Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ETHICAL CARE IN A TITLE I
MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine if the foundational constructs (student engagement and ethical care) were experienced by the 8th grade students that participated in a morning tutoring program: Future Problem Solvers. A mixed methods design was adopted for the purpose of this study including raw data, survey data, informal observations, and face-to-face interviews. The goal was to determine if the 28 participants (male and female) demonstrated academic success on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (Science). The study was also conducted in order to explore the level of student engagement and the development of reciprocating relationships based ethical care between the teacher and the students.

The findings from the quantitative analysis using the Mann Whitney U indicated that the FSP participants did make academic gains on the FCAT (Science) test to a higher degree than non-participants: Non-Participants (Mean Rank = 182.37) and Participants (Mean Rank = 332.96). The significance was established where p = .00. The quantitative analysis using frequency data also revealed that the majority of the participants reported that they were engaged in learning and made strong efforts when doing and completing their schoolwork. They also participated in class, as well as school based activities. Furthermore, they reported that they felt a sense of belonging and were supported by the staff.

The findings from the qualitative analysis indicated that the teacher did model care to the students. He engaged them in dialogue about caring relationships and confirmed and encouraged the best in them. The responses on the interviews completed by the teacher and the principal, as well as the students give evidence that strong relationships developed between the students and the teacher. Moreover, that these reciprocating relationships were built on trust and care.

The discussion and interpretations emphasizes the need for professional development, and the need for policy that strives to support student engagement and ethical care above high stakes testing.

This work is dedicated to my brother and sisters who have been a blessing to me through my entire life in countless ways. It is also dedicated to Dr. Constance J. Smith whose voice at the other end of the line has been a constant source of calm, wisdom, and steadfast friendship for many years. To Becky and Gabby whose love and encouragement have been immeasurable. And to Gabby whose journey into college gives me hope that some in her generation will be leaders that set the stage for a better world.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND CODING KEYS

Acronyms

Westridge	Westridge Middle School
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
MGSSE	Middle School Survey of Student Engagement
FPS	Future Problem Solvers Program
ELL	English Language Learners
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
OCPS	Orange County Public Schools
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
WRAT	Wide Range Achievement Test
RAPS	Research Assessment Package for Schools
CECs	Classroom Emotional Climate
HSSSE	High School Survey of Student Engagement
CEEP	Center for Evaluation and Education Policy

Coding Keys

BE:	Behavioral Engagement
T:	Trust
EL:	Engagement in the learning
M:	Modeling
D:	Dialogue
P:	Practice

C: Confirmation

R: Relationships

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

<u>Background</u>

Since 1918, there have been at least three major school reforms occurring in the United States. The primary focus of these appears to have been driven by social and economic changes (Goodlad, 2004; Powell, 2007; Jennings, 2012). The reforms were influenced by the United States transitioning from an agricultural to an industrial society. One of the major changes in education was motivated by the fear that Sputnik was a clear indicator that Russia was out pacing the United States in the area of space exploration. In more recent history, educational policies have been persuaded by a shift in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores and global politics (Noddings, 1992; Brownlee, 2012). Recently, educational policy has taken the direction of "high stakes" standardized testing as a primary assessor of academic gains and educational improvements. However, opponents including teachers, parents, and some policy makers (Straus, 2012) question whether the high states tests are an adequate measure of academic gains or merely a process by which teachers teach to the test. As a result, the gains are specific to the test and not necessarily indicative of knowledge that can be generalized to other tests and/or needed applications (Linn, Dunbar, & Shepard, 1991).

In 2013 to 2014, a new sort of reform emerged in which 45 states have agreed to adopt the Common Core Standards (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2012). Some of the goals of the Common Core Standards address preparing students for college and career readiness. The Common Core Standards will be used to develop curriculum and instruction, and standardized testing will be used to assess knowledge. In reviewing the information on reform and standardized testing, a question arises: do the reforms and the issuant educational policies truly lead to academic gains and knowledge? Do they lead to higher graduation rates? More

importantly, do they lead to students that become well-educated citizens with a positive future? Or, is there something more that takes place within the walls of educational institutions that assist students not only in achieving academic gains, but also helps them move on to become life-long learners?

In the Orange County, Florida Public School System, students began taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in 1998. With the concerns and policies outlined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the test scores became married to school accountability. According to statistical reports published on the Florida Department of Education Website (www.FLDOE.org), students taking the tests have demonstrated improvements in academic gains over the last several years. In addition, the website gives evidence that the dropout rate in Florida has decreased over time. The State reports that "the graduation [*sic*] rate rose from 56.5 percent in 2002-03 to 74.5 percent in 2011-12" (www.FLDOE.org). Interestingly, the reports overwhelmingly insinuate that the standards and assessments are the power train behind the success of the students. Little to no information is given pertaining to other factors that may also be contributing to the success of students. Additional influences may be part of the equation when students succeed such as student engagement and the dynamics that occur when students feel cared for and demonstrate their care for others (Noddings, 2002; Goodlad, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

In the State of Florida, although students have made academic gains on the standardized tests, there continues to be an achievement gap based on gender, race, and poverty (Florida Department of Education, 2013). This is evident not only when it comes to academic achievements, but also when taking the dropout rate into consideration. As a result, it is

imperative that other factors are examined, which play a role in student achievement and persistence in obtaining a high school diploma.

Westridge Middle School (Westridge) is a Title 1 school located in Orlando, Florida. The school is located in a high poverty community, where most of the students walk from their homes to the campus. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (nces.ed.gov/globallocator/), the student population at the school during the 2011 – 2012 school year included 1061 students. The general student demographic breakdown was Black (55%), Hispanic (39%), White (2%) and All Others (4%). According to the Florida Department of Education (schoolgrades.fldoe.org), one hundred percent of the students received free and reduced lunch. This is consistent with estimated 94.60% poverty level of the families for students attending the school as reported by the Orange County Public School System. (https://www.ocps.net/cs/support/titlei/Pages/TitleISchools.Aspx).

At the end of the academic school year (2012 – 2013), the school received a grade of "D" having, dropped one letter grade from the previous year. Based on the 2011 - 2013 FCAT reading and math scores, and the 2012 – 2013 science scores, there are significant differences in the number of students that scored at a level of 3 or higher that attended Westridge in comparison to students that attended non-Title 1 schools, as well as differences when comparing students of varying races (Florida Department of Education). The school scores were comparable to Title 1 schools in the county with similar demographics, however, Westridge's scores and those of other Title I schools differed from the scores of the Non-Title I schools.

Table 1: Demographic Comparison for Westridge Middle School, Memorial Middle School, Avalon Middle School, and Maitland Middle School (2012 – 2013)

Middle School	Title I	Enrollment	Hispanic	Black	White	All Other	Free or Reduced Lunch	Percentage Minority	School Grade
Westridge	Y	1164	39.5%	54.2%	3.4%	1.8%	100%	98%	D
Memorial	Y	762	16.8%	78.3%	2.0%	0%	100%	98%	C
Carver	Y	772	9.1%	87.0%	1.6%	0%	99.7%	98.4%	D
Avalon	N	1613	37.3%	9.7%	43.8%	9.1%	40%	58%	A
Maitland	N	977	11.5%	26.3%	55.9%	6.1%	39%	41%	A
Discovery	N	861	30.4%	12.7%	48.7%	4.2%	42.7%	42.7%	A

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- Schoolgrades.fldoe.org
- The data in this table represents the total number of students in attendance at each middle school, whether or not the school is a Title I school (Y) or it is not (N), the racial demographics for each school, the percent of students that are eligible for free or reduced lunch, the percentage of minority students at each school, and the school grade.

Table 2: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2011 FCAT in Reading based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	29%	26%	43%	29%	37%
Memorial Middle School	26%	23%	*	25%	3%
Carver Middle School	11%	25%	*	25%	3%
Avalon Middle School	60%	57%	76%	53%	13%
Maitland Middle School	41%	33%	76%	35%	*
Discovery Middle School	52%	55%	83%	49%	5%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2011). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2011). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2011).

Table 3: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level $\geq$ 3 on the 2012 FCAT in Reading based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	41%	36%	*	39%	8%
Memorial Middle School	23%	33%	*	33%	3%
Carver Middle School	21%	30%	*	31%	4%
Avalon Middle School	64%	57%	80%	58%	3%
Maitland Middle School	56%	42%	81%	46%	*
Discovery Middle School	64%	55%	74%	52%	29%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2012). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2011). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2012).

Table 4: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level $\geq$ 3 on the 2013 FCAT in Reading based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	38%	38%	*	37%	11%
Memorial Middle School	44%	30%	*	33%	3%
Carver Middle School	27%	29%	*	29%	6%
Avalon Middle School	73%	72%	84%	65%	25%
Maitland Middle School	56%	27%	88%	36%	*
Discovery Middle School	60%	69%	78%	59%	*

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2013). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2013). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level $\geq$ 3 on the Reading FCAT (2013).

Table 5: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2011 FCAT in Math based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	26%	26%	43%	28%	4%
Memorial Middle School	47%	34%	*	39%	21%
Carver Middle School	17%	16%	*	17%	35%
Avalon Middle School	56%	54%	76%	52%	13%
Maitland Middle School	44%	39%	86%	38%	*
Discovery Middle School	66%	55%	86%	58%	18%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2011). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2011). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2011).

Table 6: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2012 FCAT in Math based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	36%	36%	*	37%	9%
Memorial Middle School	27%	34%	*	35%	10%
Carver Middle School	32%	27%	*	28%	16%
Avalon Middle School	60%	43%	76%	52%	16%
Maitland Middle School	50%	49%	82%	53%	*
Discovery Middle School	68%	58%	81%	62%	29%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2012). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2012). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2012).

Table 7: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2013 FCAT in Math based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	28%	31%	*	31%	10%
Memorial Middle School	34%	24%	*	27%	9%
Carver Middle School	23%	31%	*	31%	38%
Avalon Middle School	67%	59%	87%	65%	39%
Maitland Middle School	53%	34%	89%	44%	*
Discovery Middle School	63%	69%	90%	64%	31%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2013). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2013). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2013).

Table 8: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2012 FCAT in Science based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Total	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	30%	30%	29%	*	30%	3%
Memorial Middle School	26%	43%	21%	*	26%	5%
Carver Middle School	21%	16%	20%	*	21%	0%
Avalon Middle School	64%	54%	49%	76%	48%	9%
Maitland Middle School	61%	53%	35%	75%	40%	*
Discovery Middle School	70%	54%	61%	78%	52%	13%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Science FCAT (2012). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Science FCAT (2012). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Science FCAT (2012).

Table 9: Percentage of 8th Grade Students Scoring a Level ≥ 3 on the 2013 FCAT in Science based on Race and Poverty Indicators

School	Total	Hispanic	Black	White	Free or Reduced Lunch	ELL
Westridge Middle School	29%	27%	30%	*	29%	9%
Memorial Middle School	29%	43%	26%	*	30%	9%
Carver Middle School	22%	14%	22%	*	22%	6%
Avalon Middle School	60%	48%	46%	72%	47%	7%
Maitland Middle School	63%	44%	29%	83%	34%	*
Discovery Middle School	69%	58%	50%	83%	50%	17%

- No Child Left Behind School, District, State Public Accountability Report
- *Not enough students to include in the data.
- The data in this table represents the percentage of students that identified as Hispanic, Black, or White, that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Science FCAT (2013). It also represents the percentage of students living in poverty (Free or Reduced Lunch) that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Science FCAT (2013). And the data represents the number of students identified as ELL that that scored a "passing" score of Level ≥ 3 on the Math FCAT (2013).

It is evident by the data represented in Table 1 that the students at Westridge are largely a diverse population with high levels of poverty. This was consistent with the population at other Title I schools. There were, however, large differences in the population of the students when compared to the non-Title I schools. The students at Westridge scored lower on the FCAT Science test in 2012 and 2013 in comparison to the students at the non-Title I schools. As a result of the racial diversity and poverty level among students, the achievement scores on the FCAT, and the achievement gap observed when comparing Westridge to other Title I and Non-Title I school, it is essential that studies be conducted in order to identify factors in education that contribute to student success. These include those that exist at Westridge, where it is important to understand the factors that contribute to higher levels of success achieved by some of the school's students. Identification of these factors can be shared with the school staff in order to facilitate a better understanding of promising components offered at the school. The goal in turn would be that these could be open to more students in hopes of creating a campus where students not only make academic gains, but also thrive and strive to become well-educated, whole people.

Future Problem Solvers (FPS)

During the academic school year 2012 – 2013, a group of 8th grade students at Westridge in Orlando, Florida participated in a before school program intended for targeted tutoring.   The students that participated in this program were provided tutoring two days a week from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M by their 8th grade science teachers: Ms. Anderson, the teacher (Mr. Lords), and Mr. Pierre. Students that were in Ms. Anderson's class received the tutoring from her. This was true for Mr. Lord's and Mr. Pierre, as well. The students participated voluntarily and they demonstrated academic gains not only on the District Benchmark Testing, but also on the FCAT 2.0 reported for that school year.   Although the collective group of students made academic gains, the greatest number of participants were enrolled in Mr. Lord's 8th grade science classes. Also, his students were more consistent in participating on a regular basis. The general assumption would be that the students made the academic gains simply because they received additional academic support through the tutoring. On closer examination, however, it appears that more occurred during this process that was phenomenological "a conscious state of awareness" in nature.   As a result, the program was scheduled to continue in the 2013 – 2014 academic school year. Ms. Anderson and Mr. Pierre did not continue with the program as Ms. Anderson transferred to another school, and Mr. Pierre transferred to a 7th grade science position. Mr. Lords, however, agreed to provide the same tutoring services to his students in the 2013 – 2014 academic year.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine whether or not the 8th grade students enrolled in Westridge Middle School and those that participated in the Future Problem

Solvers Program (FPS) scored at a significantly higher level on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Science Test in comparison to 8th grade students attending Westridge who did not participate in the program; who were the same students that participated in FSP also engaged in school; and where there was a caring and trusting relationship experienced between the students and the program teacher. These were examined through the use of surveys and interviews in order to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the program and the level of academic success amongst the 8th grade science students that participated in the tutoring program. The goal was to examine aspects of the program that may have led to academic achievement amongst the participants and to determine if contributing factors included the presence of student engagement and ethical care.

Conceptual Framework

Student engagement and ethical care are two areas of research that attend to the success of students that are not solely focused on standards and assessment as the global factors for success. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), their review of several studies on the topic of student engagement reveals that there is a positive relationship between engagement and student success as evidenced by positive educational results. It is reasonable to expect that students that have a sense of belonging and have a level of confidence in their academic skills will likely do better in school. The second area of research, ethical care (also referred to as Care Ethics), is often associated with the work of Nel Noddings. In her book, *The Challenge To Care in Schools,* Noddings (1992) doesn't dispute that academics are important. She does, however, propose that what is also important to the learning environment is a place where students learn about moral education - the foundation of which is caring relationships. Both of these

conceptual frameworks give premise to the idea that there is more to academic achievement than simply teaching prescribed lessons based on standards and assessed by 'high stakes tests.' When student engagement is defined as that process in which students actively participate in the process of gaining and sharing knowledge, as well as participating in before school and after school programs, volunteerism, and relationships with their peers and school staff, it could be logically assumed that their engagement leads to growth and success. Furthermore, when we define care as a process of human beings extending their concern and affirmation to one another where trust develops and reciprocation is allowed, it seems reasonable that students will thrive in an environment that they perceive as safe. This in turn can lead to academic success. Considering these factors, it is possible that school programs that encourage student engagement and ethical care are also pivotal in student success and that student success is not solely the result of high stakes testing.

Research Questions

Given the purpose and goals of this study, the following research questions were examined:

1. When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores for 8th grade students at Westridge Middle School, will the 8th grade science students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers program score significantly higher on the FCAT in comparison to 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

2. Did the teacher promote Student Engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher's responses to the teacher Interview Questions?

3. Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the students were actively engaged in positive school related activities and relationships programs?

4. Did the student responses on the Student Interview Question*s* give evidence that they experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher?

Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions, a mixed study was proposed as the best means for accomplishing the goals and purpose. A quantitative analysis was conducted analyzing the student's FCAT 2.0 Science scores posted for the 2013 – 2014. Also, a survey was administered in order to assess Student Engagement. A case study was fulfilled to include student and teacher interviews. The hypotheses were:

1. Eighth grade science students that attended Westridge and participated in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers Program will score significantly higher on the FCAT 2.0 Science scores posted for the 2013 – 2014 academic school year in comparison to the 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program.

2. Students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers Program will give evidence of feeling engaged and having a caring and trusting relationship with their

teacher based on responses to the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement (MGSSE) the Student Interview Questions.

Scope

This study was conducted at Westridge Middle School. The subjects included 28 students, 1 teacher and the Principal. The students were all 8th graders and the teacher taught science. The students participated in a morning tutoring program known as the Future Problem Solvers (FPS), which was facilitated by the science teacher. The purpose of the study was to examine various aspects of student engagement among the 28 students. Furthermore, the study was designed to determine the level of ethical care demonstrated by the teacher towards the students, whether or not they reciprocated and the levels of care impacted the achievement of the students. This study is relevant for understanding the current literature about the use of ethical care to measure the effect of student engagement on learning.

Methods

This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods. Three instruments were used for data collection: The Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement (Indiana University, 2010). The University of Indiana developed this survey, and it was based on the nationally administered High School Survey of Student Engagement. In addition, this investigator developed two surveys: an open-ended questionnaire for students and one for teachers. The surveys were placed online using the software supported by Survey Monkey™.

The students completed the pre-surveys online during the time frame from January 28, 2014 – February 11, 2014. They completed the post-surveys online during the time frame from May 22, 2014 to May 30, 2014. The interviews with the teacher and the principal were

conducted face to face. The interviews were recorded using the computer-based program

Audacity™. The interview with the teacher was conducted on April 28, 2014 and the interview

with the principal on April 21, 2014.

The quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods appropriate for pre- and

post-comparisons (Independent T-Tests).   For the qualitative data, the interviews were

transcribed. The transcriptions were coded in order to identify the following themes: Emotional

Engagement (EE), Behavioral Engagement (BE), Trust (T), Engagement in the Learning EL),

Modeling (M), Dialogue (D), Practice (P), Confirmation (C), and Relationship (R). The themes

were analyzed to determine if the research questions were answered.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study are intended to contribute to the larger body of work related to

student engagement, ethical care, and student achievement. Because of the sample size and the

existing literature for the conceptual framework, this study has the following limitations:

1. The sample size for this study was expected to be small. The number of students that

    were realistically able to participate in the study was limited due to many factors

    including, time constraints and transportation. Many of the students that attend

    Westridge walk to and from school, however, a significant number also ride the

    school bus. Those that rode the school bus were limited in their ability to participate,

    because they could not get to school by 8:00 A.M. Also, they did not have alternative

    means of transportation. Furthermore, students that walked to school often had

    responsibilities at home that precluded them from participating in the program (i.e.

    helping their younger siblings get ready for school).

2. Although there is much literature on student engagement and student success, there is limited research on student engagement as a multi-dimensional concept. Furthermore, there are not many instruments that are available for measuring student engagement especially when taking into consideration all three aspects: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive.

Summary

Since the 1950s, at least three major school reforms have taken place within the United States. More recently, the reform has centered on high-stakes testing and school accountability. Proponents of high-stakes testing advocate for rigorous learning and curriculum content based on data driven decisions. One problem with the current reform of high-stakes testing and school accountability is that there continues to be an achievement gap along the lines of race, ethnicity and socio-economics.

This study was designed to examine a group of 8th grade science students who attended Westridge Middle School. Westridge is a Title I school located in a high poverty community in Orlando, Florida. The students that attend this school are predominantly Black (African American and Caribbean populations). They typically come from families falling within the poverty income levels. The students in the study were enrolled in a tutoring program called the Future Problem Solvers. They attended tutoring three mornings a week and they excelled academically as evidenced by their high scores on their FCAT scores. The study focused on this group of students and their teacher in order to determine if factors outside of those inherent in the high stakes testing and school accountability reform were present.

The factors examined in this study were those found in the conceptual framework: student engagement and ethical care. The study sought to examine if the students that participated in the Future Problem Solvers program were engaged in school and if they developed a reciprocal, caring relationship with their teacher, Moreover this study sought to examine if these factors contributed to their academic success? In order to gather data for the analysis, the students completed online surveys intended to determine their level of student engagement and their sense of having developed a caring relationship with their teacher. In addition, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the teacher and the principal using open-ended questionnaires. The data was examined using quantitative and qualitative methods.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review was conducted by searching articles through various online databases, as well as in person searches for books found in the University of Central Florida library system. This review excludes articles involving student engagement as it relates to students attending colleges and universities. Furthermore, the articles are specific to those conducted within the United States. This literature review was not designed to be exhaustive, but rather to provide research that supports the conceptual frameworks and research questions put forth in this project.

The conceptual framework that set the foundation for this study includes student engagement and ethical care. In many respects, the two elements of the framework are easily intertwined, because they both speak to student success based on relational factors that are separate from high stakes testing and standards. In this way, they are focused on factors that have greater sustainability and therefore, perhaps greater influence in comparison to the factors often found in the shifts associated with educational reforms likes high stakes testing.

Although the latter pose limitations, this study will help to alleviate some of the burden on the research by contributing to the findings when employing an instrument that does in fact measure student engagement on multiple levels.

Student Engagement and Ethical Care

The review of literature is specific to the constructs of Student Engagement and Ethical Care. The literature examined for this purpose spans a twenty-eight year search, which includes materials published between 1986 and 2014.

