also motivated to read in their leisure time. Leisure reading is connected to students' academic achievement. When leisure reading focuses on plot, character development, and setting, it may lead to improved test scores in reading/language arts. When leisure reading has an emphasis on narrative and informational text, it helps content area literacy (Gabriel, Allington, & Billen, 2012). Questions 8 and 9 were used as follow-up questions. Follow-up questions allow participants to provide more details and a wide range of responses (Faupel, Raue, Nelson, & Tsakraklides, 2015).

If there had been any adverse events involving research participants that might require immediate referral, I would have stopped the interview and turned off the audio recorder and engaged in conversation with the research participants to address their concerns. I would have ensured that the participants were comfortable with continuing the interview by rebuilding trust and reiterating the benefits and purpose of the research study. If they would have continued to feel discomfort, I would have reminded them of their right to discontinue participation in the research study at any time without being penalized, contacted my chair immediately and submitted a completed Adverse Event reporting form.

System for Keeping Track of Data

Each participant was assigned a number, and I used a pseudonym chosen by the participants. The data were collected ethically with sensitivity to the participants and their environment. I started to take notes in my journal but stopped because I felt as though I was not giving the participant my undivided attention. Therefore, I did not write down any notes in my journal until after the interviews were completed, and the participants were escorted to the exit door.

Role of the Researcher

I explained to the participants that they may know me as a former middle school or substitute teacher who volunteered at CWW or in the same school district. They may also know me as the wife of a teacher and coach at CWW High School. I explained to them that my role as the researcher was not connected to any of those other roles. Therefore, to minimize perceived coercion to participate, I did not select any participants who my husband coached because of the personal relationship that he has with his players.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis with an inductive approach. In using an inductive approach, there were no preset codes. Codes and themes were created after the raw data had been transcribed (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). Coding allowed me to assign codes to groups of data, usually in phrases or paragraphs. (DeCuir, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011). Codes are labels given to raw data that assist with categorizing the data. The raw data were transcribed into codes, categories, and themes.

Once the data were categorized, themes were developed based on the interpretation of the participants' similar responses to the interview questions (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013).

The results of qualitative data analysis are to ensure the data collected answers the research question (Elo et al., 2014). I analyzed the data without any assistance. Data are usually analyzed by one researcher when using inductive content analysis (Elo et al., 2014). My first step in analyzing the data was listening to the recorded interviews over and over to ensure that I had transcribed them correctly. I listened to the recorded interviews and typed the transcripts. I reviewed the typed interview transcripts and listened to the recorded interviews simultaneously to ensure they corresponded with each other. After I confirmed the recorded interviews and the analyzed transcripts coincided with each other, the participants were given a chance to perform member checking. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the findings to ensure that their transcribed interview was interpreted correctly and reflected their experiences.

I sent a text message to all participants to inform them that I was sending them an e-mail pertaining to their interview transcript. I e-mailed all 10 participants a copy of their transcribed interview and noted in the e-mail if any corrections needed to be made, please notify me within 48 hours. After 48 hours, I was able to make contact and meet with eight of the 10 participants. I provided the eight participants with a \$6.00 Subway gift certificate as a token of appreciation for participating in the research. I hand delivered the gift certificates to the participants at CWW High School or a safe convenient place for them. A few weeks later, I was able to make contact with the other two participants to

provide them with the Subway gift certificate. As another measure to ensure all the participants had reviewed the transcripts, upon delivery of the Subway certificate, I provided participants with a hard copy of the transcript. I asked participants to take a few minutes to review their transcript for accuracy and to correct any misinterpretations or to add additional information for clarity.

After member checking, I recorded all of the participants' responses that applied to the interview questions. Interview Question 1 was used to make participants comfortable in order to build a rapport. Interview Questions 8 and 9 were follow up questions used to allow participants the opportunity to provide additional details about their experiences. Interview Questions 1 and 8 were not coded but they were included in the findings to present a detailed picture of the participants' experience (see Appendix D).

With Interview Questions 2 through 7 and Interview Question 9, I used highlighters, color pens and markers to create codes from participants' responses to assist with identifying common words and phrases to develop themes. To create codes and identify themes, the data were broken down by key words and phrases based on the responses to the interview questions. These themes were color coded to present a visual interpretation of the data.

I did not have many notes written in my journal because I gave the participants my undivided attention doing the interview. My main focus was on the participants' body language, gestures, facial expressions and the attitude of the participants as they spoke

about their experiences. All participants displayed positive body language. To ensure the accuracy of the data, I listened to the audiotaped interviews repeatedly and transcribed them verbatim immediately following the interview in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon explored.

After all the recorded interviews were completed and the interview questions were answered, I analyzed and summarized the findings. In summarizing the findings, I listened to the interviews several times to ensure they correlated with the analyzed transcripts and belonged to the correct participant. All interviews were transcribed ensuring they were connected to pseudonyms chosen by the participants. Next, I wrote each interview question on a separate sheet in my journal. After separating each interview question, I recorded each participant's response to identify similarities. Recording each interview question separately also provided a better look at the percentages for the yes or no questions that pertained to parental involvement and leisure reading.

Separating the questions and creating codes for the responses provided a better view of the results. The following four themes were created from the analysis of the data: (a) caring parents and grandparents, (b) caring teachers and principal, (c) mentors, and (d) leisure reading. There were a total of 36 codes. Once the participants' responses were color coded, themes were developed. Discrepant data were included in the findings in order to present a clear picture of the participants' experience as a student at CWW High School.

After analyzing the data, I had to confirm the data were credible and valid. Data have credibility and validity when individuals are familiar with the phenomena being

studied and can relate to the results presented ((Sandelowski, as cited in Cope, 2014). To guarantee credibility and validity of the data, member checking was performed by 100% of the participants through e-mail and face to face. In using member checking, all 10 of the participants reviewed their initial transcript and their analyzed transcript for accuracy (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Out of the 10 participants that performed member checking, only one of them requested corrections on grammar to be made.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient on the EOC exam in reading/language arts to identify factors associated with their academic success. Ten participants were selected for the study. The 10 participants consisted of five males and five females. Four (t males and two females) of the participants graduated in 2012. The two males were enrolled in college and had part-time jobs. Both of the females were single parents who worked and one of them were enrolled in college. Two (both males) of the participants graduated in 2014. They both had jobs but only one of them were enrolled in college. The other four (one male and three females) graduated in 2015. They all were currently working and looking forward to attending college in the Fall. The participants engaged in a one-on- one recorded interview with open ended questions and probes. The purpose of the recorded interviews were to ensure that the participants' responses were transcribed correctly. The data were analyzed through codes and themes.

The findings from the participants' transcribed interviews confirmed what the review of literature revealed to be true when identifying parental involvement, mentors,

and resilience as positive connections to student achievement. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory continued to guide the study with a focus on the external motivation of humans. The findings revealed all the participants needed someone to motivate them at some point. The analyses of the participants' responses created four themes. The four themes that derived from the analysis of the data were: caring parents and grandparents, caring teachers and principal, mentors, and leisure reading. The information gathered from these themes provided answers to the research question.

Theme I: Caring Parents and Grandparents

Theme I developed from participants' responses to Interview Question 2.

Interview question 2 was: In what ways, if at all, do you think parental involvement made a difference in your success on the EOC exam in reading/language arts? All participants acknowledged that parental involvement made a difference in their success on the EOC exam in reading/ language arts. Alpha proclaimed his parents were involved in a very positive and strong way. "My parents were the type of parents that didn't let me give up easily. When I told them I didn't understand something, they knew that I was just being lazy.

Therefore, they would say read until you understand it and to me that was like tough love and I prevailed." Tavo indicated his parents were a big involvement. "My mother and my father pushed me to study harder and go to tutoring." Jay said his mom encouraged him to read more. Sam stated his mom and grandparents were very involved! "My mom, my grandma, and my granddad always pushed me to study, even when I

didn't want to and I wanted to do other things. They always pushed me to study and get it out of the way."

KP explained his momma and dad really stressed him about school work in general, not just language arts. "They really stressed it and wouldn't let me slack off at all." So, if you didn't complete your assignments and your grade wasn't looking like they wanted it to? "My momma was taking phones...taking games.... taking everything!" Key Key asserted her parents were always strict on her doing her work. "They made sure I did my work all the time. If I ever came home with a bad grade, I would lose certain privileges on certain things. They would take away my cell phone, TV time was reduced or taken away completely, I couldn't go to games or I couldn't go outside to hang out with people." Marshmallow testified her mom made her read. "She made me read books and study things. Starting in elementary on up, I have been reading books on my own."

Also, responses from Question 9 were included in Theme IV. Question eight was: Is there someone else or anything else you would identify as having a positive impact on your academic success? Alpha identified his mom and his dad (who passed away when he was younger). "My mother and father because my mother was an above average student and from the stories I heard my father was an over achiever. He was like a straight A student all throughout high school and basically they were telling me my dad's intellect was passed down to me through genetics so, basically I have no excuse to fail."

KP recognized his father. "Mmmmmh, (pausing for a few seconds to think) Well, I guess my father would be a positive impact because I saw how hard he would always work. He had a whole bunch of things coming at him and he faced challenges. I still saw

that he was a strong and positive person even though he was going through a lot. That was a positive impact on me because it's got me the exact same way." Jean gave credit to both of her parents. "Well, my mom and dad both encouraged me to do more reading on my language arts testing and everything. They helped me out a little bit doing the things I needed to do. If I didn't know an answer to a question or if I didn't know the writing, then I would have to do more exercises, do just more of the work. So, they helped me out pretty much." Key Key continued to recognize her parents and grandmother as positive impacts on her academic success. "I say of course my parents and my grandmother who always pushed us. My grandmother always pushed us to do our best no matter how bad a circumstance was or how bad we wanted to stop."

Theme II: Caring Teachers and Principal

Theme II evolved from participants' responses to interview questions 4 and 9. Interview Question 4 was: When you faced challenges with academic assignments, how were you able to conquer those challenges to achieve academic success? Sam stated he sought help from teachers. "In situations like that, most of the time I would go to somebody and they could help me understand it better or explain it better. Someone like whom? "Like one of my old teachers who work here." Dannie asked teachers and they helped. "I wouldn't say that I faced challenges with my academic assignments but if I did, I would ask my teachers, they are very good at helping you out when you asked. They are not very good at it if you don't ask because they don't know if you have problems or not, so you have to ask them."

Jean received help from the teachers and the principal. “Well, I had plenty of help from the teachers and the principal. It was a lot of help that I had from the alumni people and other people around the school too. Yes, I had plenty of help with doing my assignments and everything. I got through it with help from teachers and administrators.” Marshmallow went to tutoring provided by the school. “Tutoring helped a lot. The school provided the tutoring and people like my sister and other family members helped too. So that’s how I was able to conquer academic challenges or I just looked at it on my own and figured it out.”

Responses from Interview Question 9 were also included in Theme I. Tavo identified his teacher as having an impact on his academic success. “I took her class when I was in the 9th grade and she motivated me from 9th grade. She was the reason I started doing my work. She had a talk with me some years ago and that’s when I changed my behavior and started focusing on my academics.” So by your teacher talking to you that encouraged you to get on the right track? “Yes Ma’am.” Jay identified his football coach. “We were eager to get on the football field. So he would be like if we don’t get our grades up, we can’t play football. That also motivated me.” Sam credited being in the band. “I would say band! Band taught me how to study because I always had to go over my notes and stuff like that when I was in the band. Band taught me patience.” Baller gave credit to all of her coaches and teachers.

Jean stated that the principal had a positive impact on her academic success. “He was a big help in my life too with high school and everything.” In what way would you say the principal contributed or had an impact on your success? “He had an impact on my

success by getting me to a higher grade. At first my GPA wasn't good but then I almost made principal's list. The principal told me when I graduated I was going to be someone and I was going to go to college. I wasn't going to go to college at first because I found out I was pregnant, so that changed my life. The principal was a real big help. So, he motivated you? Yes!" Dannie stated her teacher had a positive impact on her academic success. "She'll tell you that she wants you to achieve but it seems like she being hard on you. But, she was actually doing the right thing. When I did the summer intern with the college, the way that she taught me, they were doing the same thing there, so actually she was preparing me for a bigger future than just high school."

Theme III: Mentors

Theme III originated from participants' responses to Interview Question 3. Interview Question 3 was: Did you have a mentor through a program or someone who acted as a mentor? If so, do you think they had a positive effect on your academic success with the reading/language arts EOC exam. Alpha acknowledged he had a few mentors which were his family and friends. "Basically it was kind of the same things with my parents, a lot of tough love. They were building me up to be a strong African American brother." Tavo stated that his father was his mentor. "He had a big effect on my grade on the end of the course exam. He encouraged him to read." Jay was in a mentor program. "The lady in the program helped us throughout our senior and junior year. The mentors taught us how to construct out the reading process and helped us with the reading process. It boosted up our reading level." Sam was in two mentoring programs. "Anytime

I needed help with something all I had to do was to go to somebody in one of those programs and they were more than happy to help me out.”

KP really didn't have a mentor. “It was just things I was seeing in my environment. From what I saw in my parents, it was kind of like a motivation for me to just work harder. They didn't really have to stress it as much or I really didn't need a mentor. I could just see my surroundings and realize that I wanted better.” Dannie had two mentors through a program. “They really encouraged us to do more with reading. We met with them on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they actually encouraged us to read more and go to school.” Baller was in a mentoring program. “My mentor taught me how to build my vocabulary up dealing with language and how to talk to someone.” Jean had a teacher as a mentor. “Mrs. B was a very, a very helpful mentor. She has helped almost all of the students that graduated that year to get into college. She helped a lot of kids that weren't going to make it but they made it because of her.”

Key Key had plenty of mentors. Her parents, teachers and the principal all mentored her mainly for reading. “The principal started the book club. The book club started me to like to read. Now, I am reading chapter books.” Key Key recognized the principal for starting the book club. She claims the book club played a major role in her beginning to read. Marshmallow teacher was her mentor. “My teacher loves to read. So of course if she reads, I have to read too because I have to know what she's talking about.”

Theme IV: Leisure Reading

Theme IV derived from participants' responses to Interview Question 7. Interview Question 7 was: As a high school student, did you engage in leisure reading? If yes, how often? If no, why not? Seven of the 10 participants stated they engaged in leisure reading or at least read interesting literature. Tavo, Jay, Dannie, Baller, Key Key, and Marshmallow all engaged in leisure reading. Tavo probably read about two books a month. "I also had to read different books throughout the whole year in English IV". Jay was in something kind of like a club with half of the football team, they helped each other with reading assignments." So did you read any books on your own? "Yes." Did you like to read? "Somewhat." Did you read chapter books? "Yes, I read chapter books." Reading is Baller's favorite subject. Baller identified her mom made a difference. "Well my mom, she's a reader herself. I read at times." How often would you say you read? "Like when I am done with my work and don't have anything else to do."

Dannie stated her grandma made her read something every day. She recalls, "When I get home every day, my grandma "girl you better go read that magazine and that newspaper and if I didn't read, I got in trouble, and I like my phone! I read most of the time but I don't read books. I read the Sunday paper. I probably read about 3 or 4 times a week. Not every day but I'm getting better at it. I use to not read at all."

Key Key was excited about reading. "Oh yes! I started reading my 10th grade year. I had a friend name A., she use to read a lot. She would tell me about certain books that she had read and thought they were fun. So, I read the books and actually liked them. Then I started to read more often." Marshmallow read a variety of literature. "I don't

know how often but, I did. I would probably say maybe three times out of a week.” What did you read? What type of things did you read? Did you read chapter books? “Yes, I read chapter books, magazine articles, articles on the internet and things that I just researched.”

Alpha, Sam, KP and Jean, read sometimes during their leisure. Alpha stated there was no particular reason he did not engage in leisure reading. “I always preferred to do other stuff. I’m more of a hands- on person and as far as reading, I won’t read unless it’s necessary.” Did you like reading? “It all depends on what I’m reading. If I’m reading something I’m interesting in then, yes, but if not, no.” Sam did not like reading. “I wasn’t a big fan of reading. When I was in high school, I didn’t realize the importance of reading until I got to college.” KP stated he enjoyed leisure reading in middle school. “I read books that were all about action and fighting, all of that kind of stuff. They were real interesting. “

Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory focus on the internal and external motivation of humans. The findings indicated out of the five mini theories embedded in Deci and Ryan’s self- determination theory, the participants’ responses to Interview Questions 5 and 6 relate to organismic integration theory (OIT) which focuses on extrinsic motivation that aims towards outcome to the behavior itself.

The participants’ responses from Interview Questions 5 and 6 relate to Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory. They revealed participants were motivated by others to succeed. Interview Question 5 was: Were you self- motivated to succeed as a high school student, or did you need someone or something to motivate you? What was your

motivation? Alpha was determined to succeed but needed motivation from others. “I was always self-motivated but when I was slacking my mother, my family, and my little cousin all would motivate me to get back up on my business.” Tavo was mainly self-motivated but sometimes he needed to be motivated. “Basically I was self-motivated. But at times, I lost confidence and that’s when parents and teachers played a role in building my self-confidence.” Jay was self-motivated and needed motivation as he got older. “I was trying to get an education and better myself. I want to be the only one in my inner family to go to a bigger college. So that’s why I pushed myself to learn more and come to school every day.”

Sam was also self-motivated. “I would say I was self-motivated because I always wanted more for myself. I never just wanted to be stagnating.” KP was motivated by his parents and his environment. “My motivation was my parents and my environment. My parents because I would always see their struggles, like when bills would come up. In my environment, I could see how everybody was in this certain type of mind set of not making it and I realized I can’t be like that. I had to just keep pushing forward to be something out of life.”