Student Engagement

The concept of student engagement is not necessarily a new idea. Educators have often attempted to "engage" students in school. There has often been at least the vague notion that students that are "engaged" in school tend to make greater gains and succeed at least to the point of graduating. The basic questions that arise, however, are what exactly defines student engagement and knowing what it is, how will educators encourage it?

Over time, educators and researchers have attempted to define engagement in terms of behaviors, motivation, and relationships. In their work, Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Parks (2004) indicate that there are many definitions in the literature related to engagement. The primary definitions include three areas: behavior, emotion, and cognitive. The collective research defines these in varying ways and in many cases, the definitions overlap. Consequently, Fredericks et al. (2004) propose that engagement may be best defined as a meta-construct that includes all three dimensions. The researchers note that the meta-construct is important because the three dimensions are interconnected, rather than detached from one another. They also indicate that the construct is multi-dimensional because each of the three primary elements can vary in intensity and duration.

Although the idea of engagement being a multi-dimensional concept has merit and potential for a broader linkage to student success, the literature that employs this concept to study student success is limited. Instead much of the literature in this area continues to examine individual aspects of the concept rather than the combined dimensions. A review of the literature indicates that the research is typically narrowed to the impact on achievement based on behaviors, classroom culture and student teacher relationships.

In his publication, Finn (1989) reviewed studies that show a linkage between multiple factors that contribute to a student leaving school prior to graduation such as race, socio-economic status, academic ability, and school performance. He pointed out that the research was perhaps limited in examining the specific processes that take place within the school system that leads to students dropping out. In an effort to more clearly understand the processes, Finn drew upon two models: The frustration-self-esteem model and participation-identification model. Through his examination of the models and the specific constructs "identification" and "participation", Finn surmised that overall students enter school wanting to participate and are encouraged to do so. As the participation persist over time, academic success is achieved resulting in the student developing identification with the school. Factors such as rewards and a sense of belonging reinforce the identification and perpetuate the engagement. Collectively, participation leads to school achievement and identification resulting in a "self-reinforcing cycle". Therefore, Finn concluded that valuing school, participation in school activities, and a sense of belonging is crucial to positive outcomes.

In addition to his 1989 study, Finn (1992) pointed out that some students entered school with a tendency that precludes them from participation. The result is failure to identify with the school and over time, academic success is low. In this study, Finn sought to gain a clearer understanding of behaviors demonstrated by students that were involved in classroom activities versus those students that were not involved as rated by their teachers. He also focused this work on differences amongst students of differing races, genders, and socio-economic status. In addition, he examined whether or not past academic performance had an impact on those who were engaged versus those who were not engaged. This study included 1,388 fourth grade students. The students attended 72 schools located in the state of Tennessee. Demographic and

academic data were collected through the school system from 1st grade through 4th grade.

Several questionnaires and rating systems were used including the Student Participation

Questionnaire. This questionnaire placed the students into one of three categories:

1. Non-participatory behavior (annoys or interferes with peers)

2. Minimal adequate effort (pays attention in class)

3. Initiative taking (does more than just the assigned work).

The student scores from the Student Participation Questionnaire along with other related data

was taken into consideration and students ultimately fell into one of three categories:

1. Active participants

2. Passive participants

3. Non-participants

His findings suggest that students that fall into the participating groups had greater academic

success and had maintained this achievement over time, regardless of race, gender and/or SES.

Continuing his pursuit of understanding the processes that lead to academic

disengagement versus academic success, Finn (1997) hypothesized that school engagement was

important to academic hardiness. Furthermore, he suggested that student engagement is

malleable, allowing school staff to foster behaviors that lead to greater engagement and

opportunity for success.

His study included 1,803 minority students from low-income homes. His data was

selected from the U.S. Department of Education's National Educational Longitudinal Study of

1988. Students were grouped based on the following factors: grades, test scores and persistence

(8th through 12th grades). The groups were more specifically defined as

1. Academically successful school completers (resilient),

2. School completers with poor academic performance (non-resilient completers), and

3. Non-completers (dropouts).

His analysis revealed significant differences amongst the groups where the resilient students demonstrated greater behavior engagement as evidenced by

1. Getting to class and school on time

2. Being prepared for and participating in class work

3. Expending the effort needed to complete assignments in school and as homework

4. Avoiding being disruptive in class

Interestingly, Finn did not find that extracurricular activities had a straight connection to sustained academic achievement amongst the low-income students.

In addition to Finn's work, Ladd and Dinella (2009) also examined the effects of emotional and behavioral engagement on students over time. Their longitudinal study included 383 students. The youth were participants from the age of 5.5 to the age of 13.5. Ladd and Dinella (2009) examined two specific constructs:

1. Cooperative –Resistance Classroom Participation (Behavioral)

2. School Liking-Avoidance (Emotional)

The instruments used to determine the student's behavioral and emotional engagement were

1. Report of School Liking and Avoidance Questionnaire

2. Rating Scale and School Adjustment

3. The Devereux Elementary School Behavior Rating Scale

In addition scores on the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) were administered to determined academic achievement.

The results from the study corroborated aspects of Finn's work reported in his 1992 study, that students with higher levels of engagement have higher levels of academic growth in comparison to students that do not. Furthermore, the levels of students' engagement in earlier years tend to perpetuate over time.

In their work, Klem and Connell (2004) examined student engagement in both elementary and middle school. They included in their study student records and survey data of students from six elementary schools and three middle schools. The schools were located in urban school districts. The investigators analyzed data taken from the Research Assessment Package for Schools (RAPS) administered from 1990 – 1995. RAPS was developed by James Connell & Associates and measures educational competence and school engagement. It measures effort, preparedness, class attention, and the students' perception on how/why school success is important. On another level, RAPS measures student's coping methods and reaction to negative school events. Based on their review of the data, Klem and Connell (2004) found that students who perceived "teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear, and fair are more likely to report engagement in school." In addition they found that the middle school students that reported high levels of engagement were 75% more likely to attain high levels of academic performance in comparison to the average student.

A study cited in several works is that of Wentzel (1998). In her study, the investigator sought to examine several factors that are associated with student motivation and achievement. The study sample included 167 sixth graders that all attended the same middle school. Multiple instruments were used to examine: perceived peer support from peers, family cohesion, distress, social goal quest, interest in school and class, and performance and mastery goal orientations. In

addition, academic grades obtained from the students' sixth and seventh grade years were included in the study analysis. Wentzel's findings indicated that there was a relationship between students with positive engagement behaviors and school success. The behaviors included being on time for school and class, being prepared, participating in schoolwork, completing assignments, and self-management skills within the classroom.

While some studies focused on the relationship between behaviors and student academic success, Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White and Salovey (2012) centered on Classroom Emotional Climate*s* (CECs*)*. CECs are described as classrooms where teachers demonstrate sensitivity to their students, take their views into perspective, avoid ascribing to punitive disciplinary actions, and where teachers and students share caring and amiable relationships. Their study involved 1,399 fifth and sixth graders and employed observational data and surveys. The findings supported their hypotheses that there was a positive relationship between CECs and higher student grades, which was influenced by higher levels of reported student engagement.

Like the study conducted by Reyes et al. (2012), many studies examining Student Engagement and Academic Success provide supporting evidence that caring relationships have linkages to student success. In this way, they run parallel to the work of other researchers whose focus has been on Ethical Care.

Ethical Care

Ethical Care is a concept that does not necessarily arise out of theoretical spheres, but rather out of practice and practicality. It is a practice involving relations (Noddings, 2012). In her work, Noddings (2012) describes care ethics as distinguishing between the "assumed needs and expressed needs" of the individual. She states, "every human life starts in relation, and it is

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through relations that a human individual emerges". These human beings include students who are emerging through their journey of education. She designates the teacher as the "*carer*" and the student as the "cared for". She portrays the "carer*"* as being attentive, receptive, and objective when understanding the true needs of the cared for. She emphasizes the need for the carer to set aside his or her own values and judgments in order to understand the need of the student. She recognizes that we cannot necessarily rid ourselves of our values and opinions, but that we can compartmentalize these so that we can effectively listen to discern the needs of the students (Noddings, 2010). Moreover, it is clear that in some cases teachers and staff demonstrate a caring relationship with the student and help them develop the moral sense of care for themselves and others. In some cases teachers and staff feel conflicted when the true needs of a child does not closely align with needs presumed by the school and the compulsory curriculum. Noddings (2010) acknowledges the importance of the curriculum, but emphasizes that teachers be able to respond to the needs of their students while being allowed to use their professional and moral judgment. When this occurs, a robust relationship is allowed to develop where caring and trust are the foundations.

Noddings (2002) also speaks to the process by which a person learns to care for others. She proposes that as one experienced being cared for*,* an individual learns to care for others. It is the exchange of being "cared for" and "caring" that establishes the relationship. As part of educating moral people, Noddings offers four key components of the construct:

1. Modeling
2. Dialogue
3. Practice
4. Confirmation

The idea of *modeling* emphasizes the importance of showing the *cared for* what it really means to care. The teacher demonstrating his or her own good behavior and character can accomplish modeling. In addition, the teacher can demonstrate virtue through external models found in historical accounts, biographies, as well as works of fiction (Noddings, 2010).   The second component specifically points to the importance of *dialogue* and distinguishes that dialogue and conversation are not necessarily the same. Conversation can be void of a topic, whereas dialogue begins with a topic. Noddings suggest that dialogue is perhaps the most significant of the four components. She points out that through dialogue, the teacher helps the student grow in their ability to truly hear the needs of others (Noddings, 2010).

In addition to dialogue and modeling, Dr. Noddings points out that through the process of caring, practice is integral to the development of becoming attentive. In essence, one must engage in care giving activities including being attentive in order to develop the capacity to care. She gives the example of group work as an opportunity to practice caring. Through their group work, students can be reminded that their goal is to help one another, as well as to achieve their collective goal (Noddings, 2010).

The fourth component important to the education of moral people is *confirmation*. In this context, confirmation is the act of affirming and encouraging the best in others. Noddings (2010) explains that there is a great deal of empathy and sympathy dispensed through the caring process. Confirmation of caring is not extended with an associated cost and may be as simple as recognizing or acknowledging the caring. In some cases when the acknowledgment or reciprocation does not exist, the carer runs the risk of empathetic fatigue. Noddings suggest that through the process of ethical care, teachers can teach moral ethics whereby they develop a relationship with the student and the student in turns learns to care for themselves and others.

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In his ethnographic study, Cloninger (2008) also explored the concept of caring for students in the classroom. He acknowledges the work of Noddings and points out the emphases in her work to include teaching students in the school system to not only care for themselves and others, but also animals, the environment, and of course the subject matters to which they are exposed. He expanded his study to also include the concept of love within the classroom. He indicates that love differs from care in that love is a richer, deeper experience. He points out that the specific type of love most applicable to education is "agape", where agape is defined as a "state of unconditional love". Basing his study on the foundations of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., Cloninger critiques the current education system as failing to include meaningful conversations about "agape" relative to the relationships between the students and teachers within the classroom. As a result, the system fails to recognize the positive impact an agape relationship can have on the classroom overall.

Through his observations, interviews, and feedback from those observing his classrooms, Cloninger (2008), points out that inherently agape allows for the students to experience the classroom as a safe place. In this environment, the teacher listens attentively to the student and visa versa. The student is allowed to express him or herself without fear of judgment. In many cases, however, the teachers are not encouraged to interact with their students in this way. They may be unaware of its importance. They may not give themselves permission to create a classroom culture that is built on a foundation of agape love. With the teacher as the guide, if this foundation is not guided – there is the distinct possibility that the foundation of caring will not develop.

Cloninger (2008) points out that building a classroom based on unconditional love takes time, and it comes with risks. He illuminates the idea, however, that building a classroom

without care and unconditional love is also risky. He cites the level of violence within the schools and cases of suicide amongst students and he notes that being open to students, providing them a safe loving place to learn may be less risky than the alternative where violence and suicide are prevalent.

Goldstein (1998) also attended to the concept of love in the discipline of teaching. She acknowledges that love is often an assumption in education. She points out that research in this area has been difficult because defining the word is difficult. Much of the research on the topic of love has been devoted to romantic love. Goldstein recognizes Noddings' work where ethical care advocates strong relationships between the loving teachers and their students. Goldstein, however, expands on this concept by expressing that this one-on-one relationship be enlarged to encompass the entire classroom. As a result, she suggests that a modification of Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love could be modified in order that it may be applied to the education system.

In her work, Goldstein compares Noddings' explanation of ethical care to the three components of Sternberg's theory: intimacy, commitment and passion. She notes that teachers are committed to the students and their craft. They do have intimate relationships with their students as defined by close and connected feelings in a loving relationship. She is clear to point out that the modifications of this theory for the purposes of education must focus on appropriate types of loving relationships and not on experiences such as passion found in romantic relationships. She concludes that teachers' commitment steers the teachers to form the loving relationships and intimacy allows for the meaningful care and reciprocity.

Goldstein (1998) simply states that "intimacy embodies trust" and yet, a database search of trust and education yields little in the way of overwhelming research. And so the question arises, what is trust, how does it develop, and what does it matter when it is applied to education?

The examination of the literature on student engagement, ethical care, unconditional love, and trust provide evidence that these strongly contribute to academic achievement. When students feel a sense of belonging and when they feel cared for by others, they tend to engage and thrive. Perhaps the glue that bridges student engagement and ethical care is love and trust, where trust is the foundation for a sense of belonging and relationships. That trust is what allows the student to engage in activities, as well as relationships and it is trust that allows the teacher and staff to embrace the students.

Trust

Merriam Webster defines trust as a "belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc." (Mirriam Webster, 2014). It is a powerful definition, but an important question is how does a human being develop trust in others?

Although there are theories on the development of trust, there is little research focused specifically on trust and education. Often the articles focus on trust in business: human capital, marketing, and economics. Or they cover the development of trust between nurses and patients in health care. These serve little when attempting to understand the development of trust in children and the trust between children and teachers. This is especially true when it comes to children in urban communities that often are subjected to poverty, achievement gaps, and other factors that undermine their ability to achieve success.

In his theory of personality, Erik Erikson (King, 2010) suggested that individuals experience stages of development in sequential order. Failure to experience success in the stages can lead to maladaptive behaviors or what he terms a "crisis". A crisis can result in a person being "stuck" at that developmental age causing difficulties in sufficiently attaining higher levels of growth. The first stage of his theory is "trust vs. mistrust". In this early stage of development, a child learns to trust or distrust his or her environment. The stage is believed to begin at birth and spans until the child is 18 months of age. If the child learns that they can depend on their caretakers to feed, nurture, and care for them – than they learn to develop trust in others and in themselves. Children that are not provided with these essentials learn to mistrust the world around them. They learn that they cannot rely on others manifesting in a failure to develop trust overall.

Related to Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow proposed that in order for individuals to attain the highest level of development, self-actualization, they must first have their lessor needs met. He defined these as physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belonging needs, and esteem needs. In essence, he theorized that persons will have difficulty arriving at a level of self-actualization if their primary needs for food, water, shelter, love, and esteem are not met.

Collectively, the theories make a case whereby human beings whose needs are not met and/or who experience complications when striving to have their needs met could easily fail to develop a sense of trust in others. Given the level of poverty and other associated factors (single parent families, high levels of school mobility (Lippman, Burns & McArthur, 1996), high levels of crime, learning issues, and other related factors often experienced by students attending urban and/or Title I schools – it is not unlikely that children attending these schools frequently do so

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without being trustful of others, including their teachers and other school staff. Consequently, it is a difficult task for teachers and staff to develop a rapport and trust with their students.

In her work, *Trust and Antitrust*, Baier (1986) clearly speaks to the issue that trust requires a level of vulnerability. Furthermore, that trust can be violated resulting in hurt. And yet, she suggests that it can be through the injury that we most often recognize that there was trust. Baier (1986) discusses the idea that even without conscious trust, we often find it necessary to rely on others. She distinguishes between trusting in others and relying on them by pointing out that trust counts on the other person's good will. It may be that in a time when education is strongly focused on prescribed standards and high-stakes testing, students must rely on their teachers to achieve. Still, there doesn't seem to be enough time for teachers and students to develop a relationship overtime that promotes trust not merely reliance.

In their work, Ennis and McCauley (2002) indicate that trust is a concept that may be limited in urban schools within the United States. Moreover, even though there are basic staples that are needed for student achievement including highly capable teachers, there is still the need for communities within the classroom that provide students with the opportunity to develop trust. The researchers eloquently state:

> In other words, creating webs or communities of trust in urban schools is a complex, risky endeavor built on mutual expectations for goodwill nurtured over long time-periods. It involves an internal level of justice and fairness that cannot be built on negative consequences, threats or fear of intimidation. (p. 153)

In order to gain a better understanding of how trust is built within the school system, Ennis and McCauley (2002) conducted a qualitative study examining the development of trust at Lincoln High School. The school enrolled approximately 1200 students, most of whom were African-

American. A significant percentage of the students received free or reduced lunch. The researchers were interested in learning what strategies some teachers used in order to build rapport and trust among students typically considered difficult to serve as the result of their being disengaged and/or disruptive. The researchers found that there were four primary factors that played a role in the development of trust between the students and teachers: "expectations, persistence, commitment and voice".

When examining the perspective of the students, Ennis and McCauley (2002) reported that the students indicated that they "needed and respected teachers that would spend time with them and teach them the content." It appears that the strategies selected by the teachers to work with the students were in fact rooted in the needs of the students. The teachers found ways to teach the content in such a way that the students could relate to the material. Furthermore, the teachers opened avenues for communications by letting the students know that they believed in them and thought they deserved to trust and to be trusted. In addition, the teachers modeled care to their students by spending time with them allowing them opportunities to share about themselves and their experiences and providing them with a voice within the classroom.

Throughout their process of using strategies to develop trust, the teachers set expectations and established lines of accountability. They did this, however, by allowing the students to develop self-esteem through the opportunity for second chances. The students were rewarded and praised for their accomplishments. The students reported that in some cases, it was the first time anyone had expectations of them academically.

Diligently, the teachers were persistent in their efforts. They opened themselves up to the students by sharing appropriately. They were warm with the students and created a classroom that provided a safety net for the students. They gave the students an out when needed, allowing

them to maintain self-esteem in the presence of their peers. Through the processes employed by

the teachers, the students engaged more often. Moreover, they worked to define and accomplish

their academic goals. They did these things through trust that allowed them to thrive rather than

stay behind their barriers of distrust that had previously led to academic disengagement and/or

failure.

Classrooms that Lead to Student Achievement

In his longitudinal study, Goodlad (2004) and his team observed over 1,000 classrooms.

He determined that the average student spends approximately 180 days a year in school for an

average of 6.5 hours per day. He also found that of the classrooms he observed, there were

repeated themes of activities that occurred throughout the day from classroom to classroom.

Goodlad found that overall teachers acted autonomously and is seen by the students as an

authoritative figure. The teachers are typically the sole agent in choosing the specific

assignments and tasks to be completed by the students. The students, in turn, have little input

regarding the course of their day within their classrooms. In many cases, when students did

work in groups they did so as a singular entity. There was little to no true collaboration. In

essence, the students were inert recipients of whatever was assigned to them. Students indicated

that they often did not have time to complete their work and they seldom understood what was

really expected of them. The students also reported that they did not get enough help from the

teacher on things they did not understand and/or on how to correct their errors. Goodlad (2004)

found that although these were important to the students, the use of these techniques along with

praise was used infrequently. Moreover, Goodlad found that although parents and teachers

believed nurturing behaviors and skillful and varied teaching practices such as those noted were

important, the diversity of teaching techniques were actually narrow in scope. Instead, what took place in many classrooms was the institution of systems that minimized the teacher's expression of positive and/or negative emotions, the teacher's focus on upholding systematic relationships among the members of the classroom, and little to no input on the part of the student regarding the activities, direction, and collective goals of their education.

Summary

The literature review examined works that helped define the conceptual frameworks for this study, as well as to shed light on the factors taken into consideration in seeking to answer the research questions. In doing so, the search focused on information that pertained to student engagement, caring and trusting relationships among the students and the teacher, and associated academic gains. Perhaps more important, the search included work that points out that although the findings of many researchers demonstrate that student engagement, caring and trusting relationships lead to academic gains, what really happens in the an overwhelming number of classrooms minimizes the very things that lead to academic success. Instead of developing student engagement and nurturing relationships, the teacher focuses on direct instruction mostly likely geared towards the high-stakes testing. Consequently, a focus of this research was to highlight what has been found to work and what has been found to be ineffective in the way of academic gains. In doing so, this literature review sets the foundation for this study that sought to determine the factors employed by one teacher, in one school where academic gains were accomplished.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

Research Design

This study examined multiple factors that likely contributed to academic success among science students at Westridge Middle School. More specifically, the purpose was to determine if students participating in the Future Problem Solvers (FPS) tutoring program were engaged in school. The study also examined whether or not the program teacher (herein referred to as "the teacher") and students developed a reciprocating relationship based on ethical care, which involved trust and if care and trust resulted in academic gains. This chapter will describe the research methods used to conduct this study including, but not limited to the participants, site selection, instruments, procedures, and basic strategies used for analysis.

Ultimately the study was conducted in order to determine if the students participating in the program were engaged, experienced ethical care, and made academic gains. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores of students participating in the 2013 – 2014 FPS program, did the students demonstrate academic success as evidenced by scoring at a level ≥ 3?

2. Did the teacher promote Student Engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher's responses to the teacher interview questions?

3. Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the students were actively engaged in school programs?

4. Did the student responses on the student interview questions give evidence that they experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher and reciprocated in response?

As a teacher working at the research site, I had the opportunity to know the Future Problem Solvers Program well. The program had been in place for two years. The program was important for research, because knowing the outcomes could contribute highly to the potential for better practices in the education system. The study was accomplished through the use of face-to-face interviews, on-line surveys, and general observations.