Dannie was self-motivated, but at times she needed to be motivated. “I was self-motivated because lately there haven’t been any people in my family to graduate, so I wanted to achieve something that no one has done. That kind of motivated me because a lot of people were like, you can’t do it. So, I’m a person that likes proving people wrong.” Baller was self-motivated. “Playing sports was my motivation and I knew in order for me to play sports I had to get my education first.” Jean needed to be motivated.

“Well, my teacher motivated me to do better. At first, I was just the meanest little thing I could be in school. All throughout school I was mean. I didn’t want to hear what no one had to say. I had to do it on my own, and figure it out. But one day I had got in trouble and was getting expelled. I got talked to that whole day by this teacher and she changed it all around for me to be a better person. She motivated me to be a better person that day! From then on, I’ve been the best good girl I could be.”

Key Key was self-motivated and motivated by her mom. “I was self-motivated because I wanted to be successful in life. I was also motivated my last year of middle school when my mom went back to college and received her RN Certification. I think that’s what it’s called. That also motivated me to want to be successful in life.

Marshmallow was mostly self-motivated but needed a little motivation from others sometimes. “I was self-motivated but you also need that one motivation to get you were you going so you won’t get discouraged. But you always got to keep your head up.”

Interview Question 6 was: Are you self-motivated to succeed as an adult, or do you need someone or something to motivate you? What is your motivation? Alpha’s motivation is purchasing a house, a car and everything else on his own. “Well, dream house and cars, that’s my motivation. And I see a lot of people my color, African American students who went to the same schools as I did giving up easy therefore, I want to push harder so somehow if I make it, I can come back and help everyone in my community.” So, you would say self-motivated? Yes, you can label me self-motivated. “Tavo is self-motivated but still needs a little motivation. “I am self-motivated now as an adult. At first I wasn’t ready but then, like I said before, my father as my motivation.”

Jay is self-motivated and needs a little motivation too. "I'm finding out new things because I just started to live this adult life. I probably need someone to help me along the way and then it will probably come to me." Sam was self-motivated as a student and is self-motivated as an adult. "I still say I am self-motivated because I always like seeing myself grow. I like looking back and seeing where I came from." KP is self-motivated. "My motivation now pretty much is that, I see that I got through it as of right now, I made it this far, why shouldn't I keep going? I still haven't met where I want to be and reached any of my goals, well I met a couple but.... I mean long term goals."

Dannie is self-motivated but needs motivation from others too. "I could say that I'm self-motivated and I need others to motivate me too. But mostly, I'm self-motivated because I want to do better than people in my family and other people that I see and know. So basically my motivation is seeing others that struggle and I don't want to be like them." Baller is self-motivated. "Well now that I have a son, I have to look out for him, so my son is my motivation now." Jean is now self-motivated. "I'm self-motivated. I don't need any motivation from anyone else right now. My daughter.....my daughter makes me want to succeed more in life and do better."

Key Key is both. "I want to succeed in life, but sometimes it's like, I'm out of high school and I know I have to focus on college. But at the same time with the economy, my mom and dad don't really have the money that I know I need to support me to go to the colleges that I want to go to. I know I have to get a job and earn money and save money so I can be able to go to college without my parents having to pay for it for me." Marshmallow is self-motivated." My motivation now would probably be not to be

in the struggle. Well since I live in a “poor community” as they would say. I don’t want to live there for the rest of my life.”

Mezirow’s transformative learning theory focus on seeking a positive view of one’s outlook on their life situation. (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). An example of transformative learning was revealed in two of the participants’ responses. In Interview Question 5, Jean stated she needed to be motivated. “Well, my teacher motivated me to do better. At first, I was just the meanest little thing I could be in school. All throughout school I was mean. I didn’t want to hear what no one had to say. I had to do it on my own, and figure it out. But one day I had got in trouble and was getting expelled. I got talked to that whole day by this teacher and she changed it all around for me to be a better person. She motivated me to be a better person.”

Another example of transformative learning was identified in a participant’s response to Interview Question 9. Tavo identifies his teacher as having an impact on his academic success. “I took her class when I was in the 9th grade and she motivated me from 9th grade. She was the reason I started doing my work. She had a talk with me some years ago and that’s when I changed my behavior and started focusing on my academics.”

Participants’ Experience

Interview Question 1 was an easy question created to make participants comfortable and to build a rapport with them. Question 1 was: How would you describe your experience as a student at CWW High School? Alpha stated his experience at CWW High School was pretty good being that he was the new kid on the block. He went to

middle school in another part of town so when he transferred to CWW he really didn't know anyone other than his cousins. Once he got to know a couple of people around the school, he stated his experience was cool. Tavo defined his experience as wonderful. He stated, "I learned a lot. They gave me good knowledge that will be a part of me for the rest of my life." Jay stated his experience was "alright." Sam exclaimed his experience was great! "I enjoyed the entire experience. The biggest effect on his experience at CWW High School was the alumni. He recalls knowing two ladies from when he was a child. "They were always around the school and that helped me to stay on track."

KP acknowledged his experience at CWW High School was ok. "I had a lot of ups and downs but overall it was pretty good." Dannie's experience didn't get off to smooth start. "It was difficult at first but when I actually got to know my teachers they helped me to become a better student and I liked it." Baller said her experience was great. "I liked how the teachers guided us. I was an athlete so I knew it was always work first." Jean's experience at CWW High School was not so simple. "It was complicated but at the same time it helped me grow as a better person. At first, I was like not there...then I got there once I was going up to my next level in the grades. So, it was more of a learning experience and growing up off of the experience. It's more of what I didn't know than what I did know."

Key Key bellowed her experience was wonderful. "I loved being at CWW for the whole 4 years. I made great friends and met wonderful teachers that helped me throughout my 4 years at CWW and that helped me to graduate. CWW was not Marshmallow's first choice. "At first, I honestly didn't want to attend CWW because all

of my friends from middle school were going to another high school. Then, my mom was like it doesn't matter what school you go to; you have to just make the best out of it. So, I came and made the best out of it. I met new friends, my grades were good, so I thought....maybe this is not so bad. Then, I liked it.

Participants' Advice

Interview Question 9 was created as a follow up question to allow the participants an opportunity to provide a wide range of responses. Interview Question 9 was: What advice would you give a student at CWW High School on how to experience academic success? This interview question offered tips on how to achieve academic success to the present and future students of CWW High School. The following are direct quotes from the participants:

Alpha: Don't procrastinate, do not give up easily and don't lose hope in yourself because college is for everyone. Not everyone wants to prevail in college but you can do it if you really want to!

Tavo: My advice would be to stay to yourself, stay positive and study, study, study!

Jay : Don't give up! Take a deep breath and keep on doing it!

Sam: I would definitely say read more before you get to college. It helps out with your understanding before you get to the next level.

KP: My advice would be to really just sit down and come into the realization that your life is just really not perfect. There is always room for improvement, so you should always seek to improve. Pretty much you should always seek for better things.

Dannie: Basically, I'll tell them they should do mentor groups with peer groups and peer tutoring. Because if you study with people, it helps you learn more. And, also stay in contact with their teachers, because most likely when they don't understand something, their teachers don't know that they don't understand it until after they get the test. So, they should tell them that they don't understand like the day that they don't understand instead of waiting and they should go to tutoring.

Baller: Put their studies first and play afterwards.

Jean: Well, I would give them the advice to always listen to this certain teacher. I know she's going to be there a long time. Stay focused on your work, never be late to school and try to do everything on time. Listen to the teachers because teachers are always right. I mean sometimes they are not like probably helpful at the time but they can always help you at the moment you need help. So to help students to have more academic success, they just need to listen more in class and do more things, positive things, and not negative things.

Key Key: Make sure their schedule is right. Put their education first, always do their work and have fun later.

Marshmallow: I would probably say there are no limits. No matter how hard you think something is, it's not that hard, as long as you put your mind to it. But don't ever feel like you can't do something because you're Black or you're in a certain classroom or you don't take honors. So that would be it.

Conclusion

Ten African American graduates from an urban high school in Tennessee were chosen to participate in this study. These 10 graduates were chosen based on their proficient score on the EOC exam in reading/language arts. The themes that developed from the participants' analyzed responses to the interview questions provided the answer to the guiding research question. The guiding research question was: What perceived factors do the African American graduates who scored proficient in reading/language arts on the EOC exam contribute to their academic success? The answer to this question is: The perceived factors the African American graduates that participated in the study associated with their academic success on the EOC exam in Reading/Language Arts are: (a) caring parents and grandparents, (b) caring teachers and principal, (c) mentors, and (d) leisure reading. Results from the analyzed data lead to the development of a 3-day PDW for CWW High School principal, teachers, and other interested stakeholders on how to mentor high school students in order to assist with improving their academics.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The themes that derived from the participants' responses to the interview questions lead to the development of the project. The participants' indicated that all of them had an adult in their lives who made a positive impact on their academic success. These adults were a parent, a grandparent, a mentor, a teacher, or a principal. Although all of these adults did not carry the title of a mentor, they played the role of one.

The participants identified the significance of having someone to turn to when they needed help with their academics. When the participants were asked what they did when they needed assistance with academic challenges, one participant stated that he sought help from his teachers. Other participants stated that they asked their teachers, received assistance from their mentors, or sought help from their principal.

When the participants were asked, "Is there anything or anyone else you would identify as having a positive impact on your academic success," they made the following statements:

- "My teacher took time to talk to me. That talk motivated and encouraged me to turn over a new leaf and to become a better student."
- "Although I was pregnant, my principal assured me I was still capable of making it to college."
- "I used to act bad in school. But, one day this teacher had a talk with me about my behavior and told me I could be a better student. That's when I started to do my work and became a good student"

The participants also identified the importance of having a caring teacher, principal, or mentor. During the interviews, all of the participants stated that they needed to be motivated to continue to succeed. The purpose of this project was to identify the importance of mentoring and to encourage more teachers, administrators, and other interested stakeholders to become mentors for students.

The title of the 3- day professional development workshop (PDW) is Mentoring Valuable People (MVP). The concept of Deci and Ryan's SDT mini theory OIT, which focuses on extrinsic motivation that aims towards a positive outcome to the behavior, was embedded in the project. All of the participants in this project study were motivated by someone or something at some point during their quest for academic success. Activities were created to motivate and encourage participants to become mentors. From attending this PDW, it is assumed the participants will gain the knowledge and skills needed to be effective mentors. The purpose of the PDW is to provide participants with hands-on activities that engage them in collaboration about information and activities that aims to improve student achievement.

The principles of Mezirow's transformative learning were also included in the project to recognize the importance of mentors' ability to transform students' negative thinking into a more positive one. The 3-day PDW provides hand-outs, PowerPoint presentations, and fun activities that focus on the importance of mentoring, the concepts of school-based mentoring, and the principles of transformative learning

Description and Goals

The goals of the 3-day professional development MVP workshop is to provide the administrators, faculty, staff, and other interested stakeholders with knowledge about mentoring, school-based mentoring, and transformative learning, all of which research has proven to be effective with motivating and encouraging students to achieve. The 3-day PDW can be scheduled in September, 1 month after school has started to allow the teachers and students time to adjust to the new school year. Each workshop will last 7 hours including an hour lunch and two 15 minute breaks. The workshop consists of videos, PowerPoint presentations, pairing and sharing, brainstorming, and engaging activities. The layout of the project is located in Appendix A.

Providing participants with information on mentoring, school-based mentoring, and transformative learning can lead to a fulfilling mentoring experience for students. According to Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, and Rhodes (2012), mentors can be school-based. School-based mentoring (SBM) usually takes place in a school setting and lasts throughout the school year. School personnel who mentor students are able to communicate with students throughout the entire school day to ensure that they are engaged in learning. Where there is a lack of family attention, mentors can offer students positive support that may assist with boosting their self-esteem and providing them with a more optimistic view of their present situation (Grossman et al., 2012).

Rationale

The decision to present a 3- day PDW was chosen based on the participants' responses to the interview questions and the themes created from analyzing the interview

transcripts. The PDW will provide an opportunity to educate the administrators, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders of CWW High School about the importance of mentoring, the concept of SBM, and the principles of transformative learning. The title of the workshops is MVP. The PDWs will address the significant themes that derived from the participants' responses to the interview questions. The workshops will focus on the following:

- Day 1 will focus on “What is Mentoring?”
- Day 2 will focus on the concept of school-based mentoring (SBM), and
- Day 3 will elaborate on the principles of Transformative Learning.

Mentors have a positive effect on students' academic success (Slack, Johnson, Dodor, & Woods, 2013). Providing a mentor for as many students as possible may bring about a positive social change.

Review of the Literature

This review of literature presents information validating PDW, SBM, and transformative learning. To produce this literature review, I searched Walden's Library (dissertations and thesis), Google, Google Scholar, ERIC, Ed.gov, PsycINFO and SAGE Premier, and online peer-reviewed journals and books. I entered the search terms, *professional development*, *professional development workshops*, *mentoring workshops*, *adult learning theories*, and *transformative learning*.

In the literature review, I identify the importance of PDWs and the core features that must be included to make a PDW effective. A PDW is an appropriate technique to present information on mentoring. The literature review also validated SBM and

Mezirow's transformative learning theory has a positive connection to student achievement.

Professional Development

Professional development keeps teachers well-informed and up-to-date. According to Hudson (2013), professional development is necessary in order for teachers to keep up with the latest teaching practices. The main focus of professional development is for teachers to gain knowledge that they can put into action to help raise the achievement level of students (Hudson, 2013). The learning goals and objectives of the professional development depend on the need of the teachers and the students (Avalos, 2011). Professional development requires the effort and responsibility of the entire staff in order for student achievement to improve (King, as cited in Avalos, 2011). The professional development workshop will include activities that promote caring relationships that will provide nurturing to mentees who have a negative disposition to possibly assist them with changing their attitude. Professional development must contain professional learning goals and objectives agreed upon by the staff at the school level.

Most teachers have had the experience of participating in or directing at least one PDW. The purpose of a PDW is to allow teachers and administrators the opportunity to gain knowledge on topics that can assist them with improving their students' learning. Hunzicker (2011) provided an effective professional development checklist that includes the following:

- Engagement of teachers in supportive learning activities, job related, student focused, teacher collaboration, and ongoing

- Information that is important to the teachers and the school district
- Hands-on activities that allows teachers to engage in collaboration
- On-going professional development that promotes continuous communication

Along with the checklist, Desimone (2011) propose that, in order to measure the effectiveness of professional development, they must contain core features defined by research that are connected to the outcomes participants care about regardless of the types of activities involved. Desimone endorses the main features of an effective professional development must lead to improve student learning and the following:

Content focus: Professional development should provide subject matter content for students and activities to assist teachers with teaching students the subject. The MVP PDW will focus on the why, how, and alternative ways to mentoring. The interest in new and innovative ways to mentoring is on the rise (Deutsch, Wiggins, Henneberger, & Lawrence, 2012).

Active learning: Teachers should have opportunities to participate in activities that include observation and feedback as well as presenting information. The MVP workshop will provide mentors and mentees with an opportunity to share their positive mentoring experiences while engaged in hands-on activities.

Coherence: Knowledge gained from PDWs should be connected to ongoing learning connected to the vision of the school, district, and state reform policies. The MVP workshop is in accordance with the school and district policy because it is an ongoing process. According to the school district, students meet with their mentors every week at their schools to develop life skills, such as goal setting, leadership,

accountability, and more. Mentors can choose to work one-on-one with students or with a group or team of students. Mentors are asked to commit to a year of volunteer service.

Duration: Professional development activities should include at least 20 hours of contact time that spread throughout the semester. Boud & Hager, (2012), express that professional development is an ongoing process throughout the stages of a professional's career.

Collective participation: Teachers should participate in PDWs that allow them to collaborate and build interactive learning communities. The learning communities should consist of teachers from the same grade, subject, or school. The MVP workshop will take place at CWW High School in order to provide a convenient location for all participants to share, pair, brainstorm, and interact in group activities centered around the importance of mentoring, the concepts of school-based mentoring, and the principles of transformative learning.

School-Based Mentoring

Mentoring is defined as a positive trusting relationship between an adult and a youth. Mentoring provides youth with motivation and encouragement and is proven to produce positive results with students' academic achievement (Johnson, as cited in Eby et al., (2013). Mentoring can be implemented through a school based program. MVP workshop will explain the concepts of school-based mentoring (SBM). SBM is a growing program. SBM is the most popular form of mentoring in the United States and is continuing to grow at a fast pace. SBM transpires at the mentees' school and can take place either during lunch time or after school. SBM last for the duration of the academic school year.

According to a study by Schwartz, Rhodes, and Herrera (2012), in-school meeting time for mentors and mentees have a positive effect on at-risk students' achievement. There were 1,139 (18% were African American students) participants in the study; all of them were members of Big Brothers Big Sisters SBM program. Forty-four percent of the participants in the study met with their mentees after school and 25% met with their mentees during the school day. Another 6% met with their mentees during lunch, and 26% met at different times throughout the school day and after school. Academically at-risk students who met during lunch or after school made significant academic progress in reading/language arts (Schwartz, Rhodes, and Herrera, 2012).

SBM continues to have a positive effect on students' academics. Chan et al. (2013) used a structural equation model to conduct a study to explore how SBM relationships were associated with the improvement in elementary and high school students' socioemotional, academic, and behavioral outcomes. The study included 526 participants who were randomly selected from Big Brothers Big Sisters SBM program. The ages range between 9-17 years of age, and 53% were identified as racial/ethnic minorities. Students benefited from teachers mentoring. The participants in this study displayed a transformation in their academics and their behavior.