Participant Selection

The participants for this study were selected using criterion sampling. Criterion sampling is considered a form of purposeful sampling and is used in qualitative studies. It allows for choosing information-rich cases for deep understanding. In essence, criterion sampling allows for deep understanding of the experiences of participants that are selected based on pre-determined characteristics (Patton, 1990). In this study, the participants were students that all attended Westridge. They were all enrolled in the 8th grade and participated in the Future Problem Solvers Tutoring Program (FSP). The teacher told the students that participated in the FSP program about the program at the beginning of the school year. Approximately 75 students initially wanted to participate in the program. The teacher could not accommodate this number of students due to scheduling factors. The students were chosen based on their ability to participate in the program logistically, as well as their indications of commitment to the program. Some students did leave the tutoring program when transportation and other time commitment issues ensued. Furthermore, some students chose to opt out of the program when they realized

the level of rigor for the program was quite high. Also, some students did not return to the

program because their behaviors interfered with their ability to complete program tasks. As a

result of students leaving the program and/or being able to participate in the research study, the

total number of student participants was 28. The study also included, one teacher (the FSP

teacher) and the principal from Westridge participated.

The 28 student participants and included both males and females whose ages ranged from

12 years to 15 years with a mode of 14 years (57%). The demographics of the students were

similar to the school overall with the exception of gender and language spoken (see tables 11 and

12). More females participated in this program than did males, and all of the participants spoke

English as well as being proficient readers and writers of this language.

Table 10: Student Participant Demographics: Ethnicity and Race

Ethnicity/Race	Percentage
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%
Black, African American, Caribbean	32%
Latino, Hispanic, Spanish Origin	50%
Middle Eastern	4%
Caucasian	4%
Prefer not to answer	3%

Total Number of Participants was 28

Table 11: Student Participant Demographics: Gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	18%
Female	82%

Total Number of Participants was 28

Table 12: Languages Spoken in Students' Homes

Language	Percentage
English	82%
Spanish	50%
Haitian Creole	29%
Other	11%

Table 13: Highest Level of Education for Students' Parents

Highest Level of Education	Percentage
Did not complete high school	19%
Completed High School or GED	22%
Completed Community College or Trade School	22%
Completed a four-year degree	18%
Completed a graduate or professional degree	0%
Student did not know	19%

Table 14: Level of Education Students Plan to Complete

Level of Education	Percentage
High School Diploma or GED	4%
Community College or Trade School	0%
4 Year Degree	21%
Graduate or Professional Degree	68%
Did not know	7%

All of the student participants were enrolled in the program teacher's 8th grade science class. Also, many were enrolled in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program. AVID is an international program designed to close the achievement gap in education. The program strives to do so by providing educators with the training needed to assist students in developing skills necessary for completing high school and post-secondary education programs. AVID is typically designed to work with the "middle of the road" student that needs additional, external support for academic skills development, motivation, and self-esteem improvement.

The program teacher was a Caucasian male with over 15 years teaching experience. He was the Curriculum Team Leader for the Science department at Westridge. His primary duty at the school was to teach 8th grade science, but he also served on the school leadership team representing the science department. The Principal is a Hispanic male with over 18 years of experience in the public school system. He served as a math teacher in the classroom and as an assistant principal prior to being appointed a principal. He has been a principal for 8 years.

The principal granted me permission to conduct the study at the school, following approval from the Orange County Public School System's Department of Accountability, Research, and Assessment. The principal also agreed to participate in the study, as did the teacher.

Initial Participant Invitation

At the beginning of the academic school year (2013 – 2014), the teacher allowed me to visit the FPS program, where I introduced myself as the investigator and presented the basics of the study to the students. At that time, I also provided parental consent forms to the students that felt they wanted to participate in the program. The students were asked to take the forms home and have their parent or legal guardian sign them, indicating that they agreed their child could participate. The students were asked to return the consent forms to the teacher or me. The 28 participants from FPS were selected based on return of the signed, parental consent form.

Site Selections

Where sampling is an integral part of research design, site selection or research settings are of equal importance. Site selection varies from single site to multiple sites depending on the

type of study, the research questions and the project analysis method employed. This study was conducted at one site.

As this study uses mixed methods, one might consider that I chose the participants and the site as a matter of convenience. Convenience sampling and convenience settings are often employed in quantitative studies. According to Patton (1990), convenience sampling is often chosen because it is quick and accessible but he views as not necessarily having a clear goal and/or being strategic. I extended his views to the site selection as well. From the qualitative perspective, the participants were chosen using a criterion sampling method, while the site was chosen as a location where naturalistic observations could occur. The location served as a natural place where the participants were involved in day-to-day school activities (Angrosino and Mays-Perez, 2000). It is understood in qualitative research, the naturalistic observation can include interviews, and in this case, the interviews were conducted in a collaborative manner, allowing for interchange between the interviewer and some of the participants (Angrosino and Mays-Perez, 2000). In the natural setting, this allowed for ease of communications. The researcher also felt that the students were comfortable in this site. Overall, they felt safe and at ease in a familiar environment especially, since the tutoring program was held in the teacher's science classroom in the main building at Westridge. Consequently, the study was conducted in the naturalistic environment at Westridge.

Research Site

Westridge is located in Orlando, Florida. In order to fully understand the research site, it is important to have some understanding about the surrounding community. This is important to this study because greater than 60% of the students attending Westridge walk to the school. This

suggests that the majority of the students live within the surrounding locale. The surrounding community is known to have a diverse population. According to the (U.S. Census Bureau), the average number of persons living in the 32809 zip code area is 18,778 and the median age was 34.1. The racial breakdown reveals that 50.4% identify as White, 49.1% as Black or African American, and 3.1% identifies as other races. Of these, 6.2% identify as Hispanic or Latino. Ironically, the demographics based on race deviates significantly from the racial/ethnic demographics of the school (See Table 1). This community is also known for its high levels of poverty, which is consistent for Title-I schools. According to Bishaw (2013), in 2012 in the national poverty rate was 15.9 percent for all persons and the rate for children under 18 years of age was 21.8% (www.nclej.org/poverty-in-the-us.php). The rates in Florida were 17.1% and for the Orlando Metropolitan Area the rate was 16.9% (Bishaw, 2013). The persons living in the Westridge Middle School attendance areas experienced a higher level of poverty. The average rate for all persons from 2008 – 2012 was 26.8%, while the average for children under 18 years of age was 32.5% (U.S. Census Bureau).

Westridge was founded in 1973 – 1974. The original structure was a one-story building with a track and the addition of portables. In January 2013, the students and staff moved into a state-of-the-art building adjacent to the original property. The main building is 3 stories, but due to the student population size, there are also 22 portables, which also serve as classrooms. The school staff includes 1 principal, 2 assistant principals, 3 deans, 3 guidance counselors, 1 Student Assistant and Family Empowerment Program (SAFE) coordinator, 1 program specialist for ESE services, 3 curriculum coaches, 1 nurse, and 1 media specialist, 84 teachers and 7 supportive staff. The staff is also diverse and the most frequently spoken languages among them include English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, French and some African dialects.

40

The students attending Westridge are also diverse where the majority identifies as Black or African-American and Hispanic (see Table 1), they speak multiple languages, and a significant number speak little to no English. According to the Florida Department of Education (2013), 50.3% of the students qualified as English Language Learners (ELL) students during the 2012-2013 academic year. The students attending Westridge are considered as originating from families living in poverty as evidenced by the number of students attending Westridge that receive free lunches (see Table 1).

In addition to the traditional classrooms, the school houses a full gym, a full cafeteria with auditorium, a media center with computer labs, 3 separate computer labs, a dance classroom, a band and orchestra room, and a large art classroom. The school is a host to numerous before and after school programs offered by the school and/or outside affiliates: Tutoring, YMCA, Future Christian Athletes, and the Boy Scouts. The school also offers athletic programs including basketball, soccer and volleyball. Academically the school offers programs in the core subjects, as well as electives in art, dance, band & orchestra. Westridge is an affiliate of the National Junior Honor Society and its AVID program supports an average of 200 participants each year.

The focus of the school strives to be on the students. The teachers work collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Each grade level PLC is assisted by the PLC liaison. The PLCs meet at the grade level once a week to develop lesson plans & assessments, work on team building, and to develop strategies for teaching and assisting students overall. The PLC groups meet once a week with the subject Curriculum Team Leader. The Team Leaders are members of the Curriculum Leadership Team, which meets monthly. A primary purpose of the

Curriculum Team Leaders is to disseminate information from the Leadership Team meetings to the PLC groups once a month.

In spite of the state-of-the-art building and the numerous programs offered through the school, Westridge has yet to achieve a school grade greater than a "C" as determined by the State of Florida School grading process. The staff continues to work to develop strategies for minimizing the learning gap among the students, and to provide a caring environment that will allow the students to feel safe and thrive. The staff actively participates in online and face-to-face professional development provided by the Orange County Public School System and/or outside affiliates.

Rationale for Mixed Method Studies

The focus of the study is the research problem, and therefore, adopts a pragmatic approach. With this in mind, pragmatists use many approaches when working to understand the problem. As a result, a quantitative study and a qualitative study independent of one another places limitations on the comprehensive understanding of the problem. Creswell (2009) suggests the employment of a mixed study design is appropriate when a research problem cannot be sufficiently studied by using quantitative and qualitative methods independent from one another. Therefore, this study employed a mixed-methods design intended to include both qualitative and quantitative methods. Using both methods can be seen as one complementing the other, while increasing the richness and improving the interpretation (Ebrahim, 2014). The study used a Concurrent Triangulation Strategy, where both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected concurrently allowing for comparisons and lending itself to a shorter time required for data collection (Creswell, 2009).

The specific methods used for this study are:

1. Qualitative

    a. Informal Observations

    b. Face to Face Interviews

    c. Online Surveys

2. Quantitative

    a. On-Line Surveys

    b. Outcome Data from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

Rationale for the Quantitative Method

Most of my prior research has centered on the utilization of the quantitative methodology. My work included studies in oncology, reproductive physiology, as well as eating disorders. These studies took a positivist/post-positivist perspective and employed the components of the scientific method. Quantitative studies traditionally focus on numerical data for the purpose of reductionism, cause and effect, outcome (Creswell, 2009) and correlations. As a result, quantitative data was collected for this study in order to analyze demographic information, group differences and correlated variables. The goal was to examine the differences between various schools demographically and academically (school grades, FCAT scores). The quantitative measures were also intended to demonstrate academic gains. Consequently, the quantitative method is appropriate as one component of this mixed methods study.

Rationale for the Qualitative Method

Given the research questions and the conceptual frameworks used for this investigation, quantitative methods were simply not enough. The quantitative approach often employs larger

subject numbers, probability sampling, and inferential statistical analysis. It does not necessarily

allow for capturing the richness of information (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, the quantitative

method does not easily allow for describing the human condition or as discussed by

Polkinghorne (1983, pg. 203), "the basic structures of lived experience". Consequently,

qualitative methods allows for gathering a richer understanding of the participants' experiences

of student engagement and ethical care.

Rationale for the Qualitative Method: Phenomenological Inquiry

One of the major goals of this study is to gain an understanding of how students and staff

perceived the students' engagement and how the students and staff experienced ethical care. In

this work, I wanted to examine whether or not the students perceived themselves as being

engaged. In addition, it was important to understand the perception of being cared for and

extending that care to others. Furthermore, it was essential to understand the relationship

between the teacher and the students and how this relationship may have impacted academic

gains for the students.

This research is a case study, because it follows the requirements for an in-depth study of

a phenomenon: it does explore, it does describe, it does explain. Furthermore, case studies can

be used in both quantitative and qualitative investigations (Yin, 1981). Additionally, it is also

phenomenological in nature. It is the phenomenological component that distinguishes this work

as a mixed methods process that includes qualitative methodology.

The concept of phenomenology has its origin in philosophy and developed through time

to become both a philosophy and a methodology for research (Winkler & Botha, 2013). The

concept began with earlier philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Perhaps the development of

the idea grew in response to a positivist perspective that one could only understand inquiry through empirical studies that required analysis of numerical data. The early work of 20th century philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer were instrumental in defining phenomenology and specific types. Through their collaboration and debates, phenomenology was established as a way to understand the human experience. Appropriately, this study adopted phenomenology as a method for gathering a rich understanding of the experiences of the students and the teacher in order to sufficiently answer the research questions.

Procedures

1. Due to the age of the participants in this study and the relationship with the Orange County Public School System (OCPS), all required documentation was acquired from the School District, completed and filed in accordance with OCPS policies and the requirements of the University of Central Florida (UCF) Institutional Review Board (IRB) process including parental release forms (see Appendix A), withdrawal forms (see Appendix B and C), and letter of invitation (see Appendix D). All students that wished to participate in the study were required to return a signed Parental Consent Form to the investigator. All forms and data were secured in a safe location offsite and monitored by the investigator.

2. In order to answer the research questions proposed in this study, a mixed methods model was employed. The quantitative data was gained by using FCAT test scores provided by the Florida Department of Education. In addition, data regarding the level of student engagement as perceived by the student was gathered using the Middle Grade Student Survey of Engagement (see Appendix E). Furthermore,

questionnaires designed by this investigator were used to obtain data specific to the perception of the teacher, principal, and students regarding student engagement and ethical care. Also, this investigator made informal observations.

The Research Instruments

The Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement (MGSSE)

As a means of determining the students' level of student engagement, each student was e asked to complete a survey. The survey used for this purpose was the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement. The MGSSE is an adaptation of the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), which was first, administered in 2004 and has been administered by schools across the United States and has been completed by more than 350,000 students since 2006. As a result, the science community considers it a reliable and valid instrument. The HSSSE is housed at the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) office, located at the University of Indiana in Bloomington. The goal of the surveys is to discover the students' beliefs about their experiences in school. The survey was obtained from the HSSSE and the questions were transferred to Survey Monkey. The students completed the survey online via Survey Monkey.

Open Ended Student Questionnaire

The Open Ended Student Questionnaire (see Appendix F) was given to the students online using Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey was be used in order for the students to be able to complete the questionnaire anonymously. The questions included were listed below. The survey included 4 open-ended questions, 1 ranking question, and 1 yes-no question:

1. What do you think is meant by student engagement?

2. Please choose one of the answers below to tell us how much do you trust Mr. Lords.

3. What does Mr. Lords do to show you that he cares about you as a student and to motivate you to participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

4. Do you feel that your participation in the Future Problem Solvers Program, as well as your relationship with your teacher and the other students will help you be a better student?

5. What do you think you do to show Mr. Lords that you trust him?

6. Why did you choose to participate in the Future Problem Solvers Tutoring Program?

Open Ended Teacher and Administrator Questionnaires

The questions that were used for the teacher and principal interviews (see Appendix G) included 6 primary questions. The questions were intended to learn more about the views of the teacher and administrators relative to

- Student engagement

- Ethical care

- Moral education

- Student participation and motivation relative to the Future Problem Solvers Program

The questions were

1. How would you describe student engagement?

2. How would you describe ethical care?

3. How would you describe moral education?

4. How would you describe the level of student engagement at Westridge?

    a. In what ways do you feel students are engaged at Westridge?

      b.   What do you think keeps students from becoming engaged at Westridge?

5.   Thinking about the Problem Solvers Program, over 78 students were interested in participating in the program. However, there was only enough space for 50.

      a.   Why do you think the students wanted to participate in the Problem Solvers Program?

      b.   How do you think the students felt when they were not selected for the program?

      c.   What do you think motivated the students to return to the program week after week?

6.   Thinking about the students in the program,

      a.   How would you describe their relationships with one another?

      b.   How would you describe their relationship with the teacher?

      c.   What do you think the teacher did in order to encourage the students' participation?

      d.   What words do you think the teacher would use to describe the students?

      e.   What words do you think the students would use to describe the teacher?

      f.   What words do you think the students would use to describe their experiences in the program?

Administration of the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement and Student Questionnaires

The students that participated in the research study completed the MGSSE and the questionnaires on two separate occasions 5 months apart: completing a pre and post scenario. The MGSSE and the questionnaires were administered 5 months apart in order for the students to adapt to the program. The questionnaires were not administered at the beginning of the school

year, because the adjustment to the beginning of the school year could have created a confound. The specific dates students were allowed access to the computer lab for completion of the pre-surveys were January 28, 2014, February 7, 2014, and February 11, 2014. The multiple dates were allowed in order to maximize participation and in order to yield the maximum number of completed surveys. The students were allowed access to the computer lab for the post-survey completion on May 22, 2014. The surveys were made available to them on Survey Monkey. The students were provided with the opportunity to complete the surveys in the morning before school in order to maximize autonomy. The teacher informed them of the times and the location: 8:30 A.M. in computer lab 137 located on the first floor in the main building. When the student participants arrived, I greeted them and they were asked to sign in on a sign in sheet. They were then given a code that had been randomly generated by the investigator using an Excel process. The participants were given the URL addresses where they would find the MGSSE survey and the student questionnaire. The URL addresses were also posted on a white board at the front of the computer lab. The students were then allowed to choose the computer of their choice. They were directed to avoid any communications with one another while completing the surveys. They were asked to login into the computers, go to the URL addresses for the surveys and to use the random code given to them on the survey. When the students were finished, they were asked to logoff of the computer. They were asked if they had any questions. No student asked questions and they were released to the cafeteria where they were able to get their school breakfast.

The Interviews

The interview with the teacher was conducted on April 28, 2014 (see Appendix H). It was conducted in tandem by this investigator and the co-investigator, Dr. Carolyn Walker-Hopp. The interview was held at Westridge in Room 117. Room 117 was the location of the teacher's classroom. The interview began at 8:00 A.M. The location was selected in order to maximize the teacher's comfort level. The time was selected in order to minimize noise and the potential for any interruptions. The interview consisted of 6 major, probing questions. Dr. Hopp, following the interview protocol, asked the initial interview question. Mr. Lords answered the questions with an open and honest approach and allowed for probing and follow up questions by this investigator and the co-investigator. The interview was recorded simultaneously on two laptop computers. Both computers were used in order to minimize any loss of data due to technical issues. The interviews were recorded using Audacity™.

The interview process with the principal used the same procedures. The interview was conducted on April 21, 2014 at 8:00 A.M (see Appendix I). The interview was held in the principal's conference room. This provided a comfortable and familiar location for the principal and the time selected reduced any confounds in the way of excessive noise and/or interruptions.

This investigator then transcribed the interviews verbatim. The transcripts were hand coded as a means of identifying the experiences of the teacher relative to the theoretical frameworks: student engagement and ethical care and the components associated with the frameworks. The coding employed for this process was

EE: Emotional Engagement

BE: Behavioral Engagement

T: Trust

EL: Engagement in the learning

M: Modeling

D: Dialogue

P: Practice

C: Confirmation

R: Relationships

Data and Research Questions

The data gathered through the processes described above will be used to answer the 4 research questions set forth in this study. This will be accomplished as follows:

Research Question 1

Research question 1 was designed to determine if students that participated in the FPS program demonstrated academic success by scoring a Level 3 or more on the FCAT. The FCAT scores were be obtained from the Florida Department of Education website. The scores of the students that participated in the program were reported with emphasis on the percentage of students that scored equal to or greater than a Level 3. In addition, the FSP participant scores were statistically analyzed to determine the degree to which the students in the FSP program out performed in comparison to other Westridge 8th grade students that did not participate in the program.

Research Question 2

This question attends to whether or not the teacher promoted student engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship with the students. The data used to analyze

this question was taken from the teacher interview. The interview transcripts were coded and themes were identified. The identified themes were examined from a phenomenological perspective and conclusions were drawn.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 was administered in order to gain an understanding of the degree to which the student participants perceived themselves as actively engaging in school. The questions and responses on the MGSSE were clustered and analyzed statistical measures that identified the degree to which the students were engaged.

Research Question 4

The questions asked on the student questionnaire were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Questions 1,3,4,5,6 were transcribed and coded using the same codes that were used in the transcripts from the teacher and principal interviews. The identified themes were examined from a phenomenological perspective and conclusions were drawn. The first question was analyzed quantitatively in order to determine the degree to which the students trusted the teacher based on the results of a ranked (Likert) scale.

Summary

The methods used in this study were chosen in order to create a mixed-methods design which offered a rich investigation that examined student engagement and ethical care. The study site was chosen because it allowed for the research to be conducted in a place where the participants were involved in daily activities on a consistent basis. In essence it provided for naturalistic observations, which include interviews. Also, as the researcher, I had a relationship

with this site and felt confident that the students were familiar with the location and they were comfortable in the environment and were safe. The study participants were selected using criterion sampling and all participants met the criterion for inclusion.

The instruments used in this study included the MGSSE, which is a valid and reliable instrument that measures student engagement. In addition, anonymous student questionnaires were administered via Survey Monkey. The investigator and co-investigator in tandem using pre-selected questions, formulated in a questionnaire interviewed the teacher and the principal separately.

The data analysis used for this study included both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a rich means by which to address and answer the research questions. The table below shows the data sources, purpose, affiliated research question and the instrument.

Table 15: Data Collection: Sources, Purpose, Research Questions, and Instrumentation

Source of Data	Purpose of Data Collection	Research Question	Instrument
Demographic Data	To establish a description of the student population attending the school.		
Informal Observations	Gather information about the school, program, and participants	1,2,3,4	
Science Test Scores	To determine the level to which students in the FSP program made academic gains. To establish if the FSP program participants performed better on the science test in comparison to other students attending the same school	1	FCAT 2.0 2014
Interviews	To determine if the teacher promoted student engagement and developed a trusting relationship with the students. To determine if the principals observations and views aligned with the teachers.	2	Teacher and principal open-ended questionnaires.
Survey	To gain an understanding of the students engagement and established relationships at school.	3	Middle School Survey of Student Engagement
Survey	To gain an understanding of the student's perspective on the development of a trusting and reciprocating relationship with the teacher.	4	Student open-ended interview questions via Survey Monkey.