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory

According to Mezirow, transformative learning takes place when a person gains knowledge that assist with changing his or her view of the world to become a more positive person (as cited in Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Mezirow's transformative learning theory has become a topic of discussion in the educational realm (Mezirow & Taylor,

2011). The 3-day PDW guided by the principles of transformative learning assist with equipping participants with the necessary skills needed to help them with motivating mentees who hold a negative view about life with obtaining an optimistic view.

Transformative learning continues to be the focus of organizations and professional developments. According to Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), peoples' lives are transforming, and the educational system should transform its plans to flourish (as cited in Tucker, (2014). Transformative learning continues to be used as a way to deliver professional development for teachers. Transformative learning is a method educators use to challenge their students to think critically about what they presently believe and question their beliefs based on the world as they see it (Mezirow & Taylor, 2011). The hope of transformative learning is that people change for the better in order that the world would become a better place (Christie, Carey, Robertson, & Grainger, 2015). Transformational learning contains the following three-stage process:

1. A rethinking of reality and reevaluating assumptions that were deeply ingrained - The PDW will provide participants with an opportunity to participate in activities that allow them to compare and contrast their thoughts about mentoring before they had a mentee and now that they have one. The PDW will also provide activities for the mentees to collaborate and share the comparison and contrasting of an assumption they had about mentors before they had a mentor and now that they have one.

2. Cognitive reframing (ongoing coaching); The PDW will provide mentors with ongoing coaching throughout the first semester of the academic school year.
3. Modeling and co-teaching (moving from the abstract to the concrete and practical) –By the third PDW, participants who already had mentees will be interacting with their mentees. They will share their stories of success and the fun activities they have shared with their mentees (Powell & Powell, 2015).

Professional development should be on-going. Professional development should be a constant process to ensure that teachers are receiving the knowledge they need to continue to improve student achievement (Garet et al. as cited. Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe, (2011). In contrast, Stewart (2014) stated that conditions for professional development are ineffective, and teachers should move toward professional learning communities (PLC). Stewart stated that professional development was submissive, and it did not equip teachers with the knowledge they need to prepare students for college and the workforce. PLCs may better assist teachers to prepare their students for college and the workforce. PLCs are active learning environments supported by teachers from the same school, with the same learning objectives, and with the same visions (Stewart, 2014).

SBM programs require support by teachers at the same school. According to Pryce and Keller (2012), students who participate in SBM programs are referred by teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers. SBM is effective. Students who

participated in SBM showed improvement in their academics, conduct, and attendance (Pryce & Keller, 2012). Not all SBM programs yield positive results for all participants. High school boys who participated in a SBM program reported a decline in connectedness to school and cooperation within the school system (Karcher, as cited in McQuillin, Smith, and Strait (2011).

At best, most SBM programs can assist with transforming students' academic achievement for improvement. Heddy and Pugh (2015) stated that transformative learning is a hopeful aim of teachers in an effort to make a positive impact on their students' lives. According to Illeris (2014), all transformations are not positive. Some transformations could be undesirable when they are too serious and perplexing. Instead of progressing, this can cause the learner to withdraw. A transformative learning experience could leave an everlasting imprint on a person's life (Wilson & Parrish, 2011).

Implementation

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The potential resources needed for the 3-day PDW is space and financial assistance. An appropriate meeting place in CWW High School large enough to accommodate the entire faculty and staff as well as space to participate in small group activities is needed. Presenting the workshop at CWW High School makes it more accessible for faculty and staff members to attend. Tables to set up materials and other important information pertaining to the workshop are needed. Technology equipment is needed for PowerPoint and video presentations.

Financial support is needed to purchase materials and to compensate workshop assistants. Funding is also needed to purchase paper for informative handouts, ink for printers, and healthy snacks for the participants. Existing support for the workshop includes the participants making the 3-day MVP PDW a success.

Potential Barriers

A potential barrier with the workshop may be the participants' lack of knowledge on the importance of mentoring, the advantages of a SBM program and the principles of transformative learning. The solution to the barrier is for the principal to engage the participants in a pre-workshop information session on each of the 3-day topics.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The proposed implementation for the 3- day MVP workshop would be presented in September. This will give the school personnel a month to establish stability in their work schedule. The workshops provide communication and collaboration among the faculty and staff. Each workshop lasts a full work day, including an hour for lunch and two 15 minute breaks.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My role and responsibility as the researcher is to facilitate the workshops. As the facilitator, I am responsible for all aspects of the workshops. I ensure the assigned meeting place is set up and broken down in a timely manner. I ensure all technology equipment is working properly. I also ensure there are enough handouts and other important materials available for all participants.

In order for the workshops to be successful the participants must fulfill their roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of the participants are to attend each workshop on time and engage in the planned activities. They must take time to complete the formative and summative assessments to provide comments that assist the facilitator with improving future workshops.

Project Evaluation

The purpose of the 3-Day professional development MVP workshop is to present ideas and activities on mentoring that research has proven to be effective in a SBM program. To assist with meeting the goals and objectives of the workshop, formative and summative assessments are used. Formative assessments are used for the first two PDWs, while a summative assessment is used for the third PDW.

The purpose of formative assessment is to confirm if the goals of the workshops were met and to receive feedback on ways to improve activities, handouts, video selections, PowerPoint presentations and other suggestions for the second and final workshop. Formative assessment provides the facilitator with the opportunity to make improvements on each MVP workshop to ensure all goals are met. Feedback is the main component of formative assessment. Although most feedback is negative, if used correctly it can assist with making improvements (Leahy & Wiliam, 2012). Formative assessment also provides participants with an opportunity to have a voice in what they are learning and what they want to learn.

Unlike formative assessment, summative assessment evaluates the final results without the opportunity for improvement on the present workshop (Blyth & Davis, 2013).

Summative assessments are generally used for a final evaluation. After the third MVP workshop, participants complete a summative assessment. The summative assessment requests the participants to identify if the workshop goals were met throughout the 3-day workshop. The summative assessment also provides space for participants to make comments and suggestions on future MVP workshops.

The project provides information to CWW High School's administrators, faculty, staff, and other interested stakeholders on (a) the importance of mentoring, (b) the concepts of SBM (c) and the principles of transformative learning, in an effort to recruit more participants to become mentors. The overall goal for formative assessment is to receive feedback from the participants to improve the present workshops. The overall goal of summative assessment is to receive comments and suggestions that may assist with improving future PDWs. Formative and summative assessments can also be used by administrators, faculty, staff, and stakeholders interested in developing and presenting a meaningful PDW on mentoring.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

The MVP workshops were designed to bring about a positive social change from knowledge gained by administrators, faculty, staff, and other interested stakeholders on mentoring. When secondary students were motivated by and interacted with their teachers, it produced positive academic outcomes (Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011). The participants' knowledge can provide mentees with a productive successful mentoring experience that may transform their view of the world into a more

optimistic one. As the mentees' view of their world transform into a more positive one, maybe their peers' view of their world will become more positive from observing the change in them. When more students develop a positive attitude, more constructive activities may transpire and a better community can possibly emerge.

Far-Reaching

When the news about the academic improvement of CWW High School's students spill into the community, the people may want to know what caused the improvement. CWW High School can share its success about how administrators, faculty, staff and other interesting stakeholders are mentoring students. If other schools in the district and the state implement effective PDWs on the importance of mentoring, maybe more positive people will become mentors and more students' achievement level will rise. When students' academics improve, their attitudes may possibly improve and they may engage in more positive activities. This positive change may eventually lead to closing the achievement gap between African American students and European American students in CWW's school district.

Conclusion

The knowledge the participants gain from this workshop may bring about a positive social change to the students of CWW High School. All interested stakeholders can benefit from the PDWs. Initiating a SBM program may provide all students with mentors that can assist them with improving their academics.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This section includes the project's strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, and leadership and change. It includes the analysis of myself as scholar, myself as practitioner, and myself as project developer. This section also reflects the importance of the work as well as the implications, applications, and directions for future research and the potential for social change.

Project Strengths

This project study has two strengths. The first strength the project has is the information will be presented to the faculty and staff over a course of 3 days instead of cramming all the information into 1 day. The second strength the project has is it affords the participants an opportunity to meet with other mentors to share their experiences on what works and what does not work. The third strength of the 3-day PDW is all the workshops are scheduled to meet on the school campus. Being located on-site makes it convenient for all school personnel to attend.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

A limitation of the project study is that the study is only based on one urban high school. The perceptions were from one ethnic group, which included five African American male high school graduates and five African American female high school graduates. To remediate this limitation, more successful students in the school could

participate in the next study and more successful students in other low performing schools in the same school district could partake in a similar study.

An alternative approach to address the problem with the PDWs would be to make the information pertaining to the workshop available online for the participants with conflicting schedules. To allow the participants to view the information at their convenience, twitter accounts could be used to share information with peers about the workshop topics, the information could be downloaded through e-mail or it could be viewed and shared through other social media sites.

Scholarship

I encountered a transforming learning experience as a doctoral student at Walden University. My journey has been fulfilling and illuminating. For the past 5 years, I have been working to get to this point. It was not an easy road, but it was worth the bumps I encountered. I read a poster that said, “The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is the way in which you use them.” Throughout this journey, I encountered a few stumbling blocks, but I chose to use them as stepping stones.

I learned a great deal about research and gained an appreciation for every peer-reviewed article printed, and I gained a deeper respect for every author of that article. Research requires an immense amount of time. I acquired knowledge about qualitative research and the time and effort it takes to recruit participants for a study. At times, it was frustrating, but overall, I found this process interesting and intriguing. As I collected the qualitative data, I was able to engage in before and after conversation with the participants. Listening to them express their hopes and dreams caused me to reflect back

on my thoughts as a high school graduate with similar hopes and dreams. Collecting qualitative data through interviewing allowed me to get up close and personal with participants, view their facial expressions, and feel what they were feeling. As an educator for 18 years in the same school district as the participants, I was delighted by some of the responses to their interview questions, especially the ones pertaining to the principal, teachers, and coaches who made a positive impact on their academic success.

In analyzing the qualitative data, it was stimulating to listen to the recorded interviews over and over to create codes and develop themes. In analyzing the data, I also realized that I had chosen an appropriate method to gain an understanding of the participants' perceived factors that they contributed to their academic success. Analyzing the data also required intense concentration and critical analysis.

Project Development and Evaluation

In order for this project to materialize, it required the cooperation from many people. To begin with, I had to solicit permission from the principal at CWW High School to initiate my research. The principal acted as the gatekeeper. He assured that I was provided with a list of potential participants who met the criteria for my project. I used a qualitative case study design to interview 10 African American graduates about the perceived factors they associated with their academic success. After analyzing the participants recorded interviews, codes were created and themes were developed.

Based on the themes established from the participants' analyzed transcript, I developed the MVP 3-day PDW. To guarantee the PDWs were effective, I used a checklist provided by Hunzicker (2011) and included core features defined by research to

measure the effectiveness of professional development workshops (Desimone, 2011).

The 3-day PDWs were also guided by Mezirow's transformative learning theory to (a) provide activities for mentors and mentees, (b) ensure on-going professional development throughout the semester, and (c) create activities that allow participants to move from the intangible to the tangible (Powell & Powell, 2015).

Formative and summative assessment will be used to determine if the goals and objectives of the project were met. Formative assessment will be used for the first two workshops, and summative assessment will be used for the third workshop. Formative assessment gives the participants a voice as to what they want to learn. The evaluation form provides space for the participants to offer feedback while the workshops are in progress. With formative assessment, I can use the feedback to improve and amend future workshops. Summative assessment is more of a final evaluation. Space is also provided for comments and recommendations on the summative evaluation form. With summative assessment, no changes can be made to the present workshops, but the feedback can be used to develop future workshops. Participants will complete evaluations to identify if the goals of the workshops were met.

Leadership and Change

I gained knowledge on how to develop an effective PDW. As a result of this knowledge, leadership and change are on the rise. After interviewing the 10 African American graduates for this study, I feel the need to take on a leadership role in facilitating PDWs at CWW High School. Less than half of the participants in this study had mentors. Although they were not their assigned mentor, when they needed

motivating and encouraging they turned to the principal, a teacher, a coach, or an active alumnus for support. When they needed assistance with an academic assignment, they turned to this same group of people. After presenting a 3-day PDW on mentoring to the administrators, faculty, staff, and active alumni, they will have gained the knowledge needed to provide mentees with a productive mentoring experience. This project will make a positive change at CWW High School by providing as many students as possible with mentors.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I started this doctoral journey looking forward to IRB approval to interview African American high school graduates. Throughout my teaching career, I have always wondered what really motivates students to learn. How do some students excel in spite of their poor environment? Do caring teachers really make a difference in their students' academic achievement? Do involved parents play an important role with their child's academic success?

As an elementary and middle school teacher of 18 years, I have always had the desire to interview students about their academic success. As a Walden student, I completed courses pertaining to quantitative designs and qualitative designs. Quantitative designs were interesting as far as dealing with numbers and statistical figures. Nonetheless, I was more interested in qualitative designs because they provide an opportunity to interact in close proximity with the research participants to gain a deep understanding of their perception.

As a scholar, I gained knowledge about the academic performance of African American students throughout the United States. I learned about programs that assist students with improving their academic success. After completing this doctoral journey, I am inquisitive. Walden courses permitted me to grow as a scholar by presenting many assignments that required me to investigate and analyze. Now, when I am presented with an educational concept or idea from my colleagues; before I agree with them, I research to see what the literature presents.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I know what it takes to present effective PDWs. It takes research. I have learned that it is more to just coming up with a good idea. That good idea has to be proven to be a good idea based on research validated by researchers in that field. As a practitioner, I am ready to make a change by putting into action what I have learned as a doctoral student at Walden University. As a practitioner, I have been transformed. I now question my old beliefs and views until I have investigated them, and research has proven them to be valid.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I learned when it comes to developing a project, be sure it is what the participants need and not what I think they need. After interviewing the participants in this project study, they expressed how they turned to the principal, administrators, teachers, other school personnel and active alumni when they needed assistance with an academic assignment. They communicated that when they needed motivation and encouragement to continue to succeed it was that same group of adults

they contacted. As a project developer, this tells me to interview or survey the participants that will benefit from the project to identify their needs. Also, as a project developer, I am sure to implement what research has been proven to be effective.

This project was enlightening. I learned a great deal about developing effective PDWs. This project provided me with the knowledge and tools needed to move forward as a research practitioner. Because of the research I completed for this project, I am now capable of providing constructive feedback after attending PDWs. I am also able to develop and facilitate PDWs based on the need of the participants.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The MVP prepares administrators, faculty, staff, and interested stakeholders to become effective mentors. Recruiting and preparing enough school personnel to become mentors can lead to implementing a SBM program. A SBM program has the potential of providing every student at CWW High School with a mentor. A SBM program is convenient for mentors and mentees. With a SBM program, the mentors and mentees are able to communicate with each other throughout the day and after school.

Developing a positive relationship with a principal, administrator, teacher, or interested stakeholders may bring about a positive change in the lives of students. Mentors and mentees have the potential to develop lifelong bonds that can possibly provide mentors with an opportunity to transform mentees thoughts and beliefs into more positive ones. In the process of the mentees transforming, their peers may transform also by observing the change in them. This positive transformation may create an encouraging

climate in the community and motivate more students to strive to become successful, productive citizens.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

PDWs on mentoring should be an on-going process. A 3-day PDW is not enough to keep the mentoring process going. The 3-day PDW only covers the first semester. The mentors may need to be motivated to continue to mentor students throughout the next semester. Inviting the mentees to join the PDWs will allow the mentors and mentees to engage in constructive activities that create a family environment. Future research should present alternative ways to mentor. In this age of technology, coming face-to-face physically is not the only way to develop a personal relationship. Online communication is a big part of an adolescent's life. Online communication raises adolescents' self-esteem and improves their relationships with friends (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011).

This research study focused on the perceptions of only one urban high school, one ethnic group, and only 10 participants. It is recommended that a similar study investigate more than one school, more than one ethnic group, and more than 10 graduate participants. The perception of teachers and parents should also be included in a future study.

Conclusion

This project study has its strengths and its limitations. The two strengths are: (a) the 3- day PDWs are scheduled on days mandated by CWW's school district and (b) all of the workshops will take place on CWW High School campus. The mandated professional development days scheduled by the district provides the participants with

prior notice of the PDWs dates. Having the workshops on campus makes it convenient for school personnel to attend. In the event there are conflicting time schedules and some participants are unable to attend, information pertaining to the PDWs is made available online. At the conclusion of each workshop, participants are asked to complete a formative or summative evaluation. The comments and suggestions from the evaluations are used to improve the present PDWs as well as the future PDWs.

As a project developer, I learned that it takes research to develop and present an effective professional development workshop. I also learned the importance of seeking the needs of the participants. Focusing on the needs of the participants and meeting their expectations motivates them to engage in the workshops' activities.

Future research should seek alternative ways for mentors to communicate with their mentees. Communicating through social media may also motivate more workshop participants to become mentors. It is recommended that future research conduct a study that includes multiple ethnic groups, multiple schools, and multiple school districts.

In completing this project study, I faced challenges, instead of giving up, I chose to give it all I had and remain resilient. Life can take you for a loop and knock you off your feet, but what I discovered is, if you just hold on, the loop will make a complete circle and place your feet back on a stable plateau.

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Appendix A: The Project

**“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
3-day Professional Development Workshop for CWW High School**

**Day 1
AGENDA**

8:00 - 8:30

Continental Breakfast

8:30 – 9:00

Welcome**Ice Breaker Activity**

Spider Web

Identify Workshop Outcome/ Goals

Outcome: CWW’s administrators, faculty, staff, and other interested stakeholders will gain knowledge about mentoring.