Positionality Statement

As a child, I missed school on a habitual basis what one might call today habitually truant.

We were poor. My mother was a single parent. Going to school was just logistically hard.

Ironically in spite of chronic absenteeism I had many friends at school and wonderful teachers,

but there was something missing for me. When I got to high school, I found some of what was missing. I found things in which to engage; I had teachers that believed in me and took risks in my education, I found places in that high school where there was flexibility. In that place, there were pockets were I belonged. As a result, I have always been curious about what works and what does not work in the public school system.

As a teacher now and a researcher, I am keenly aware that in the current school system there is a push towards rigidity and accountability. I often suspect that this is a road on which we are being lead to ruin. If I were a child now, there is a much higher probability than 40 to 50 years ago that I would be in court for rampant truancy. If I were a child in school now, I would drop out as soon as I could.

I work in a Title I school now, where there are many students that come from single parent homes. They are poor and logistically getting to school is sometimes difficult. And yet, 28 of those students not only attended school, but they showed up for tutoring at 8:00 in the morning. I was drawn to that phenomenon. I wondered what lead those students to walk to school in most cases, go to a classroom, engage in learning and develop relationships with the teacher and each other? In spite of public school rigidity and high-stakes testing and enormous focus on accountability, what made those students show up consistently? What I believe I found was a tutoring program that encouraged the students; a program that was supported by the school and gave the participants a place to grow and belong.

As a teacher at that school and a researcher, I wanted to know more about what happened in that classroom. I wanted to conduct a research study that shed some light on something that seemed to be working for the students. As I watched the students, I realized that what was happening involved more than high-stakes testing. Out of those informal observations, I realized

the program was based on two conceptual frameworks: student engagement and ethical care.

Moreover, I realized that the concepts were not exclusive from one another in that setting. With

this in mind, I designed a study that would allow for a phenomenological study in a naturalistic

setting. The study included informal observations, teacher and principal interviews, student

surveys and questionnaires. It included four research questions that directly related to the

conceptual frameworks.

The study was conducted not only to determine the degree to which the conceptual

frameworks were present, but also to uncover positive practices that not only influence student

gains, but also relationships that promote healthy students and promising members of society.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine if: the 8th grade students enrolled in Westridge Middle School and that participated in the Future Problem Solvers Program (FPS), scored at a significantly higher level on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Science Test than 8th grade students attending Westridge who did not participate in the program; if the same students that participated in FPS also engaged in school; and if there was a caring and trusting relationship experienced between the students and the program teacher.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, four research questions were established:

1. When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores for 8th grade students at Westridge Middle School, will the 8th grade science students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers program score significantly higher on the FCAT Science test in comparison to 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

2. Did the teacher promote Student Engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher's responses to the teacher *Interview Questions*?

3. Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the students were actively engaged in positive school related activities and relationships programs?

4. Did the student responses on the *Student Interview Questions* give evidence that they experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher?

The research questions were answered using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Question 1 was analyzed using the non-parametric statistics where it is expected that the means of two groups differ from one another. In this the data was analyzed using the Mann Whitney U Test, which was based on three assumptions

1. The dependent variable is measured at the ordinal level.

2. The independent variable consists of two categorical, independent groups.

3. The participants do not belong to the same group.

The data analysis for Question 1 met the assumptions of the test:

1. The independent variables were two separate groups: those that participated in the FSP program (n=34) and those that did not (n=356).

2. The dependent variables were considered ordinal data.

Research question 3 was analyzed using univariate analysis, where frequency distributions and mode analyses were generated. The purpose of these was to demonstrate higher rates of engagement among program participants, as well as to compare student responses on the pre and post questionnaires.

Research questions 2 and 4 were analyzed using qualitative methodology. The general procedure for the qualitative analysis was accomplished by following the steps shown in the figure below (Creswell, 2009).

Validating Accuracy of the Information

Interpreting the Meaning of Themes/Descriptions

Interrelating Themes/Descriptions

Themes   Descriptions

Coding the Data

Reading Through All Data

Organizing and Preparing Data for Analysis

Raw Data
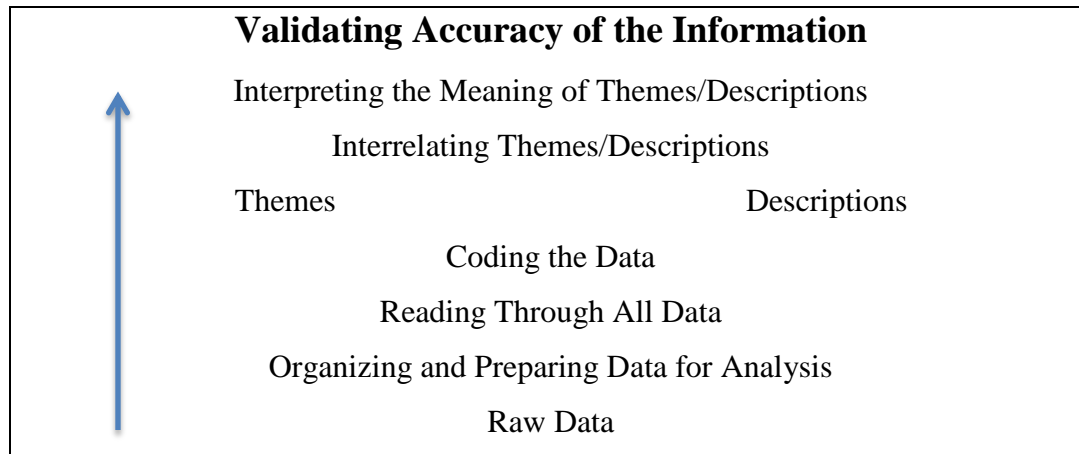
Figure 1: Qualitative Analysis Procedure

Open-ended questions were used in face-to-face interviews with staff, as well as online responses for gathering information from students. Initial themes were identified and combined based on commonality. The interview questions and online responses were transcribed and coded. The initial coding system used to identify broad themes was based on the conceptual framework of ethical care and student engagement. After several reads and recoding, the codes were narrowed down to the most common core:

1. Student engagement which includes

    a. Emotional engagement – valuing school, participation, and a sense of belonging

    b. Behavioral and learning engagement – getting to class on time, expending the

       effort needed to complete assignments in school and homework

2. Ethical Care

    a. Modeling – showing the cared for what it really means to care.

    b. Dialogue – a conversation that begins with a dialogue.

    c. Practice – engage in caring.

d. Confirmation – affirming and encouraging the best in others.

e. Relationships and Trust

Findings

Research Question 1

This study intended to determine if students participating in the FSP Program made academic gains in science above the gains of other science students that did not participate in the program:

> When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores for 8th grade students at Westridge Middle School, will the 8th grade science students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers program score significantly higher on the FCAT Science test in comparison to 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

A total of 390 8th grade students completed the FCAT Science test. Of these, 33 were participants in the FSP program, while 357 were not participants. The initial analysis based on average FCAT scores indicates a difference between the two groups.

Average FCAT Scores for Participants vs. Non-Participants
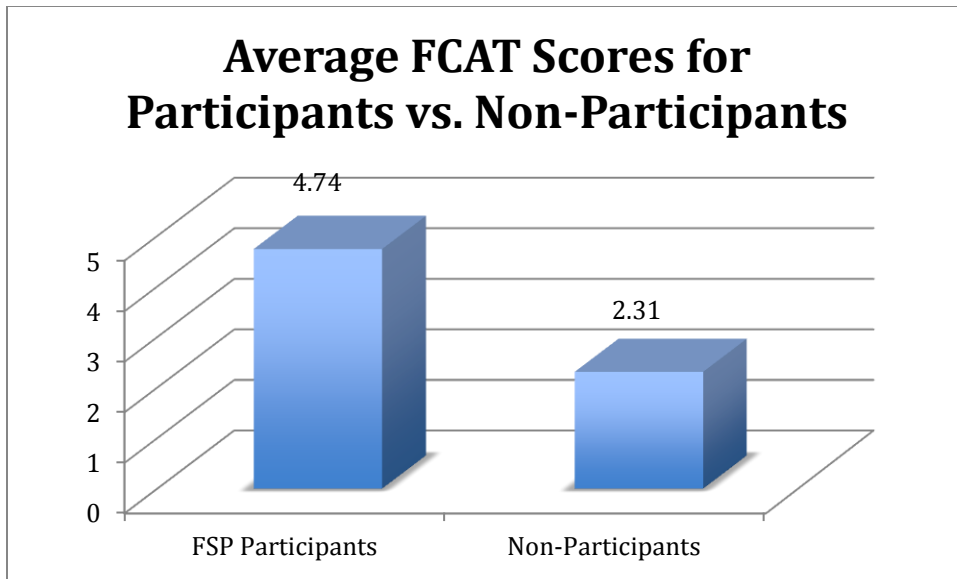
Figure 2: FCAT Score Comparison

This question was further analyzed using the Mann Whitney U test, which demonstrated significance between the two groups. Using the science FCAT scores for 8th grade students attending Westridge Middle School. The FCAT scores were entered using SPSS. The data were analyzed using the non-parametric statistic Mann Whitney U.

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks

	FPS	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
FCAT	Did Not Participate	356	182.37	64924.50
	Did Participate	34	332.96	11320.50
	Total	390		

Test Statistics[a]

	FCAT
Mann-Whitney U	1378.500
Wilcoxon W	64924.500
Z	-7.794
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Grouping Variable: FPS

Figure 3: Science FCAT Scores Comparison: FSP Participants versus Non-Participants

According to the results derived from the Mann Whitney U test, there was a significant difference between the two groups: participants and non-participants. The significance was established where p = .00. The results indicated that the students that participated in the FSP program had overall higher scores on the FCAT science test than ~~did~~ the students that did not participate in the program.

Research Question 2

Two main components of this study were directed at the teacher's promotion of student engagement and their relationship with the students. Research question 2 was designed to answer this question:

Did the teacher promote student engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher's responses to the teacher Interview Questions?

In order to answer this question, qualitative methods were used to gather data. The methods involved a face-to-face interview with the teacher (Scott) that facilitated the FSP program. In addition, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the school principal (Dr. Camacho). The interviews were conducted in tandem by the investigators: Maggie Anderson and Dr. Hopp. These were conducted using a defined protocol. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded based on common themes. The codes were used to identify evidence of promoting student engagement and the presence of ethical care. The qualitative process was used to gather information that would lead to a deeper understanding of the teacher's role in student engagement and ethical care as these relate to the students participating in the FSP program.

Student Engagement

The interview responses from the teacher give evidence that he promoted student engagement. He did this through a variety of ways. He encouraged them, he challenged them, he made them feel that they had a place in school where they fit in and would grow academically. Through his interactions with the students and his encouragement, they found a place where valuing school and participating was accepted. They also found a place where they had a sense of belonging.

The FSP program started at the beginning of the school year in August. The program was offered before school three days a week beginning at 8:00 AM. This meant that the students FSP participants arrived for school an hour and 20 minutes early in order to participate in the

program. As a teacher at the school, I often watched them as they encountered the front door.

They resembled many middle school students. They looked sleepy and did not give the

impression that they wanted to be at school at 8:00 in the morning. As I watched them later in

the morning, they were engaged. Sometimes I walked into the classroom where the program was

being held. The participants were engaged in problem solving activities. They looked more

awake and not as gloomy about being there so early. Sometimes they were in the hallways,

testing the cars they made out of wood and balloons. During these times, they were laughing and

highly energetic. Like many, I often wondered what gave them that drive to be committed to the

program and the teacher. During the interview, the teacher's responses answered not only the

research questions, but also the questions I had from a personal inquiry. Early on in the

interview he talked about what he taught during the FSP tutoring. He stated,

> I basically teach them from day one what they should have learned 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.
>
> I go with a backwards curriculum where I give them little activities to do based on the big
>
> ideas that they need to cover for FCAT so it's all about how to teach FCAT a different
>
> way in a little extra time to do it.

Shortly after this statement, he solidified that the students were committed to learning what they

needed to know and were willing to do so before school started. His statement does more than

solidify their commitment, however, it also points out a time in the program where he allowed

the students to begin the process of fitting in by socializing with the other participants. Instead

of leaving the classroom after breakfast to be with the general population of the school, he

allowed them to stay with their program peers. I observed this event on more than one occasion,

and the students seemed comfortable within the environment and with one another. They were

sitting in groups, casually around the tables. There was laughter and light bantering. In some cases there were seriously conversations reminiscent of consoling one another.

> The kids have been willing to come. I've had kids since August that have been here religiously straight through the line and it's good to see them every day in a different light because after I do this [*sic*] teach the lesson) they go get breakfast and then they just chill in the classroom for about ½ hour before the bell rings.

In the interview when the teacher was asked directly how he would describe student engagement, his answer was brief, but a powerful testament to the students' desire to engage and stretch academically. I observed his mannerism while he was answering this question. He was smiling and had a look often associated with someone being proud of another or in this case proud of others. And perhaps of himself, as he provided them with the extra support they needed.

> The engagement of this um problem solving program um typically it's they want to come to do extra work extra time extra ideas extra ways to get an edge…

When talking about the students developing a sense of belonging, the teacher made reference to himself as a parent and the importance of having a family like environment. He explained that he let them see a side of him they may be lacking in their home life. Again, he also allowed the students the opportunity to be part of something.

> I'm a parent I understand what's going on um but you give them ideas that you know there's other ways to do things cuz the middle school age it's usually the wrong way because they don't think before they do it and by giving them a chance to see me in the morning and see me doing something a little different they thrive on that because for some reason they don't have that anymore they don't sit at a dinner table anymore and

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talk to their family they're always on the internet this and that and there's no social aspect so they come in here for that social end of the deal which is good to see…

During my visits to the program, I not only observed the students interacting with the teacher and each other, but I also noticed that there were more girls in the program than there were boys. I wondered if this caused any problems for the boys or the girls or the program. It turns out the teacher described this phenomenon in such as way that it appears the difference in numbers between male and female students was a win-win. By allowing the program to be diverse, the teacher opened doors for both males and females.

Maggie: "So Scott do you have some of the boys that do come?"

Scott: "Yes I do."

Maggie: "They're not as many clearly."

Scott: "They're not as many and those boys tend to they're intelligent and they
            don't quite fit in with the rest of the gang so why not come with 20 girls?
            It's a way of saying Ok I need to fit in somewhere and these kids are good
            kids but they don't want to deal with all the drama that's involved in
            everyday life so [*sic*] they come to the program instead."

Dr. Hopp: "So when they boys come um they see what's going on"

Scott: "They interact with the girls just fine."

Dr. Hopp: "They interact but do they do they finally kind of get in with the work and
            do their work as well?"

Scott: "Oh yea oh yea they do just as much."

The teacher gave other information during the interview that described the participants as wanting to be successful and they want to be with him: a teacher that will motivate and help them get to that point of success.

> …they know that I'm here to do a job my job is to get them from point A to point Z now the problem is a lot of the teachers along their way in their opinion haven't done their job so they come to me for that support of you have it you know what it takes you've been there let me ride on your coat tails and take you know they wanna come with me to that Z.

The teacher spoke more about the students' craving engagement and academic success, as well as rising to the occasion when they are challenged. He used his words to draw an analogy between their desire for success and the sweet taste of chocolate. As I sat in the interview, his words were vivid, he was smiling, and I could taste the chocolate in my own mouth. I could feel that desire one has when they experience success and they want more; I could relate to the analogy as I thought about my own education and hopes of being successful. I remembered my 7th grade science teacher, Mr. Schwartz. He was known as a difficult teacher, not liked by many students. I on the other hand, I loved Mr. Schwartz. He was tough and challenging, but his challenge was the foundation of my success in his class. Perhaps in the same way that Mr. Schwartz' challenges kept me returning to his class, the teacher's challenge to his students in this study kept them returning to the program

> Dr. Hopp: "So why do you think… um… the kids come to the problem solvers program?"

> Scott: "They typically come because what else are they gonna do what else are they gonna do and if a person is offering me something that I need I really really need, why not try it why not get into it and say lets jump in all the

way so I I feel that they come one because there's nothing else better to do and that's typically what the mornings are all about and two they want that extra that teachers don't give them."

Dr. Hopp: "So when they discover that what you are actually doing is academic you know and that you you've… I gather that you can probably disguise that pretty well… but once they you know you've got a got a pretty high rate of return. You know that the kids keep coming. So why do you think that is?"

Scott: "Because once they once you taste the chocolate you want more once you get that sweet taste in your mouth of success. Now I I not only do I do the backwards curriculum I say ok let's see what you did in 6th grade and I also say ok before an exam lets go over it lets go over it in a little bit more detail. And you give that kid that extra power to say I'm gonna be successful on that test. Now most kids fail my tests 90% of my kids fail my tests now. Why? It's because I push them off the cliff and they don't know how to get back. So I give them a problem that is so difficult for them they don't get it do I fail them for that no I back track and say ok well why did you do this or why did this happen and again they want more just from that so."

The teacher expanded on his understanding that the students rose to the challenges that he presented before them. Perhaps the challenges he presented were palatable to the students because they experienced them in the program where they felt safe and secure. When he spoke of this type of challenge he was adamant, his voice grew slightly. I felt a sense that he meant business, and I suspected that the students felt this as well. In spite of his animation, his face was

kind. In that moment I could feel why the students felt safe with him. He gave the impression of

balancing business with openness and compassion.

Scott: "They consistently need to be pushed I have pushed more this year than I

ever pushed and it like sometimes it's like a deer in the headlights it's like

what are you doing it's like all this and you're giving it up your behavior is

now starting to suck why is that and you consistently have to reinforce

what your all about and what you want all these kids to do. I mean they

had a test where I virtually went over every single answer except lets say

like five of them, and these kids failed the test and you go, what are you

doing? Are you giving up on me now three weeks to go before FCAT

what are you doing? And I blasted them. I'm like you know what I'm

gonna do… I'm gonna go ahead and put this on progress… I'm gonna

make you eat this grade and they look at me like you wouldn't dare and I

did and they look at me like holy crap I got like a 70 now, and I'm an A

student I'm like cause you're not doing your job I don't give you a free

pass because your nice to me cause you want a hug every. I don't give you

a free pass… free passes are not allowed, it's all about you push, you push.

you push. and then you give up… you push some more."

Dr. Hopp: "Right."

Scott: "There's no such thing as giving up and unfortunately this class they're

giver uppers they like to give up without trying so."

Dr. Hopp   "So then after you push you know and they know you're gonna push and

you've had them since august right?

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Scott   "m hum."

Dr. Hopp: "Ok they know that you're gonna push… they know how you're going to react so what kind of reaction do you get … I mean do they…?"

Scott: "I have some kids that don't come back."

Dr. Hopp: "Oh."

Scott: "I have some kids that say ok this is too much for me I have too much on my table and this is just not what I'm looking for but most of the time they step up their game and they'll say hmmm I really need to finish what I started and unfortunately you know their home life and their friend life is not the same."

Dr. Hopp: "Right."

Scott: "Because they never can finish what they started they never can communicate and here it's you know if I give you that sense of security that you know you can do it you can do it you can do it then I push them I knock them down all the time then I pick them up I knock them down and I pick them up it's that tough love and by knowing that they want that they consistently will fight."

During my informal observations of the program, what ultimately struck me was that the students were engaged in learning. Moreover, they resembled my own family. As the youngest of ten children, we are ethnically diverse and there are far more females than males. We are comfortable in each other's home. We gather in times of joy and in times of sorrow. We bicker and hug and laugh and cry, but we support one another through the phases and challenges of life. When I watched the students in the program gathering in the morning, they were learning but

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they also reminded me of my family. In the interview it was evident that the teacher had allowed for a "family" to emerge where success was a family value. His words substantiated my observation.

> Dr. Hopp: "Let's talk about the kids some more… um how would you describe their relationships with one another?"
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> Scott: "In that program they're pretty close now again you have little groups you have groups like these are the geeks and these are the jocks these are the this so they find their own little niche within the class and sometimes you have the um you know kind of like sibling relationships where they battle each other but it's more of a way of it's pretty close I never had a problem in FCAT tutoring as far as relationships are concerned I say it's family if you don't want to be in my family get the heck out it's all about you have to be wanting to help out another I always tell them relationships are never 50-50 and they go what are you talking about they they have to be and I go no because sometimes that partner needs a little extra sometimes they need a little bit less and you need a little bit more and if you balance it so again it's never 50-50 cause it's not life isn't fair and you gotta figure out how to get there… how to be successful in life.

Ethical Care

The interview responses give evidence that the teacher developed and trusting relationships with his students through the process of ethical care. He modeled for the students what it really means to care. He had conversations with the students that opened the door for

understanding caring relationships. He engaged in caring relationships with the students and they responded in kin. He affirmed and encouraged the best in his students. Not only do his responses give evidence of the development of trusting and caring relationships with his students during which this study was conducted, his responses also give evidence of the existence of healthy trusting and caring relationships with prior students.

The teacher started the program off at the beginning of the year with a conversation about caring. The conversation was also a form of confirming and encouraging the best in his students.

> They want to come to extra work extra time extra ideas extra ways to get an edge where in regular classrooms a lot of teachers don't give that edge they don't even give them what they need so they come to me because for some reason they see that from day one I tell them you know it's all about care it's all about you know what do you feel what you need to do.

In another response, the teacher opened up about his relationship with a prior student. He spoke about her in a soft tone as a father might about his own child. His words were clear that they had developed a reciprocating relationship, one in which he continued to model caring and to affirm and encourage the best in the girl.