- What is mentoring?
- What mentoring is not?
- Why mentor?
- What are mentors’ tasks?
- What is the 1st Stage of Mentor/Mentee relationship?
- Who is my mentee?

9:00 – 9:30

Activity

The participants will complete a KWL Chart and volunteers will share their answers. (A KWL chart tells what you already Know, what you Want to know, and What you Learned.

9:30 – 10:30

Topic of Discussion - PowerPoint

- What is mentoring?
- What mentoring is not.
- Why mentor?
- Q & A

10:30 – 10:45**Break**

10:45 – 11:45

Activity

The participants will view a video titled “Mentoring Scenario 1” taking notes to discuss what was learned from the video and what the mentor could have done differently. Then, they will share.

11:45 – 12:45

Lunch

12:45 – 1:45

Topic of Discussion - PowerPoint

- Tasks of a mentor
- The 1st Stage of Mentor/Mentee relationship
- Who is my mentee?
- Q & A

1:45 – 2:00

Break

2:00 – 2:45

Activity

Participants will complete the L in the KWL Chart. Volunteers will share.
Share and Pair---Letter Writing

Formative Assessment

Participants will complete a formative evaluation

Day 1
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
PowerPoint



WHAT IS MENTORING?

A Mentor can be:

- (1) a friend a young person can trust**
- (2) a role model that exhibits positive behavior**
- (3) a person that can assist young people with finding opportunities they may not be able to have access to on their own**
- (4) a person that provides mentees with examples of positive behavior**



WHAT MENTORING IS NOT!

A Mentor is not:

- (1) a parent – Mentors are not responsible for providing mentees with basic needs.**
- (2) a counselor – Mentors who feel mentees are in need of counseling should not advise them but refer them to a professional social worker**
- (3) a financial provider – Mentors spend time with mentees and are not required to spend money.**



WHY MENTORING

The three most important things mentors can do for their mentees are to:

- 1. Assist with cultivating their social skills**
- 2. Help with improving their life skills and**
- 3. Provide them with support and encouragement**



PRIMARY TASKS OF A MENTOR

- **Establish a positive, personal relationship with mentee**
- **Establish a trusting relationship**
- **Interact as often as possible with mentees**
- **Support them as often as possible**
- **Spend quality time having fun**



THE BEGINNING STAGE OF THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

Get to Know Each Other

- (1) **Be patient, it takes time to feel comfortable talking to someone.**
- (2) **Spend quality time getting to know your mentee.**
- (3) **Discover what you have in common.**
- (4) **Be consistent.**
- (5) **Be prepared to be tested by your mentee.**



WHO IS MY MENTEE?

Mentees are:

- (a) young people who have a desire to achieve.**
- (b) adolescents who want to know what skills they need in order to become successful adults.**
- (c) teenagers who want to learn how to cope with the difficult situations.**



WEBSITES

www.pyd.org/editor

www.mentoring.org



Day 1
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Activities

ICE BREAKER DAY 1: Spider Web

The participants will make a circle. The first participant is given a ball of yarn. The participant with the ball of yarn reveals information about her/himself and throws the ball of yarn to another participant in the circle. That person reveals information about her/himself and throws the ball of yarn to another person in the circle. This continues until all of the participants in the circle have revealed information about her/himself. The ball of yarn is then thrown in reverse and the participant that received the ball of yarn from that person has to repeat what that person said about themselves.

Warning: Participants must pay attention because they are unaware of who may throw the ball to them.

<https://extension.purdue.edu/4h/Documents/Volunteer%20Resources/Past%20Congress%20Lesson%20Plans/Spider%20Web%20activity.pdf>

KWL ACTIVITY

PARTICIPANTS WILL USE A KWL CHART TO SHARE WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW ABOUT MENTORING, WHAT THEY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MENTORING, AND AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP THEY WILL SHARE WHAT THEY LEARNED ABOUT MENTORING

ALL ABOUT MENTORING

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED

--	--	--

Share and Pair - A Bond of Fun (Role Play)

Supplies:

- Paper • Pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Participant will pull a number between 1-10 or roll a die.
2. The first person starts the story will write the number of words equal to the number they pulled or rolled.
3. The next person pulls a number or roll the die and adds a twist to the story writing the number of words equal to the number she/he pulled or rolled.
4. The partners will continue to twist and turn the story together until they agree it is complete.

<http://www.connecting-generations.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/52-Mentor-Activities.pdf>

Day 1
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Evaluation Form

Directions: Please the write the number that best fits your opinion about the goals of the workshop.

1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Agree 3 – Disagree 4 – Strongly Disagree

The Following Goals Were Met:

1. An understanding of Mentoring _____
2. An understanding of what is not Mentoring _____
3. I know why I should Mentor _____
4. I am knowledgeable of the tasks of a Mentor _____
5. I know the 1st stage of a Mentor/Mentee Relationship _____
6. I understand who my mentee is _____

Comments:

Suggestions:

Day 2

“Mentoring Valuable People” Workshop AGENDA

8:00 – 8:30

Continental Breakfast / Welcome

8:30 – 9:00

Ice Breaker Activity

Fact or Fiction

Recap Day 1 (Q & A) “WIN PRIZE!”

9:00 – 9:30

Identify Workshop Outcome/ Goals

Outcome: CWW’s administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni will gain knowledge about mentoring and school based mentoring (SBM)

- What is School Based Mentoring
- How are youth referred?
- What are some advantages of SBM?
- What are some of the advantages for Mentees?
- What do teachers say?
- What does research say?

9:30 – 10:30

Activity

The participants will complete a KWL Chart on School Based Mentoring-volunteers will share

Topic of Discussion - PowerPoint

- What is School Based Mentoring
- How are youth referred?
- What are the advantages of SBM?
- Who are the volunteers?
- Q & A

10:30 – 10:45

Break

10:45 – 11:45

Activity

Complete the L in the KWL volunteers share. Participants will view “Mentoring Scenario1 and “Mentoring Scenario 2 to compare and contrast the actions of the mentor and mentee. Discuss with small group and report to all participants.

11:45 – 12:45

Lunch

12:45 – 1:45

Topic of Discussion - PowerPoint

- What some of the advantages for Mentees?
- What do teachers say?
- What does research say?
- Q & A

1:45 – 2:00

Break

2:00 – 2:45

Activity

Mentors will share positive MENTORING experiences with a partner. Then, they will brainstorm group activities to engage in with their mentees. They will meet as a team with their mentees and complete a group activity.

2:45 – 3:00

Formative Assessment

Participants will complete a formative evaluation

Day 2
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
PowerPoint

SBM

SCHOOL
BASED
MENTORING

SCHOOL BASED MENTORING

- School-based mentoring programs are very popular in the United States and have become increasingly popular. Roughly 30 percent of mentoring programs are located in schools, and these programs are growing at an alarming speed.
- All school based mentoring programs operate differently and have their own schedules. Most of them require the mentor and mentee to meet on a weekly bases to discuss educational and enjoyable topics.
- Most school based programs only operate during the school year.
- However, research suggest the programs should extend throughout the summer months to accomplish better outcomes. (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh,

HOW ARE YOUTH REFERRED?



- Usually the students in the school based programs are referred by teachers, counselors, and other staff members.

What are Some Advantages of School-Based Mentoring



- School-based mentoring programs are usually less costly.
- School-based programs have the supervision and support of school personnel.
- Mentors are located on the school campus. This provides a better chance for them to speak directly with the teachers on the students' behalf to help with improving student behavior and academics.
- Academics are the center of attention with mentors interacting with mentees on the school campus.

Advantage for Mentees



- Mentees that experience behavioral problems or receive low grades are usually referred.
- School-based mentoring provide support to students who parents are not involved in their education.

What do Teachers Say?



- According to teachers, students with mentors displayed improvement in their conduct and academics.

What Does Research Say?



- Research indicates that youth participating in school based mentoring programs show improvement in their academics and their behavior.

Websites



- www.education-world.com
- www.mentoring.org

Day 2
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Activities

Fact or Fiction!

Participants will use a sticky note to write 3 things about themselves. Two of the three things will be true. Participants will read their three things to the group to decide which two are true and which one is false. Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/small-group/two-truths-and-a-lie.html>

KWL ACTIVITY

PARTICIPANTS WILL USE A KWL CHART TO SHARE WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL BASED MENTORING, WHAT THEY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL BASED MENTORING, AND AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP THEY WILL SHARE WHAT THEY LEARNED ABOUT SCHOOL BASED MENTORING

ALL ABOUT SCHOOL BASED MENTORING

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED

(MentoringScenario 1 Video)<https://youtu.be/OuGPHZBV4kE>

(Mentoring Scenario 2 Video)<https://youtu.be/MiKQ8trxsbM>

Day 2
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Evaluation Form

Directions: Please the write the number that best fits your opinion about the goals of the workshop.