> I had one girl in mass she spoke no English she came to my morning tutoring she came to my after school program I basically was her kind of like surrogate dad because her dad was in jail and she spoke no English she passed the state exam in science at the end of the year. And people go well how the heck did you do that it's because she cared and she understood that I cared and that pushed her to do what she had to do.

When the teacher was asked what he meant by care, he answered in such a way that showed he not only modeled caring but he also engaged in caring about others.

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Dr. Hopp: "You talk about care, which takes me to the next question um and I want to expand on it a little bit before I get to the next um the other part of it. So when you say care tell me what you by that?"

Scott: "They know I'll do anything for them 24-7 they have my email I've had [*sic*] people that are you know crying because their parents are doing this their parents you know I'm not a counselor but for some reason they come to me for any sort of assistance moral support anything that says ok I have another person I can go to."

His words also echo a sense of trust on the part of his students, where the students engaged in reciprocation that was built on trust. He is clear in his description that he models the idea that caring is not always the easy going expression of concern, but that there are times when caring is expressed through forms of "tough love".

Dr. Hopp: "And at the especially at the middle school age they're in such a state of you know."

Scott: "But the females need that sort extra sort of loving care and they need to see that somebody sees that and once they grab onto that they will do anything for me so the caring is a two way street it's not just one way they see that I will do anything for them and now they'll do anything for me."

Dr. Hopp: "OK."

Scott: "But it's a battle it's not always I'm not always Mr. goodie two shoes all the time.   I go off on them I make sure that they have what they have so it's that love hate relationship that I have constantly with them."

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The teacher recognized that teaching is about relationships and breaking down walls of mistrust in order to develop the teacher − student relationship. In my observations, he not only spoke of this idea but he also modeled it. I frequently saw him standing at his door during class transitions. He was smiling and laughing and talking with his students. When he was facilitating the FSP classes, he did not leave the students in isolation. Rather he engaged with them in groups or individually. He redirected them when necessary, but he also laughed with them and encouraged them to think on their own; to stretch and grow. He answered their questions about a variety of topics, and as important he asked them questions. He asked them questions that were specific about their needs and challenged them to think about what they needed and how to accomplish these goals. In his interview he shares some thoughts related to the concepts of modeling caring, as well as the development of trust and relationships

Scott: "They know that I'm here to do a job my job is to get them from point A

            to point Z. Now the problem is a lot of the teachers along their way. In

            their, the students [*sic*] opinion haven't done their job. So they come to

            me for that support of you have it you know what it takes you've been

            there let me ride on your coat tails and take you know they wanna come

            with me to that Z. So they don't want to stop, because it seems like all

            their education so far in their life it stops and then over the summer it goes

            backwards and they they forget everything. And, it's maybe because in

            my opinion the teacher doesn't fit in with the kids. Now it's that

            relationship that you have to have and a lot of teachers the kids put up

            their wall because the teacher says something to them and the wall never

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breaks down. So I tend to break the wall down if I even have one at the

end of the year."

Dr. Hopp: "Right right and there's always that you know I taught as a Seminole

school teacher and you know they come in after the summer as you say

and you start talking about anything that has anything to do with academia

um what I found was that when they could make a connection. Like when

you get your kids back do you find that there has been some sort of a

connection made and they'll go from that point you know with you um.

And maybe you haven't had that experience with them yet but which

relates to another part of our question in terms of defining education we

have care we have ethical care how would you define moral education

Scott: "A lot of these kids don't know how to deal with things they've never been

taught they don't understand the difference between right and wrong

because you know they learn it the home life which is totally different

than the sort of friendship life which is totally different than the school life

and they have to try to battle which one is one and so they come to me for

you know I have a problem with this what do you do. So they love to ask,

these kids love to questions so not only am I teaching them the curriculum

from back to forth but I'm also saying ok well what do you need at this

time what I can I help you with this time and as soon as you open a floor

up they open up and you see them in a totally different light where in

classroom they're like they're listening but they're not always there.

Where in the morning it's more like they need to know the difference

between right and wrong. And I say every day you choose your friends

wisely you choose what you are and by doing the extra two hours a week

with them they seem to understand that there is a different life than what

they have and when they get in higher education they're going to

understand what I'm talking about it's not just now I have kids from 15

years ago that still email me thank me for why I touch them in a totally

different light than everybody else did and it's not that I'm doing it cuz

you know I'm whacked it's because teaching is about caring teaching is

about showing them the difference between right and wrong and a lot of

teachers don't do that."

In a simple statement, the teacher speaks boldly about the effort he puts forward in

helping the students. He explains that as a result of his giving effort, the students do the same in

return. His words epitomize the concept of reciprocation that is based on both parties giving

effort to one another.

I'm like because they go forth and give me the effort that I give them. And, because I

give it to them, they give it back to me.

His actions and responses in the interview give further evidence that he frequently

models care and the recipients respond in kind. This relationship involves dialogue and

engagement that is balanced with boundaries that are necessary for the development of healthy

teacher – student relationships. In my observations he is at his classroom door throughout the

day during transitions performing his required duties of monitoring the hallways and guiding

students to make good choices. He doesn't, however, give the impression that he is simply there

to take attendance or to assure compliance in the hallways; instead his actions demonstrate care

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for the students. The students gather around his doorway and to talk with him and their peers. There is active engagement that exceeds the perfunctory activities of both the teacher and the students. Instead, their actions are more often those consistent with expressions of concern and care for one another. The words throughout his interview confirm that my observations are consistent with his perspectives as noted in these interview statements.

Maggie: "And how do you come to know that how do you come to establish that relationship so that the kids share with you or how do you know this population."

Scott: "You gotta talk to them. You have to not just say ok what are your favorite subjects at the beginning of the year you can't do that you have to be one on one with those kids every once in a while they need that extra you go out in the hallway they need that extra I mean I'll have a crowd hanging around me I mean I have 30 hugs a day just because the kid understands that I'm there for them there's nothing like that."

Maggie: "And how do you set excuse me how do you set boundaries with the kids how do you think you've established a boundary so those kids know where that line is."

Scott: "Because I I kind of it's not like where I show it they understand it based on my disposition my face my understanding I'm there but there is a teacher student boundary am I the boss you are the people you have to understand that there is and it's not that I say it they automatically understand what's going on. "

Maggie: "OK"

Scott: "And that's been throughout the whole years."

Dr. Hopp: "And you set those boundaries and they understand what they are."

Scott: "Yeah there just like sort of magical boundaries that they know not to not to cross and again everybody I have that gives it all they got it's kind of like family and family doesn't exist anymore in a lot of places and you go ok since this kid is misplaced maybe mom and dad broke up the kid needs somebody and I'm that extra person just in case and for some reason they always go to that side."

In points in the interview it was clear that the teacher's responses involving student engagement and ethical care were not always separate and distinct from one another. In cases, the two conceptual frameworks merged into one. Both were present simultaneously. This was clear in the teacher's explanation regarding the participants' relationships with one another. In this case the teacher not only dialogued with the students and modeled ethical care, but he also provided the opportunity for the participants to develop caring relationships with one another. In doing, the students experienced emotional engagement through their sense of belonging.

Dr. Hopp: "Let's talk about the kids some more… um how would you describe their relationships with one another?"

Scott: "In that program they're pretty close now again you have little groups you have groups like these are the geeks and these are the jocks these are the this so they find their own little niche within the class and sometimes you have the um you know kind of like sibling relationships where they battle each other but it's more of a way of it's pretty close I never had a problem in FCAT tutoring as far as relationships are concerned I say it's family if

you don't want to be in my family get the heck out it's all about you have

to be wanting to help out another I always tell them relationships are never

50-50 and they go what are you talking about they they have to be and I go

no because sometimes that partner needs a little extra sometimes they need

a little bit less and you need a little bit more and if you balance it so again

it's never 50-50 cause it's not life isn't fair and you gotta figure out how to

get there… how to be successful in life.

In his role as the facilitator of the program, the teacher also went beyond the original

goals of the program, which was tutoring. In addition, he sought to bring out the best in students

by providing them with leadership opportunities. He established a recycling program with the

participants, which gave them a sense of pride. I was privileged to observe these students as they

entered my classroom to pick up the recycled paper. They were so engaged, pleasant and eager

with their roles. They perform their duties with diligence, the whole time smiling and

developing a relationship with me. Through this program, he affirmed and encouraged the best

in the participants.

| Scott: | "I've really started a program and this year with my Tuesday Thursday I've also thrown in the recycling program and that gets a lot of other kids that ok well now I actually have title and I have a little badge that I go around and now I'm the boss you know I can walk around." |
| Maggie: | "And they are so funny they come to my class and they're just like they kind of beam with pride to pick up my recycled stuff. It is just the funniest thing to watch them." |

Perhaps the most critical example of the development of a trusting caring relationship and the confirmation of the relationship occurred with a student that had participated in the program the year prior to this study. It is clear from the interview that the teacher had maintained a teacher-student relationship with the girl that expanded past her being in the program. The exchange was moving and was affirming that there was a trusting relationship that was embedded with advice and encouragement. The fact that the student sought out the teacher for this advice demonstrates a type of reciprocation that can only exist in the presence of established trust and a foundation of care. Moreover, it was a relationship that aligned with student engagement. The student returned to the school it is evident she felt safe and nurtured and belonged.

Dr. Hopp: "That's all the questions we have is there anything else you want us to know. "

Scott: "Uh just one of these things that was kind of interesting yesterday sort of broke my heart but heather who was in my future problem solvers group last year she was my student assistant last year she's I always say you go through my class and if you have these three criteria you're good to go 'blood, sweat, tears' and last year I made her have all three and she's you know she'll sweat it out but it was a paper cut I gave her so there's your blood. She comes back yesterday she comes back because one she has service hours to do for the high school and she goes I have to tell you something. What is it is is drama is a boyfriend is she goes I don't know how to handle something and I need help and I go ok well what is it she goes death it rung a bell and I'm like there was a fire in the apartment complex and she goes I go is it about the fire she goes yes and I go was it

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about the fire this morning at the apartment complex I guess it was a

mother and two kids."

Dr. Hopp: "Yes."

Scott: "It was her relatives and she did not know how to handle it she goes how

do you handle it Mr. Lords what do you do and I'm like your handling it

pretty well and she's not like I don't know how to handle it and she starts

breaking down so I was that extra sort of you know she needed it and how

do you do that but she insisted that she had to come see me because she

didn't know how to handle something."

The Principal's View

In an environment where naturalistic observations occur, there are often many actors co-existing in that environment. Their views and thoughts can be germane to the phenomenon under examination, because they offer a lens through which the researcher can gain an enriched perspective: a lens similar to or different from the actual participants. In this study, the principal provided the external lens. I work closely with the principal. I have always found him to be a man of his word. He exudes a faith in the success of the students. He often engages with them in the hallways and gives them shout outs during the morning announcements. He is a man of sincerity and shares his limited time willingly with staff and students. On the organization chart, I am his subordinate. In everyday life, however, I am his friend. I trust him and I trust his lens to be based on a foundation of honesty and integrity.

When asked directly how he defined student engagement, the principal was clear and articulate. He spoke like a man who had given this concept much thought. He was specific and

inclusive and spoke about engagement that encompasses various aspects of a student's life. He didn't speak in random theoretical terms, but in words that gave the impression he embodied the concept.

Maggie: "So we are asking you how you would define student engagement?"

Dr. Camacho: "It's exactly that its interchange with involvement staying involved in an activity um taking part in an activity being part of an organization involving one's self um whether it be with a club whether it be with a sport but its occupy ones time in an organization or a group that has a common goal common direction common division."

Dr. Hopp: "So in the classroom that would um relate to in terms of what I hear you say if there involved how would you relate that to what goes on in the class."

Dr. Camacho: "Class well it's really a shift from the instruction model as opposed to sitting an listening anymore it's now teachers are taking the facilitator role and students become more engaged with the material as opposed to sit and listen memorize it and restate for an assessment now they have to be able to interact with knowledge and not only do and as a matter of fact I was watching interestingly Ted Talk last night about involvement. That which we get involved or engaged ourselves in are the ones we will tend to have more knowledge in afterwards its practical its hands on and um the source to learning is experience um and exposure to a situation but as far as engagement that that takes it to a different level where you are emerged in it your interacting with um if we're going to refer to the classroom your

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interacting with knowledge interaction with others and the teacher

themselves take again more of a facilitator role as opposed to just

remember this information and restate it later."

The interview with the principal also gave evidence of not only his awareness of student

engagement, but also that he promoted the concept within the school. He allowed for teachers to

offer programs that encouraged student engagement and ethical care and gave the credit to the

teachers; perhaps evidence of his own confirmation through ethical care.

Maggie: "Dr. Camacho here at West Ridge how would you describe the level of

student engagement?"

Dr. Camacho: "The level of student engagement right now our student body of about

1250 students if I were to add up all of our sports all of our clubs morning

tutoring now I will include our after school tutoring we have throughout

the year I'm going to venture to say we about 400 and now if you include

our bands orchestra our dance clubs and so forth now we're were

blooming up to 500 students that are involved in these activities there's

extracurricular actives as well so when we're talking about our

involvement here and how students are engaged its continuing to increase

just in my tenure I've started the Boys Scouts um through the support of

Ms. Wong I've started the uh Fellowship of Christian Athletes through Ms.

Salters and to me it's about listening to where teachers express their

interests also. Because you have to have teachers that are also that want to

lead these things so to me my goal is to always provide teachers the

resources the things they need to make things happen. Um I'm proud to

say that neither one of those ideas came from me they came from our teachers and I said where do I sign. How do you do it I as a leader have to find my shining stars that are going to help me create that culture that I referred to earlier and if we can create our culture based on organizations like the Boy Scouts that deal with moral education service to community to self to others then I know were heading in the right direction and those are the organizations those are the opportunities I want to continue to increase in our school because the message that they share because of the moral teachings that they share."

Not only did the principal have a definition for student engagement, he also expressed his thoughts regarding the concept of ethical care. His words are thoughtful and gives a sense of what he believes it truly means to provide an environment where ethical care is crucial to the success of the students and staff. His words parallel those of the teacher whose responses indicated that he believed teaching is about caring and relationships.

Dr. Hopp: "OK so how would you describe ethical caring?"

Dr. Camacho: "Well ethical when I think of ethics I think of morals now um but ethical care is what um even Arthur Foshay wrote in his book the curriculum matrix there is a different side of the curricula that we tend to forget about and that's that the social uh the emotion the people skills curricula that we do that's that unspoken curriculum sometimes that hidden curriculum but ah again going back to the fact that ethical care embodies those forms how we welcome someone we speak so much about relations being key to learning relationships are what make rigor and relevance happen I've

heard that stated before learning does not exist until our relationship begin

first and certainly I've heard statements like this so when we talk about

ethical care we are talking about the moral side of the piece that has

someone feel safe comfortable uh allows for their needs first and a sense

of belonging well our most effective learning and our most effective

emotions come out when we have a sense of belonging. And its a good

feeling as opposed to anything else so it ties into ethical care knowing that

we have a responsible we have an obligation to care for an individual

provide a safe learning environment not only for the students but for all

individuals that come into this learning environment here our place here

school if you will. But we all have that obligation and that falls down to

ones ethics and quite frankly there's one saying that I heard years ago

there's no such thing as ethical leadership only ethical leaders. And its

what we do on a daily basis that makes the difference what environment

do I impose on myself as the leader of this school and what environment

am I going to allow - culture is what we allow so what culture am I going

to lead here and I always try to do that through ethical standards."

Maggie: "And when we talk about ethical standards you talk about morals how

would you talk about moral how would you describe moral education?"

Dr. Camacho: "Well moral education it it again ties into that ethical as well uh that

hidden side referring back to Foshay's curriculum matrix it's just there are

other components that we have to assure that students are obtaining in

their lives were raising people we are raising young people that are one

day going to take our spots. And I understand the entire piece of of the

certain pieces of curriculum needing to be taught the foundation of life

mathematics sciences things of those nature but there's also that moral

piece that we need to prepare students for on how to interact with others

how to um resolve conflict people skills almost and those are the areas we

need to emphasize a great deal um with our young people because

sometimes they don't obtain it elsewhere and its its by modeling positive

behaviors a simple hand shake to them and say good morning to you those

are to me moral education examples being displayed to them and how to

say hello and emote positive behaviors because we haven't because we

have them for a very short amount of time in middle school we have the

smallest amount of time of any other area in the educational system."

When the principal was asked specifically about why he felt the students participated in the FSP

program, his responses focused on the teacher. He gave credit to how the teacher presented the

program, so that the students wanted to participate. He reaffirmed that the teacher modeled

ethical care, and through dialogue built relationships with the students. Moreover, he pointed out

that the teacher creative an environment where the students felt a sense of belonging.

> Dr. Hopp: "So turning to the Problems Solvers Program um there were um I'm
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> thinking I'm looking here 78 students almost 80 students interested and
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> there was only room for 28 um and in thinking about the program why do
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> you think there were so many students that wanted to participate?"
>
> Dr. Camacho: "It's how you sell its how you sell that I give credit to the teacher its how
>
> you sell it. If you think about it these students are basically coming in for

morning class we call it tutoring but it's a zero hour class twice a week that they come in for and it's really how the teacher sold it. I'm here to help you I'm here to you be successful going back to the relationship piece establish that relationship, guys this is what it's about I know you can do it were going to prepare for it were going to get you there he took a personal interest in the students the students see that they believe his sincerity and that's what's driving them here it's not for a grade they're not getting a grade for it it's the extra support to do well."

Dr. Hopp: "Have you had a chance to um have any conversations or know anything about the students who were able to get into the program?"

Dr. Camacho: "Not in particular not the ones that didn't get in no."

Dr. Hopp: "Ok. Um and let's talk about motivation I mean you know you hit on a lot of things that really um get at motivation so why do you think the students keep coming back week after week?"

Dr. Camacho: "I gotta go back to the teacher, because he has welcomed them he has set the stage for growth learning personal learning also knowing that they're not going to be alone in this he's going to help them get there and that's critical that that when you know as person you have someone on your side that's going to support you give you everything you need to be successful I think that's a win-win right there and that just gives you that positive feeling to want to learn more you're not alone and that just just solidifies support structures and when the support is there we as individuals will do better."

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Maggie: "Now what I've observed that in that environment - he's pretty tough on those kids. Um much tougher than most instructors are so how do you think that plays think that plays into this?"

Dr. Camacho: "Well you have to have a fine balance at some point and knowing the teacher he's constantly giving them that zone of proximal development if you will. Alright guys this is where you are but were still going to keep stretching there's more to do there's more to learn I'm gonna get you there. And its not just coming in all right guys were done we've made it good great. No it's a continued pursuit of more it's as simple as that just more and that's what keeps bringing the students back."

The principal had visited the students and the teacher during the time that the FSP program was being held in the mornings. During his visits the principal was keenly aware that the students were being challenged, motivated, and they were engaging in the learning process. As important, these co-existed with evidence of ethical care: dialogue and relationships. The principal doesn't, however, speak about the presence of these things. He also points out that what the students were learning in that classroom were important to their success not only in that moment, but to their future. He noted that the students were learning and developing skills they would need in society.

Dr. Hopp: "When you've been you've um and you've been in the classroom to watch what goes on a little bit. OK just tell me in general what you've seen you know what you've noticed about the kids in that classroom."

Dr. Camacho: "In that specific classroom?"

Dr. Hopp: "In the Problem Solvers."

Dr. Camacho: "That they're engaged they're involved I um I by observation I believe they understand the purpose behind it that they're and it goes back to a fundamental belief that when you know the purpose and you understand the purpose behind it that's your cause, people follow causes they don't follow people but I do believe they follow powerful people that lead that cause you gotta have that strength and in this case that teacher has solidified that purpose with them and the students understand why and you understand they why. You know we hear so much about Simon Sinek's work the why and the how and the what will come the achievements will come but they know the why they know that if they work hard that positive outcomes will occur."

Dr. Hopp: "Did you notice anything about the relationships with the teacher?"

Dr. Camacho: "Yeah as Ms. Anderson pointed out he's got a tough love situation with them I'm here to throw you off the cliff and he'll tell them you're gonna be thrown off the cliff your gonna see things you've never seen your quite frankly going to see things you don't know how to do and that's ok because the message is clear the students are going to see problems that they're going to challenge they're going to scratch their head they're going to have to collaborate with their uh partner and the end they still may not know the answer but they're going to keep working at it until they do. We talk about so much about skills that young people need yeah there's the foundation skills but there also need to be able to be a problem solver a creative thinker and a uh team work team worker those kind of things

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these are skills they need to see to prepare for their lives ahead of them

that's the way our society is moving towards that's our society is

involving and the education of not only young people but of even adult

learners is drastically changing very very different um watching an

interesting piece on that last night as well on distant learning uh how that's

changed the face of education so were also having to prepare our young

people for a different mode of learning as they move on to their post-

secondary school."

Research Question 3

One conceptual framework setting the foundation for this study is student engagement. Research Question 3 attends to this framework:

Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the students were actively engaged in positive school related activities and relationships programs?

This question was analyzed using univariate analysis: frequency distribution and mode. These were used because they give a mathematical description of the percentage of students in the program that were more highly engaged in positive school activities and relationships and those that were less engaged. The students responded to the Middle School Survey of Student Engagement twice. In this way, the responses served as pre and post responses. Only certain questions on the MGSSE were selected for analysis based on their relevance to the conceptual framework: student engagement. The questions were clustered based on whether the responses

pertained to overall statement of engagement, engagement in learning and behavioral

engagement, or emotional engagement.