1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Agree 3 – Disagree 4 – Strongly Disagree

- (1) I gained knowledge about School Based Mentoring. _____
- (2) I know how youth referred to SBM programs. _____
- (3) I know some benefits of SBM. _____
- (4) I know who usually volunteer to mentor in SBM programs. _____
- (5) I have knowledge of some the advantages of SBM. _____
- (6) I have knowledge of some of the advantages for Mentees in SBM programs. _____
- (7) I know what research says about SBM programs _____

Comments:

Suggestions:

Day 3
“Mentoring Valuable People” Workshop
AGENDA

8:00 – 8:30

Continental Breakfast/ Welcome

8:30 – 9:00

Ice Breaker Activity

Desert Island

Recap Day 2 Q & A “WIN PRIZE!”

9:00 -9:30

Identify Workshop Outcome/ Goals

Outcome: CWW’s administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni will gain knowledge about Transformational Mentoring.

- What is transformational mentoring?
- What is the goal of transformational mentoring?
- What are the Mentors’ Roles and Responsibilities?
- What is the Students’ Path to Transformation?
- What are some alternative ways to mentoring?

9:30 – 9:45

Activity

The participants will complete KWL Chart Transformative Learning--volunteers will share

9:45 – 10:15

Topic of Discussion- PowerPoint

- What is transformational mentoring?
- What is the goal of transformational mentoring?
- What are the Mentors’ Roles and Responsibilities?
- What is the Students’ Path to Transformation?
- What are some alternative ways to mentoring?
- Q & A

10:15 – 10:30

Break

10:30 – 11:00

Activity

Participants will complete the L in the KWL Chart and share

11:00 – 12:00

Lunch

MENTEES OF TEACHERS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS WILL JOIN WORKSHOP AFTER LUNCH!

12:00 – 1:30

Topic of Discussion

Introduction of mentees by their mentors–Mentees and mentors will share their experience with the workshop participants.

1:30 – 1:45

Break

1:45 – 2:45

Activity

Identity Collage - The mentors and mentees will complete a Picture Collage of things they would like to do or have done together. Participants without mentees will work in a small group and create a Picture Collage of things they would like to share with a mentee if they decide to mentor.

2:45 – 3:00

Summative Assessment

Participants will complete a summative evaluation

Day 3
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
PowerPoint

TRANSFORMATIONAL MENTORING

Transformational mentoring focuses on assisting students with developing and transforming themselves into a better person.

(Frazzini and Fink, 2011)

Goal

The goal of transformation mentoring is to teach students how to find the answers to life questions on their own. The students must learn to believe and trust themselves. (Parks, 2000).

Mentors' Roles and Responsibilities

- * **Transformational mentoring** - holds the mentee responsible for finding their own answers (Nash and Murray, 2010).
- * **The mentor provides:** - support, motivation, and encouragement as well as challenges the mentee (Parks, 2000).
- * **The mentor reframes** – from providing the mentees with answers

Student's Path to Transformation and Meaning

- (1) **Students become aware of the reality of their own life by recognizing their strengths**
- (2) **Students continue to seek the truth as they use their critical thinking skills to change their beliefs and world view.**
- (3) **Learning to interact in a responsible manner that demonstrates positive behavior that expresses good morals and principles.**
- (4) **Vowing to use their talent, knowledge and skills to assist others with improving and to make the world a better place.**

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO MENTORING

- * **E- mentoring – With E-mentoring, mentors and mentees use technology to communicate and sustain a mentoring rapport (Rowland, 2012).**
- * **Some of the ways students interact with each other through social media are:**
- * **Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Face time, and Skype**

Rowland, K. N. (2012). E-mentoring: An innovative twist to traditional mentoring. *Journal of technology management & innovation*, 7(1), 228-237.

Websites

- * www.transformationalmentoring.org

Day 3
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Activities

Desert Island

Pretend you are sent to a deserted island for a year! You can only take 3 things:

- (1) Your favorite Song
- (2) Your Favorite Book and
- (3) One Luxury Item

Participants will share and discuss with the group.

<http://www.group-games.com/team-building/stranded-on-a-desert-island.html>

Identity Collage

OBJECTIVE

To share thoughts and interest

MATERIALS

Magazines

Glue Stick

Construction Paper

Scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

Mentors and mentees will use magazines to cut out pictures to create a collage of the things they like, the places they have been, the places they would like to go, and other things they like. Then, they will share their collages to identify and discuss differences and similarities.

<http://www.creativity-portal.com/howto/arts crafts/features/2004/magazine.collage.html>

Day 3
Professional Development
“Mentoring Valuable People” (MVP) Workshop
Evaluation Form

Directions: Please the write the number that best fits your opinion about the goals of the workshop.

1 – Strongly Agree 2 – Agree 3 – Disagree 4 – Strongly Disagree

- (1) I have knowledge of Transformative Learning. _____
- (2) I understand the goal of transformative learning. _____
- (3) I know the Mentors’ Roles and Responsibilities in Transformative Learning. _____
- (4) I understand the Students’ Path to Transformation. _____
- (5) I gain knowledge about alternative ways to mentoring. _____

Comments:

Suggestions:

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Participant ID# _____

Participant Pseudonym (Chosen by Participants) _____

Verify Participants' Identity_____
Introduce myself_____
Restate the purpose of the study_____
Review signed informed consent form_____
Explain interview process (choose pseudonym, 45 min. to 1 hr. audio recorded interview, note taking,)

- Check equipment
- Ensure participant is comfortable
- Ask participants if they have any questions?
- Begin Interview

1. How would you describe your experience as a student at CWW High School?
2. In what ways, if at all, do you think parental involvement made a difference in your success on the end of the course exam in Reading/Language Arts?
3. Did you have a mentor through a program or someone who acted as a mentor?
If so, do you think they had a positive effect on your academic success with the Reading/Language Arts end of the course exam?
4. When you faced challenges with academic assignments, how were you able to conquer those challenges to achieve academic success?
5. Were you self- motivated to succeed as a high school student, or did you need someone or something to motivate you? What was your motivation?

6. Are you self-motivated to succeed as an adult, or do you need someone or something to motivate you? What is your motivation?
7. As a high school student, did you engage in leisure reading? If yes, how often? If no, why not?
8. What advice would you give a student at CWW High School on how to experience academic success?
9. Is there anything else you would identify as having a positive impact on your academic success?

_____Remind participants that a follow up conference will be scheduled to review the transcript for validity before it is reported.

_____Thank the participate for their time

Appendix C: Telephone Protocol

Hi, may I please speak with _____.

Hello _____, my name is Paula Harris. I am a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know me as a former middle school teacher in your school district or as the wife of Gerald Harris, a teacher & coach at CWW High School, but this study is separate from that role.

I am conducting research on a study entitled “**African American High School Graduates Perceived Factors Associated with Their Academic Success**”. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of African American graduates who scored proficient in Reading/Language Arts on the end of the course exam at CWW High School from (2010-2012) to identify perceived factors associated with their success.

I received your name from the administrators at CWW High School They compiled a list of graduates who scored proficient on the Reading/Language Arts EOC exam. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

If you agree to engage in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 45 min to 1 hr. audio recorded one on one interview that will take place in CWW High School library
- You will also be asked to review the transcript of your interview before the results are reported by either by email or in person (30-45 min)
- You may also request a copy of the final results that will be presented to the school in a PowerPoint handout.

By sharing the positive factors that you identify as associated with your success may possibly assist the present and future students of CWW High School with improving their academic success.

Will you be willing to engage in this research? _____

If no, thank you for your time.

If yes, thank you so much, I will provide you with an informed consent form that will provide you with more detailed information about your rights and my responsible as the researcher. I am asking that you read it, sign it, and please return it to me.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study! I look forward to interviewing you.

Enjoy the rest of your day!

Appendix D: Transcription Codes

B- BAND	SM- SELF-MOTIVATED
C- COMPLICATED	SON-SON
CO-COACH	SP-SPORTS
DAU-DAUGHTER	STR-STRESSED
ENC-ENCOURAGE	T-TEACHER
ENV-ENVIRONMENT	TT-TEACHER TUTORING
F-FATHER	W-WONDERFUL
FAM-FAMILY	WE-WANTED AN EDUCATION
FR-FRIEND	WM-WANTS MORE
G-GREAT	
HC-HELP COMMUNITY	
L-LIKED	
M-MENTOR	
MA-MADE	
MO-MOTIVATED	
MOM-MOM/MOTHER	
NM-NO MENTOR	
NSTR-NOT STRUGGLE	
OK-OK	
P-PARENTS	
PG-PRETTY GOOD	
POW-PROVE OTHERS WRONG	
PRI-PRINCIPAL	
PR-PROGRAM	
REF-REFLECT	
RES-RESILIENT	
SG-SELF GROWTH	
SI-SISTER	

Appendix E: National Institutes of Health Certificate of Completion