Overall Statement of Engagement

       The participants that completed the MGSSE were asked on the survey: "How do you feel

about the following statements related to your school?" Included in this question, the students

used a Likert Scale to respond to a specific activity: I am engaged in school. The results are
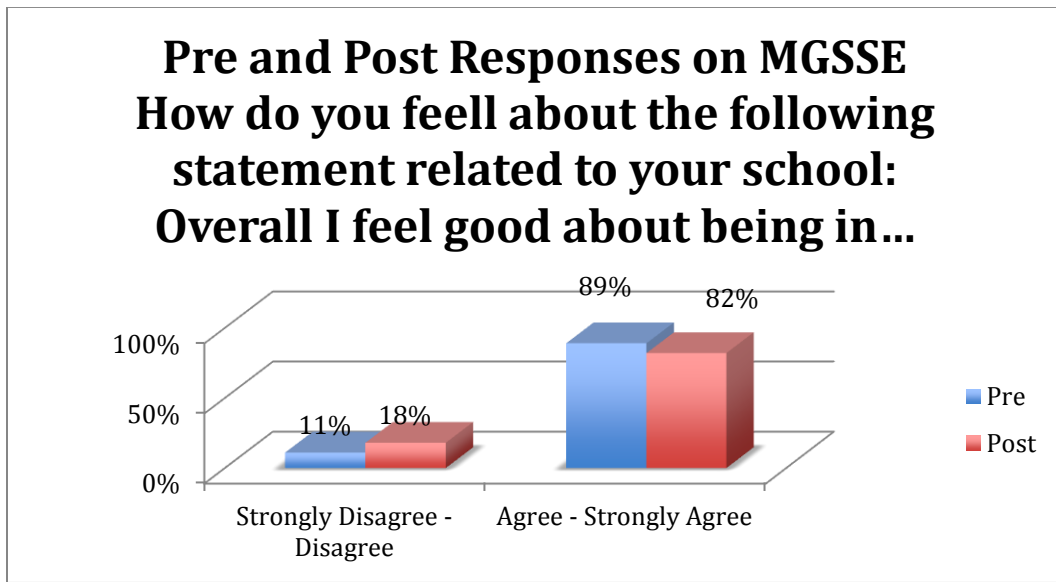
shown in

Figure 4: Participants' Perception of the Degree to Which They Felt Engaged in School

       The results indicate the typical mode for the responses related to the students' feeling

good about being in school was agree to strongly agree. The frequencies indicate that there was

a 7% decrease on the post responses in comparison to the pre-responses in the agree to strongly

agree category.

Engagement in Learning and Behavioral Engagement

When students are engaged in learning, they give evidence of being prepared and participating in class. They also give evidence of showing efforts in completing in class assignments and homework, as well as studying for their classes. This cluster analyzed data that related to these types of activities.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing homework?
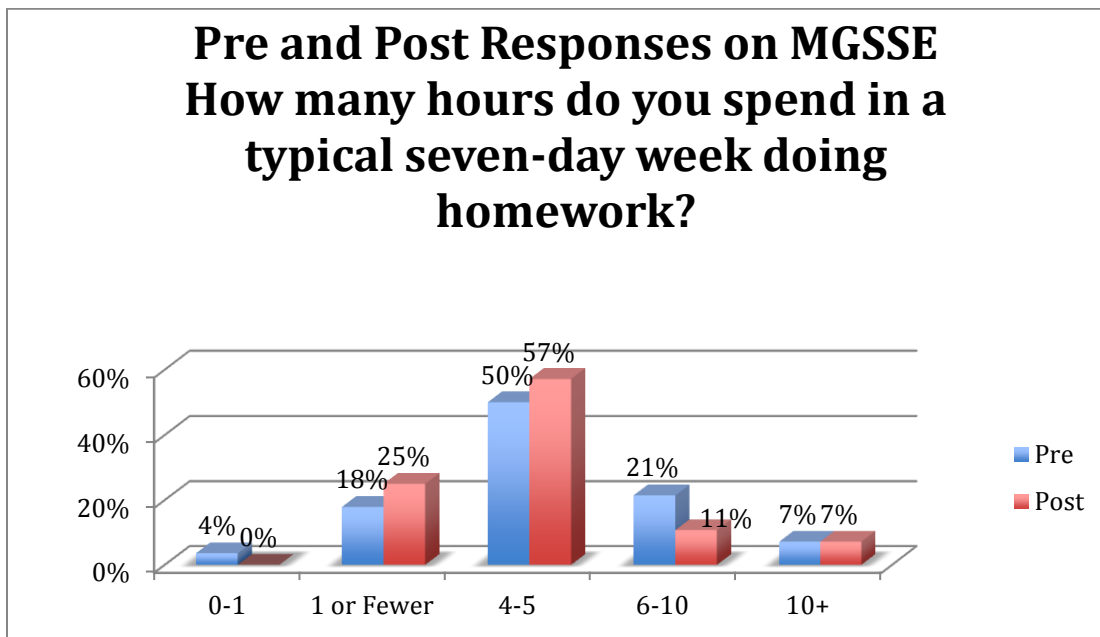

Figure 5: Number of Hours Participants Reported Studying per Seven-Day Week Based on Pre and Post Responses to MGSSE

The results indicate the typical mode for the number of hours spent in a typical seven-day week was four to five hours. The frequencies also show that the percentage of students that studied four to five hours per week increased by 7% from their pre-questionnaire responses to their post responses.
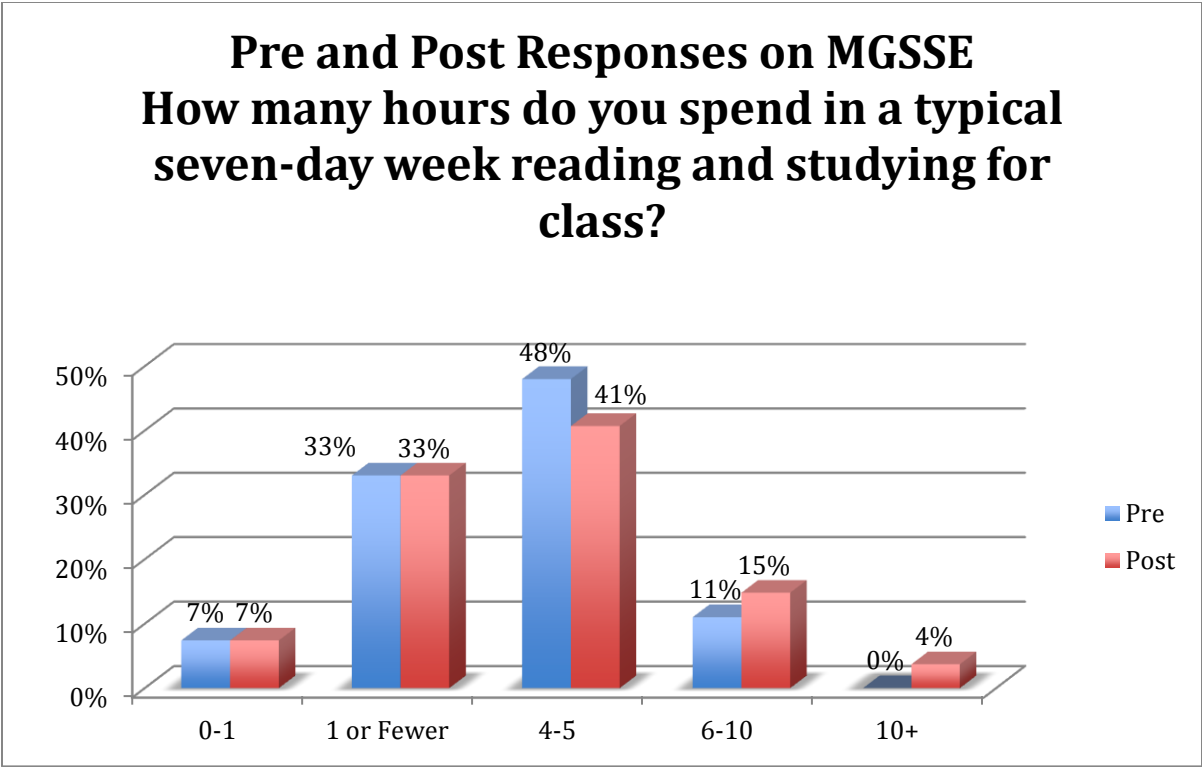
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Figure 6: Number of Hours Participants Reported Reading and Studying for Class per Seven-Day Week Based on Pre and Post Responses to MGSSE

The results indicate the typical mode for the number of hours spent in a typical seven-day week was 4 to 5 hours. The frequencies also show that the percentage of students that studied 4 to 5 hours decreased by 7%, while those studying 6 to 10 hours per week increased by 4% and those studying 10 or more hours increased by 4% from their pre-questionnaire responses to their post responses.
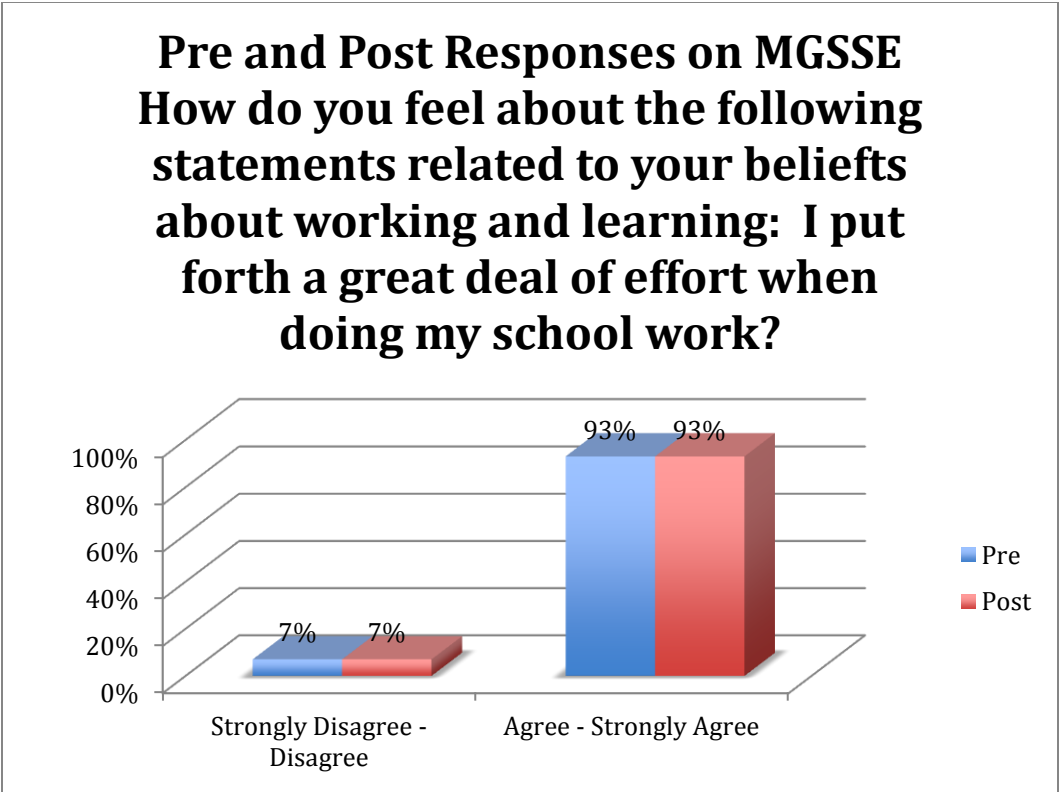
**Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How do you feel about the following
statements related to your beliefts
about working and learning: I put
forth a great deal of effort when
doing my school work?**

Figure 7: The Degree to Which Students Felt They Put Forth Effort in Doing Their Schoolwork

The results indicate the typical mode the student's belief that they put forth a great deal of

effort in doing their schoolwork was agree to strongly agree. The frequencies indicate that there

was not change in the percentages between the pre-and post-responses.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE During this school year how often have you done each of the following: asked or answered questions in class?
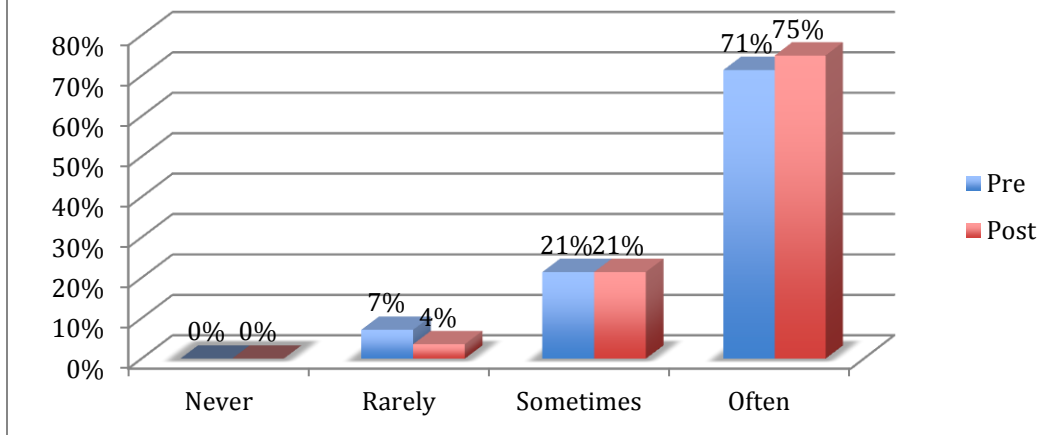
Figure 8: During This School Year, How Often Have You Done Each of the Following: Asked or Answered Questions in Class?

The results indicate the typical mode for the participants asking or answering questions in class was "often". The frequencies also show that the percentage of students that reported that they rarely participated dropped 3%, while those that reported they participated increased by 4% based on their pre and post responses.

**Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
During this school year how often have
you done each of the following:
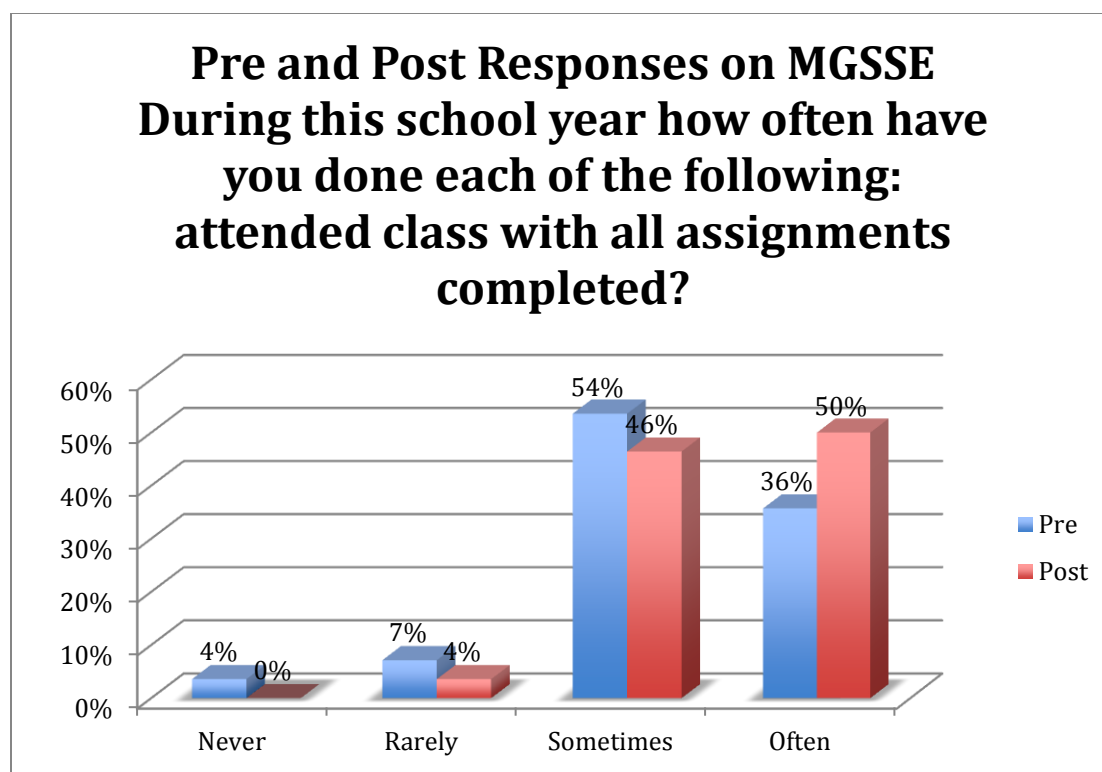attended class with all assignments
completed?**

Figure 9: During This School Year, How Often Have You Done Each of the Following:
Attended Class with All Assignments Completed?

The results indicate a tendency towards a bimodal distribution for the students' responses

that they attended class with all assignments completed. An analysis of the frequencies indicates

that greater than 90% of the students agreed that they attended class with all assignments

completed. Also, there was a 14% increase in the number of participants that strongly agreed

that they put forth great effort when comparing their pre and post scores.

Emotional Engagement

Students that are emotional engaged tend to value school. They also participate not only

academic activities, but also in extra-curricular and community activities. Moreover, the

students have a sense of belonging relative to their school. This cluster analyzed data that related

to these types of activities.

**Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How do you feel about the following
statement: I take pride in the quality
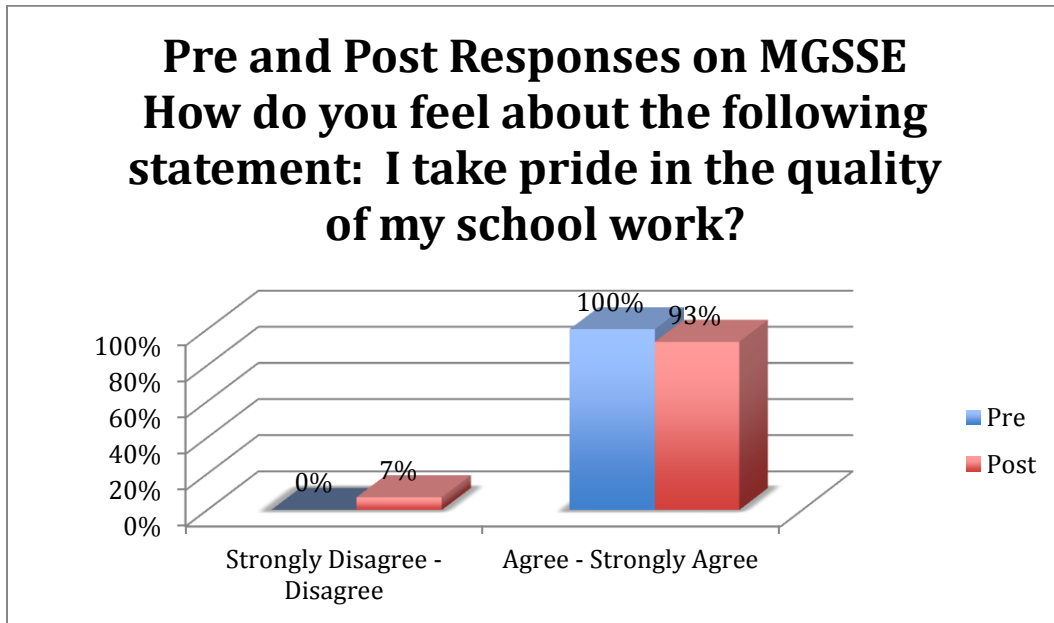of my school work?**

Figure 10: Students' Beliefs about Working and Learning Related to Taking Pride in the Quality
of Their Work

The results indicate the typical mode for the participants that took pride in the quality of

their work at school was agree to strongly agree.   The data indicates that there was a slight

decrease in those that agree to strongly agree that they took pride in the quality of their work.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
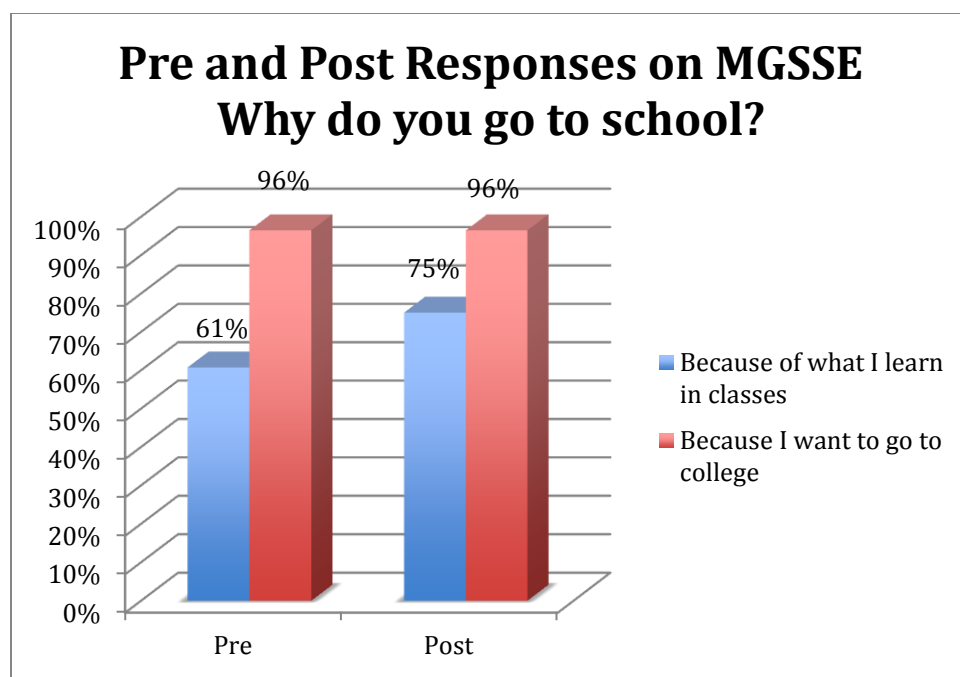**Why do you go to school?**

Figure 11: Student Responses to the Question: Why Do You Go to School?

The frequency data indicates that greater than 50% the participants go to school because they of what they learn in class and because they want to go to college. The data shows that there was an increase in the percentage of participants that responded on both reasons. There was a 35% increase when responding to the statement: because of what I learn in classes. And, there was a 21% increase when responding to the statement: because I want to go to college.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week participating in school-sponsored activities?
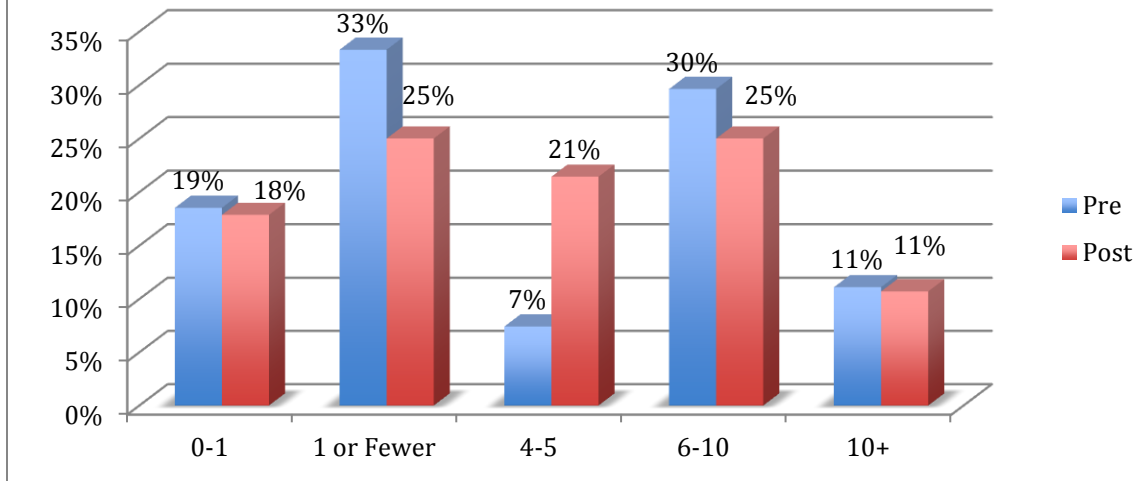
Figure 12: Number of Hours Participants Reported Participating in School-Sponsored Activities (Clubs, Athletics, Student Government, etc.) per Seven-Day Week Based on Pre and Post Responses to MGSSE

The pattern of responses shows variances in the number of hours spent by the participants engaging in school-sponsored activities. Based on the pre and post responses, there is minimal to no differences in the percentage of students that spent 0 to 1 hours participating in the school activities. This is true for those students that spent 10 or more hours on these activities. There is a decrease in hours spent engaged in these activities for 1 or fewer hours, as well as 6 to 10 hours when comparing the pre and post responses. The distribution also shows that there is a 14% increase in the number of respondents that reported spending 4 to 5 hours engaged in these activities when comparing their pre and post responses.

**Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How many hours do you spend in a
typical seven-day week practicing a
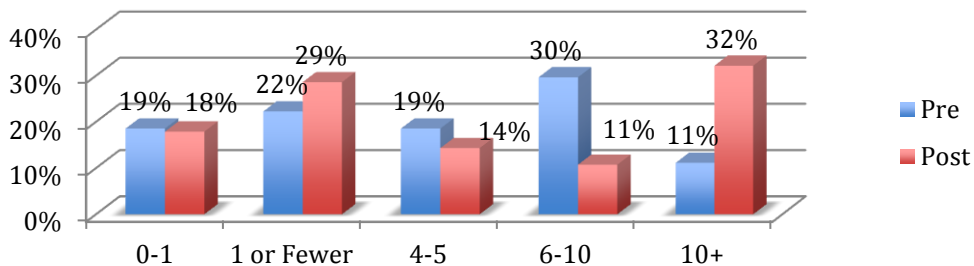sport and/or musical instrument
and/or rehearsing for a...**

Figure 13: Number of Hours Participants Reported Practicing a Sport and/or Musical Instrument and/or Rehearsing for a Performance per Seven-Day Week Based on Pre and Post Responses to MGSSE

The pattern of responses shows variances in the number of hours spent by the participants practicing a sport and/or musical instrument and/or rehearsing for a performance. The data does show a 21% increase in the participants that devoted 10 or more hours to these activities when comparing the pre and post responses.

**Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How many hours do you spend in a
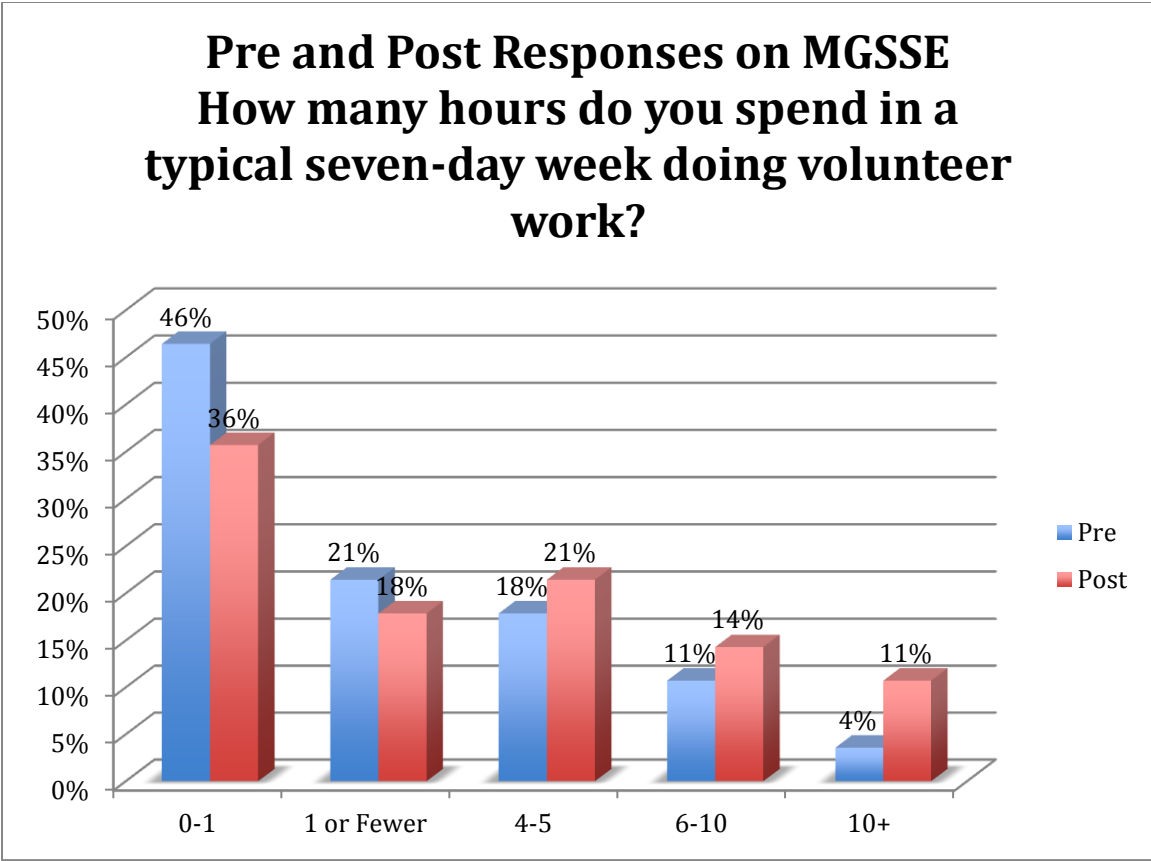typical seven-day week doing volunteer
work?**

Figure 14: Number of Hours Participants Reported Doing Volunteer Work per Seven-Day Week Based on Pre and Post Responses to MGSSE

The results indicate the typical mode for the number of hours spent volunteering in a

typical seven-day week was 0 to 1. The frequencies show that there was increases in the

percentage of students that volunteer more than 4 – 10 hours per week based a comparison of the

pre and post responses.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How do you feell about the following statement related to your school: Overall I feel good about being in this school?
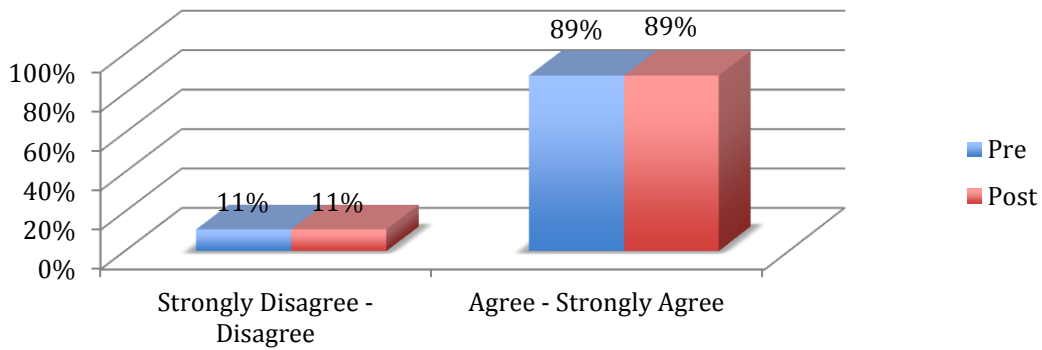
Figure 15: Students' Feelings about Attending Westridge Middle School

The results indicate the typical mode for the participants that felt good overall about being in their school was agree to strongly agree. There were no differences in the mode when comparing pre and post responses.

Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE
How do you feell about the following statement related to your school: There is at least one adult in this school who cares about me?
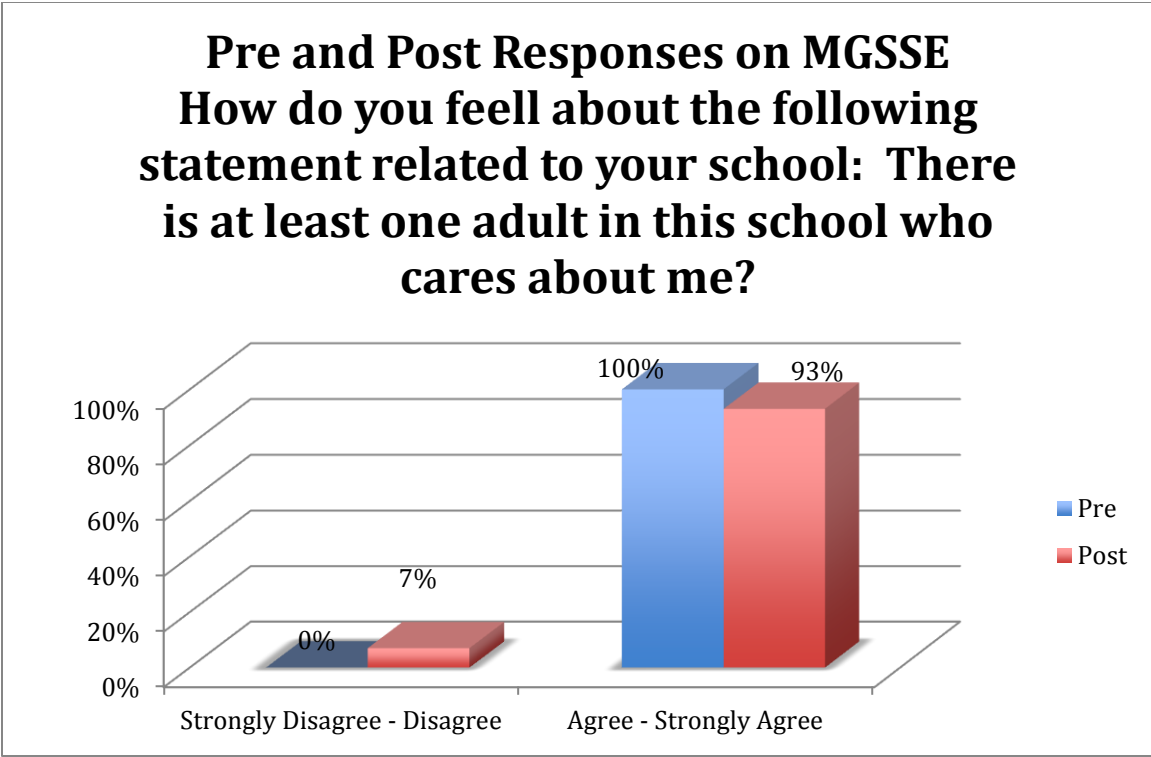
Figure 16: Students' perception That There Was At Least One Adult in the School That Cared about Them

The results indicate the typical mode for the participants that believed there was at least one adult in the school that cared about them was agree to strongly agree. There were no differences in the mode when comparing pre and post responses.
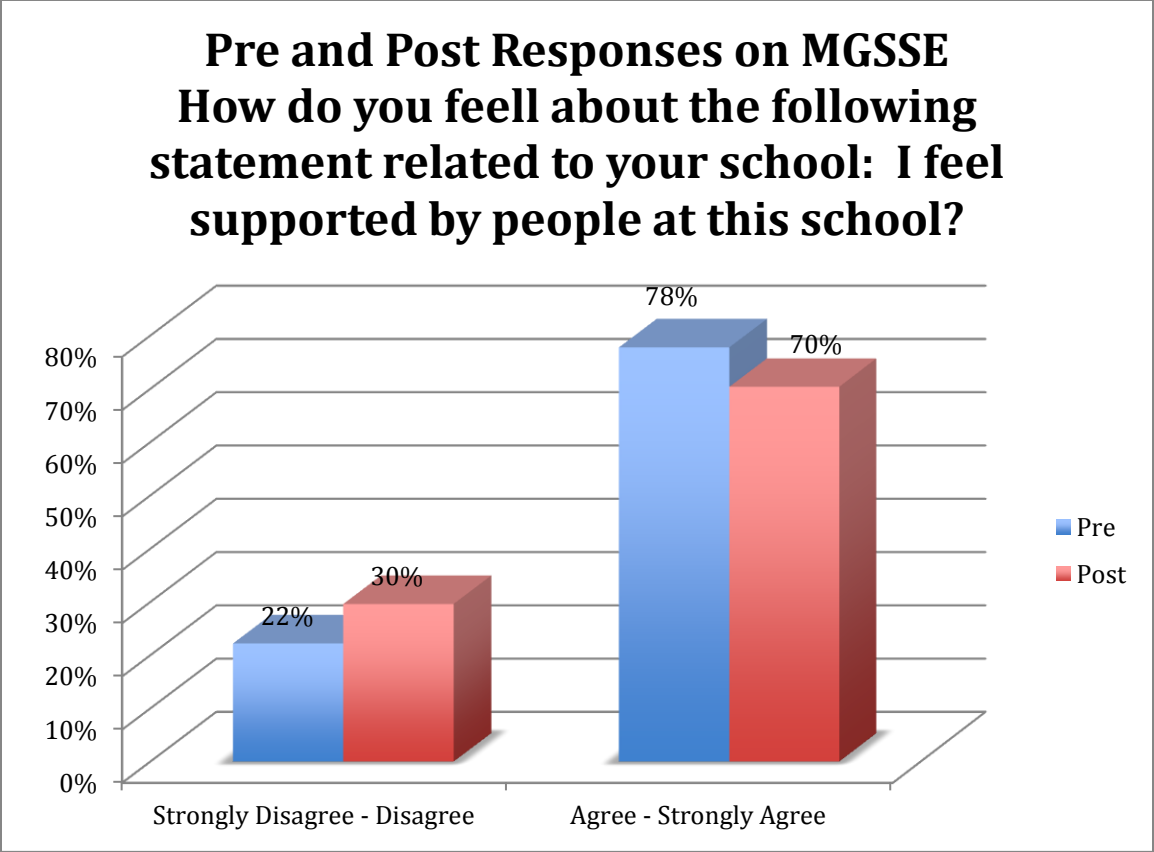
Pre and Post Responses on MGSSE How do you feell about the following statement related to your school: I feel supported by people at this school?

Figure 17: Students' Perceptions of Feeling Supported By People at the School

The results indicate the typical mode for the participants that felt supported by others at the school was agree to strongly agree.   The data indicates that there was a slight decrease in those that agree to strongly agree that they took pride in the quality of their work.

Research Question 4

This study was designed to answer research questions about the conceptual frameworks: student engagement and ethical care. Of all the data, perhaps most important were the views of the students found in research question 4:

Did the student responses on the Student Interview Questions give evidence that they

experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher?

When it came to the conceptual frameworks, it was important to understand the views of

the teacher and the principal, but it was imperative that the students' views were understood as

well. Although the research question was specific to the students' experiencing a caring and

trusting relationship with the teacher, their views on student engagement were also included.

These were included, because their responses incorporated aspects of relationship. Furthermore

when students gave explanations for how they showed the teacher they trusted him, their ways of

doing so often aligned with how they defined student engagement.

In order to gather data from the students, they completed an online questionnaire that

consisted of seven questions (see Appendix F). They completed the questionnaire in January

through February and again in May. Questions 2, 3, 4, and 6 were analyzed:

Question 2:   What do you think is meant by student engagement?

Question 3:   Please choose one of the answers below to tell us how much do you trust

               Mr. Lords (the teacher)?

Question 4:   What does Mr. Lords (the teacher) do to show you that he cares about you

               as a student and to motivate you to participate in the Future Problem

               Solvers Program?

Question 6:   What do you think you do to show Mr. Lords (the teacher) that you trust

               him?

Question 2

When the students were asked what they thought was meant by student engagement, their

pre and post responses generated three primary themes.

1. Student focus and attentiveness

2. Student motivation and drive

3. Collaboration, participation and engagement in the learning process

Their responses gave clear evidence that the students had developed for themselves meaning behind the concept of student engagement. Although their responses were diverse, the students themselves understood what it meant in their lives. With simplistic responses, the students felt that being engaged meant that students had to focus and give attention to their studies. Some students were straightforward and stated it means to "be focused", while others responded that it meant to "be attentive".

The students also reported that they believed student engagement meant that they were willing to give it their all. That the students themselves had intrinsic motivation towards success:

"That the student is willing to give it everything they got to learn."

"Student having the drive to want to work hard in school."

"When students do their work and give full effort."

"When the student puts in the same amount of effort to learn if not more than the effort the teacher puts in to teach."

When I think of middle school students, I have images of 11 – 14 year olds moving rapidly through the school grounds. Sometimes they move with drive and motivation, sometimes it seems they move with vacancy of thought. The things they say in class are often void of meaningful contemplation because they are still in that phase of life when they are developing the skills for abstract thinking and self-direction. There are times, however, when what they say is so thought provoking that it baffles the minds of adults. The responses to

question 2 related to the theme involving collaboration, participation and engagement in the learning process were certainly not void of cognitive activity. The students gave clear evidence that they believed student engagement involved learning and relationships; the two were not exclusive of one another:

"I believe it is students collaborating and working together."

"Student engagement is when all students are engaged in an activity or a lesson that is beneficial to our education"

"Students working together to get something done."

"Student engagement is to participate in any of the work being done in class."

"Interacting with peers and asking questions or answering them."

"I think student engagement is working together to have a good outcome."

"Where a student and a teacher have a nice relationship and can trust one another."

"Student being actively involved with their groups, peer or teachers and students learning and understanding for them."

"That student like each other."

"Teachers that talk to their students and give them ways to how they can do better."

"Interacting with everyone and everything."

"I think it means how students interact with other students."

"The teacher interacts with peers about the topic."

"Student collaborating and engage together and discussing things."

Question 3

When the direction of the questions turned directly to the concept of trust, the students were asked to rate their level of trust in Mr. Lords (the teacher). Overwhelmingly, the students responded that they trusted him as evidenced by the response rates on the pre-questionnaire administered in January to February.

- I trust him most of the time: 32.14%

- I trust him a lot: 67.86%

On the post questionnaire, there was evidence that the level of trust the students held in the teacher increased over time by 21%:

- I trust him most of the time: 11.11%

- I trust him a lot: 88.89%

It is clear based on the response rates that all of the students held some level of trust in the teacher while participating in the program. Moreover, this trust increased over the course of time.

Question 4

The student responses on the pre and post questionnaire run parallel to one another. In both cases the students are explicit in their views that Mr. Lords cared about them and motivated them. In an examination of their wording, the motivation is strongly connected to a desire for the students to succeed.

As a teacher, I am highly aware of the limited time a teacher actually has during the course of their day. Outside of the actual teaching, my time as a middle school teacher is spent in preparation, meetings, and communications with parents, collaborations, and more meetings. This is true for my colleagues at Westridge; I suspect this is true for many teachers at many other

schools as well. My experience is that time is a commodity. My observations of the teacher were that he was on campus by 7:00 AM, he spent his lunch time in his classroom or dealing with other work related responsibilities, and he met with students in the morning not only on the days that he facilitated the FSP program. Like my life as a teacher, time was a commodity to him as well. This appears to not have fallen short on the students and they viewed his devotion of much of his limited time to them as a sign that care about them. In this way he modeled ethical care and practiced by giving of his time. He also confirmed and encouraged the best in others, in his students.

"He comes every morning on time and gives us everything we need to better help us. And we see him during school so it's just extra time he gives to us and it's because he has to do it. He wants to help us and give more time."

"Well to begin with he has FPS which is more than a lot of teachers, and that says a lot. Just the fact that he gets up early and comes to school before 8 to help us more shows that he cares."

"He always help you get a better understand of what you're learning he takes time out of his pocket to help us and it's just the little things he does to help YOU when he's not obligated to."

"He shows up he cares about us because no other teacher takes the time to spend extra time with us and help us prepare more for state tests and real world tests."

The students not only believed he cared about them because of the time he devoted to them, they also felt that he wanted them to succeed. In cases, his desire for them to succeed was tied to his challenging them in their work and to do their best in life. He gave them reasons to believe in themselves.

"He helps us understand, when we have a problem and helps us push are self and keep trying."

"He pushes you and makes you realize you have the potential to succeed."

"He tells us we can succeed."

"He wants us to succeed as a student and pushes us to do our best and to put in all the effort we got into our work."

"He motivates us by telling us we can be better no matter how much we try."

"Your work is never done, you can go farther in learning is what I learned from him."

In their experience with the teacher, the students also spoke about a type of caring that went beyond their academics. This was especially true in their post responses (see Appendix H). The students in many cases expressed a type of concern that may represent the epitome of ethical care, because through the process of working with the teacher the students learned that the teacher cared about them not only academically; but he also cared about them as human beings.

"He comes to me when I have a bad day and cheers me up. He motivates me by teaching me things that are interesting."

"He teaches me that the real world is not going to be fair."

"Mr. Lords talks with us if we have a problem, and he develops very intellectual ways for us to learn and have fun at the same time."

"He actually helps me in everything I need help with… If I seem down he always talks to me… And when my grade is going down he always does his best to help bring it up."

Perhaps one student's response summarized his perception of their teacher as someone who not only dialogued with the student and motivated them, but also practiced and affirmed ethical care.

"He teaches me a lot about life and what I can do to be a better person that other students don't expect of me. He is really respectful, caring, and a nice teacher if you get to know him well."

Question 6

When critically discussing the concept of ethical care, it is important to understand that the basis of the concept is rooted in relationships. In turn, healthy relationships are based on trust and reciprocation. The student responses to question 5 undoubtedly confirm that the students felt that the teacher cared about them. In question 6, the students had the opportunity to share their views on how they showed him that they trusted him. In essence, to give confirm reciprocation. In some cases the students showed the teacher they cared about him by simply telling him so. In other cases, they demonstrated trust by engaging in the learning process.

"I tell him."

"I don't know, probably by doing the work in his class and when I take things such as book I bring them back like he asked."

"Learn what he's teaching me. Because I know he's not going to give false information."

"I don't act shy in his class and I do my best with my work."

"I give him all my attention and give him all my attention like he gives me."

"I complete my work and I am respectful."

"I complete his work and I follow his recommendations such as joining the Future Problem Solvers Program."

"I rely on him by helping me do good on test and I work harder the next so he sees I improve and I am getting better."

In addition to showing him trust by engaging in school and the learning process, in a significant number of cases they reported that they showed trust by discussing their problems with him and seeking advice. As a person that has studied and worked in clinical psychology, it is not always easy for people to develop trust in others. Trust can be hampered by past experiences of abuse, abandonment, deceit and it requires a certain level of vulnerability. Through my work children and at risk families, I am aware that trust can be frightening to many adults and much more to children. And yet, the children that participated in the FSP program felt safe enough with the teacher that they allowed themselves to become vulnerable. In doing so, trust developed in both directions.

"I don't really trust a lot of people to be very honest. Especially not teachers. They tend to talk a lot about students. But Mr. Lords is kind of different very very very but veryyyy different from the other teachers."

"I go to him if I need anything."

"I can by teasing him and playing around in his room."

"I finish some of the important work and I joke and hang around with him (I sometimes aggravate him on purpose."

"I tell him if I'm mad or sad."

"I treat him like a friend not a teacher."

"I can be open with him and tell him if I have any problems and as my teacher, he helps me and he's always there for me personally."

"I show him the same respect he gives me, and I talk to him about any problems I am facing."

"When I have a problem that is in or outside of the school he will always give me advice."

I talk to him about almost everything. He seems like the person that knows what to say whenever I have problem. He knows that we have a bond of trust that no one can get in the middle of. I really appreciate that.

In the same way that trust in relationships can result in mistrust, in some cases that trust and reciprocating relationships can have lifelong impacts. I recall once that I had a college student in one of my classes. Her grades were good, but she seldom spoke or participated. She was pleasant, but one of those students I couldn't read very well. At the end of the course she wrote a letter to her coordinator at the college. In it she said that I was one of the best instructors she had ever had. She went on to say that she had learned a great deal, and as a result, she planned to change her major to psychology. From that, I learned that there are times when we never know the impact we have on a person.

Years later, while reading the FSP student responses, I am reminded of that college student. Without that letter, I would have never known the impact I had on her. In a similar way, one of the participants in the FSP program shared how much the teacher meant to her. In doing so, the student exemplifies the spirit of a trusting and reciprocating relationship.

"I be myself around him. I don't have to pretend to be someone I'm not to get in trouble or addressed. With him it's easy to let go and not pretend to be someone you're not. He doesn't judge you he accepts you for who you are and that for me means more then you will ever know."

Summary

The quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings together give substantial evidence that the students experienced the tenets of the conceptual frameworks: student engagement and

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ethical care. The teacher and principal interviews showed that student engagement and ethical care were fostered and encouraged by their FSP program teacher and supported by the school principal. The students that participated in the FSP program were engaged in school and in the learning process. Moreover they felt that there were adults at the school that cared about them and that they had developed relationships with their peers. The participants responded in ways that indicated they valued school and felt a sense of belonging.

In both the teacher interview and the student questionnaires, there is strong evidence that the teacher employed principles of ethical care. He talked with his students about many topics learning related and personal. He modeled caring in an ongoing basis and he affirmed his students. He pushed them and encouraged them to be the best they could be while providing them with the educational skills they needed, along with being a sounding board. He provided them with advice and the students in turn developed a caring relationship with him. Together the teacher and the students demonstrated a relationship that was built on trust and reciprocation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study to determine whether the 8th grade students enrolled in Westridge Middle School and that participated in the Future Problem Solvers Program (FPS) scored at a significantly higher level on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Science Test in comparison to 8th grade students attending Westridge that did not participate in the program. In addition, it sought to determine if the FSP participants were engaged in school. And it sought to determine if there was there a caring and trusting relationship experienced between the students and the program teacher. These were examined through the use of surveys and interviews in order to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the program and the level of academic success amongst the 8th grade science students that participated in the tutoring program. The goal was to examine aspects of the program that may have led to academic achievement amongst the participants and to determine if contributing factors included student engagement and ethical care.

Conclusions

Research Question 1

When analyzing the FCAT Science Test scores for 8th grade students at Westridge Middle School, will the 8th grade science students participating in the 2013 – 2014 Future Problem Solvers program score significantly higher on the FCAT in comparison to 8th grade science students at Westridge that did not participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

This question was intended to determine if the students that participated in the FPS program made academic gains on the FCAT Science test to a greater extent than other 8th grade students that also attended Westridge and took the same FCAT Science test. The student scores on the FCAT Science test were analyzed using the Mann Whitney U test. The result showed that there was significance indicating that the students that participated in the FSP program did score higher overall when compared to students that attended Westridge but did not participate in the program.

Research Question 2

Did the teacher promote Student Engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship, as evidenced by the teacher's responses to the teacher Interview Questions?

This question was designed with the intent of asking predefined questions of the teacher during a tandem interview. The goal was to elicit information that would lead to an understanding about the teacher's promotion of student engagement and student relationships. During the interview the teacher provided many responses to the questions that clearly demonstrating that he not only promoted student engagement, but also encouraged growth. Moreover, the responses strongly supported the idea that the teacher developed caring student-teacher relationships with the participants. And, he encouraged the development of positive, peer relationships among the participants.

An additional interview was conducted with the school principal as a means of gaining understanding about the teacher's promotion of student engagement and the development of a caring and trusting relationship. The responses from the principal strongly paralleled the responses of the teacher. The principal's perspective reinforced the presence of the teacher's

promotion of student engagement and indicated that the students were engaged while

participating in the program. Furthermore, the principal strengthened the understanding that not

only did the teacher develop caring and trusting relationships with the students, but he also

promoted positive peer relationships.

Research Question 3

Did the responses on the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement indicate that the

students were actively engaged in positive school related activities and relationships programs?

Research question 3 was answered through the student responses on the Middle Grades

Survey of Student Engagement. Specific questions that focused on both emotional engagement

and behavioral engagement were selected for analysis. The findings indicated that the students

viewed themselves as being engaged in school. Furthermore, they reported that they spent time

in learning activities as well as other school related activities such as dance, band, and sports.

The manner in which the students answered questions related to emotional engagement provided

support that the students valued school and felt a sense of belonging.

Research Question 4

Did the student responses on the Student Interview Question*s* give evidence that they

experienced a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher?

This question was answered with responses found on the open-ended student interview

questions. The student participants gave strong evidence that they felt cared for by the teacher.

The majority of the students reported that they trusted him, and that they felt they could share

things with him. The participant responses supported the idea that the teacher challenged them,

but wanted the best for them. Many of the students indicated that they reciprocated in the

relationship and showed the teacher that they trusted by two primary themes: they engaged in learning and made strong efforts with their work and they shared things about their life with him and sought out his advice.

Discussion

Student Engagement

This premise of this research and the research questions were based a broader question: is there more to academic gains than simply teaching to a test and using those test scores to hold students and teachers accountable? Since the implementation of high stakes testing in this country, there has been much research conducted related to the implications of their use. This researcher believed that there was more going on in the schools that contributed to student success; other contributing factors that went beyond teaching to a test. The results of this study support that there is more to education and academic gains that state exams and end of course exams. Perhaps, what happens in some cases is that students are provided with opportunities to engage in a safe and nurturing environment. They are supported by teachers and staff and encouraged to do their best. Ultimately, they realize that someone or more than one person cares about them and in return they reciprocate in a caring relationship.

The findings in this study support the researcher of others whose work focused on student engagement and ethical care as factors that contribute to academic success. In his work, Finn (1989) concluded that valuing school, participating in activities, and feeling that the student belongs in and to the school lead to academic success. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Finn. The students that participated in the FSP program did value school. They valued the work they accomplished academically and participated in not only learning activities,

but also other positive school related activities. They had established goals for themselves. They felt cared for by staff members and peers. Not surprising that they also showed academic gains on the FCAT Science test.

Finn (1997) also found that student engagement was pliable permitting opportunities for greater engagement and academic fulfillment. Through this examination of the FSP program, it became apparent that the teacher and the school principal encouraged the development and establishment of varied activities in which the all students could engage. The activities that were provided were not strictly defined to those considered extra-curricular because they included programs that centered on engagements in learning. Furthermore, the information gathered from the principal also established that the level of engagement increased at the school within a short period of time, relatively speaking. Certainly, among the students that took advantage of the activities were those that participated in the FSP program.

In her studies, Wentzel (1998) found that there was a relationship between positive student engagement and student success. She found that students that were prepared, completed assignments on time, and participated in schoolwork had greater levels of success. The students in the FSP program certainly gave evidence of putting forth effort to complete their work. They also gave evidence of spending time doing homework, reading and studying for class, participating in class and completing assignments.

In addition, the teacher's classroom aligned with the work of Reyes et al. (2012). In their study, they described classrooms where teachers were sensitive to their students and engaged in caring and affable relationships with their students (Classroom Emotional Climates – CECs). They found that there was a relationship between CECs and positive student grades. In the teacher and principal's description of the FSP classroom, as well as the student's responses on

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the questionnaire, it is evident that the classroom mirrored the CECs. This, in combination with the results of the FSP participant's FCAT scores, suggests that there was a relationship between the FSP classroom environment and their academic success.

Ethical Care: Relationships

As a teacher, I know that the requirements for providing lessons and assessment to students necessitate a great deal of time. I wonder if this consumption leaves little time for developing a rapport with the students and this limitation in turn keeps teachers from fostering positive relationships with their students. Without relationships how can students feel safe? How can they gain a sense of belonging? How can they thrive in their school? And as a result of failure to belong and thrive, how can they succeed? The students that participated in the FSP program reported that they felt a sense of belonging, they participated and their FCAT Science scores supported the idea that they were academically successful. As a result of these, the arising assumption is that there is a connection between positive relationships and academic success.

In her work, Noddings (2012) proposed that life begins in relations and through these an individual ascends. She explains that curriculum is important to education, but that relationships are also important, because they allow the teacher to respond to the needs of their students. She points out that ethical caring is a foundation for relationships and moral education. Through this process, teachers employ dialogue to begin the engagement of caring. The teacher models caring and in doing so, demonstrates to the student what it really means to care. They teacher then engages in the process of caring for the student and affirms and encourages the best in the student. Through this process, the student learns to care and develops relationships with others.

At the root of relationships is trust, and trust does not come easily to some. In his theory of psychosocial development, Erikson (King, 2010) explained that trust begins in the very early stages of life. Baier (1986) proposed that trust requires vulnerability and can be violated. She points out that trust relies on another person's good will. Ennis and McCauley (2002) found that students developed trust in a teacher when the teacher spent time with their students, gave them a voice, and opened the doors for communication that involved letting them know that the teacher had confidence in them.

The work of these researchers aligns with the findings of this researcher's study. The interviews and the questionnaires give clear evidence that the teacher modeled care for the students. Moreover, he engaged in caring and show them respect and trust. He affirmed his students and they recognized this without question. In return, the students worked to do their best. They allowed themselves to be vulnerable so that trust could develop. And the end, the students showed concern and care for their teacher. Collectively, there existed strong relationships not only between the students and the teacher, but also between the student and their peers. This was evident in the teacher's description of the participants being like a family, and it was echoed in one student's response:

> I be myself around him. I don't have to pretend to be someone I'm not to get in trouble or addressed. With him it's easy to let go and not pretend to be someone you're not. He doesn't judge you he accepts you for who you are and that for me means more then you will ever know.

Summary

The questions posed in this study were answered through the analysis. The results show that the teacher modeled and practiced caring while affirming the students. Through this journey, the teacher and students developed a reciprocating relationship based on trust. In the process, the students were engaged and felt a sense of belonging, and they were academically successfully based on the results of their FCAT Science scores. The findings in this study are strongly supported by prior work of researchers.

Recommendations

The findings in this study give evidence that there is more to student success than teaching to a test or making students and teachers accountable in stringent ways. There is a need for greater research that addresses the factors that allow students the ability to succeed in school separate from current assumptions that accountability leads to student success. There is also a need for research that focuses on how differential instruction can exist in the presence of prescribed teaching practices.

Importance of this Study

As a teacher, I am often perplexed at how education tends to mimic a pendulum. As a result of the many educational reforms, it seems that as a country we have crossed the gamete of practices that swing from schools being flexible and student-centered to systems that incorporate rigidity, prescribed curriculums and classrooms that pretend to struggle to be student-centered in the face of time constraints. This study is important because it shows that there is more to fixed and polarized beliefs about educating students. That in the midst of swinging from one pole to the next, there is reason and logic that can be applied to education when given the opportunity.

The practices that were employed by the teacher and the school with regards to the students participating in the Future Problem Solvers program are indications of reasonable approaches. And in the presence of these approaches, students were successful in more ways than just passing a test. They were successful academically, as well as personally. They found a place where they felt safe and developed trusting and reciprocating relationships.

Ultimately, this study is important because what we learned from it can be a starting point for changing the views of many in this country about how we should teach our children. It may serve as a starting point for a community discussion that may lead to awareness and necessary policy changes; because educating human beings is about more than what is prescribed by others. It is about educating the whole person.

APPENDIX A: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s):   Maggie Anderson, MA

Sub-Investigator(s):   Carolyn Walker Hopp, Ed.D.

Faculty Supervisor: Carolyn Walker Hopp, Ed.D.

Investigational Site(s):   Westridge Middle School
3800 W. Oakridge Road
Orlando, Florida 32809

How to Return this Consent Form: Once you sign this form for consent, please place it in the envelop provided to you. Please give this to your child and ask them to return it to their science teacher, Mr. Lords. This form may also be returned by you to the main office in the envelop provided to you.

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study which will include about 50 students attending 8th grade at Westridge Middle School who are in Mr. Lord's Science classes. This study will also include 1 teacher and 2 administrators. Your child is being invited to take part in this research study because he or she is participating in the Future Problem Solvers Tutoring Program offered before school with Mr. Lords.

The people doing this research are Maggie Anderson of The University of Central Florida College of Education and Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp of the University of Central Florida College of Education. Because the researcher (Maggie Anderson) is a graduate student she is being guided by Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp, a UCF faculty supervisor in the College of Education.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.

- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should allow your child to take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you or your child.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is see if students that are participating in the Future Problem Solvers Tutoring Program will do better on the Orange County Public School System 8th Grade Science Benchmark Tests. Also, the purpose is to see if students participating in this program feel that their school and their teachers care about them and their success. The students will complete an online survey in order to determine if they feel cared for by their teachers and the school. Their benchmark scores will be looked at to see if their knowledge of science increased. The students will also complete a questionnaire with 6 questions. In addition, tutoring session observations will be conducted. These will occur during 2 of the regular tutoring sessions. The purpose of the observations are to gather information about the teachers methods of tutoring and the interactions between the teacher and the students, as well as the interactions between the students themselves. This information will be analyzed to learn more about the tutoring program overall.

What your child will be asked to do in the study: Your child will be asked to do their best on their benchmark tests. These are administered at the school twice each quarter. All 8th Grade Science students at Westridge take these benchmark tests. Your child will also be asked to complete a 34 question survey and a short questionnaire (6 questions). They will take this survey on the computer using a code (they will not put their names on the survey). They will also take the questionnaire on the computer. These are the steps that will be taken for your child to complete the survey:

1. During two of the tutoring sessions, the students that will be participating in the survey will meet in Mr. Lord's classroom as they typically do for the Future Problem Solvers Program. This will take place during one of the regularly scheduled meeting times.
2. The students that want to participate in the survey and have your permission to do so, will be escorted to the computer lab located in the Media Center at Westridge Middle School. They will be escorted and supervised by Mr. Lords and Maggie Anderson.
3. In the computer lab, the participants will log on to the computer and be given directions for how to complete the survey.
4. The students will be allowed to complete the survey.
5. Once the students finish the survey they will be allowed to go to the cafeteria where they will be able to eat their breakfast. After breakfast – when the first period bell rings – they will report to first period as usual.

6. During a two other tutoring sessions, the students will be asked to complete a short questionnaire. This will also be completed on the computer and the procedures will be the same as those for the survey:

   - The students that want to participate in the survey and have your permission to do so, will be escorted to the computer lab located in the Media Center at Westridge Middle School. They will be escorted and supervised by Mr. Lords and Maggie Anderson.
   - In the computer lab, the participants will log on to the computer and be given directions for how to complete the survey.
   - The students will be allowed to complete the survey.
   - Once the students finish the survey they will be allowed to go to the cafeteria where they will be able to eat their breakfast. After breakfast – when the first period bell rings – they will report to first period as usual.

Please note that although we hope your child will answer all of the survey questions, they do not have to answer all of them. Your child does not have to answer every question or complete every task. You or your child will not lose any benefits if your child skips questions or tasks.

During the observations, your child will not be expected to do anything. The observations will be conducted during two of the regular tutoring sessions.

Location: The survey will be administered in the Computer Lab located on the Westridge Middle School Campus. The Computer Lab is located in the Media Center.

Time required: We expect that your child will be in this research study for approximately 1 hour (8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. for the survey and approximately 20 minutes for the questionnaire. This will be scheduled during their regularly scheduled Future Problem Solvers sessions.

Risks: Although the researchers do not anticipate any risks involved with this study, they are aware that some students may feel a little nervous about participating in the survey or worry that their survey information will be shared with others. They will be informed that their names will not be included in the survey. They will also be informed that their benchmark scores will be reviewed, but that the review will in no way impact their grades in school.

Benefits: Your child will not benefit directly for taking part in this research, besides learning more about how research is conducted.   This study, however, will benefit other parents and students that may want to participate in future tutoring programs of this type. The results of this study may help the school and the school district provide more tutoring of this type, if it is determined that the program does help students make academic gains and helps them feel more connected to school.

Compensation or payment: There is no compensation or other payment to you or your child for your child's part in this study. There is no compensation, payment or extra credit for your child's part in this study

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study. Efforts will be made to limit your child's personal information to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of UCF.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt your child talk to <u>Maggie Anderson</u>, Doctoral Student at the University of Central Florida College of Education 407-354-2640 (Extension 528-2641) or <u>Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp</u>, Faculty Supervisor, College of Education (407) 823-2000 or by email at Carolyn.Hopp@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about you and your child's rights in the study or to report a complaint:
Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Your signature below indicates your permission for the child named below to take part in this research

_____

Name of participant

Obtained

Assent

_____

Signature and Printed name of person obtaining consent and assent

Note on permission by guardians: An individual may provide permission for a child only if that individual can provide a written document indicating that he or she is legally authorized to consent to the child's general medical care. Attach the documentation to the signed document.

APPENDIX B: ADULT WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program Study

Notice of Study Withdrawal

Dear _____,

This letter is being sent to inform you that you have been withdrawn from the

Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Middle School Program research study.

The reason for this withdrawal is noted below:

_____   You have indicated they no longer want to participate in the study.

_____   You are no longer an employee working for the school.

_____   You are under investigation for disciplinary reasons by OCPS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or concerns,

please contact Maggie Anderson (Primary Investigator) at 407-766-9004. Please keep

a copy of this letter for your records.

_____   _____

Maggie Anderson, M.A. – Primary Investigator Date

APPENDIX C: STUDENT WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program Study

Notice of Study Withdrawal

Dear _____,

This letter is being sent to inform you that _____ has

been withdrawn from the *Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Middle School*

Program research study. The reason for this withdrawal is noted below:

_____   Your child has indicated they no longer want to participate in the study.

_____   You as the parent/guardian have notified the investigator that you no

               longer want your child to participate in the study.

_____   Your child has withdrawn from Westridge Middle School.

_____   Your child's behavior prohibits them from continued participation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or concerns,

please contact Maggie Anderson (Primary Investigator) at 407-766-9004. Please keep

a copy of this letter for your records.

_____   _____

Maggie Anderson, M.A. – Primary Investigator Date

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INVITATION

Letter of Invitation

During the 2013 – 2014 your child participated in a research study *Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program* conducted by Maggie Anderson (Primary Investigator) and Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp (Co-Investigator). This study has been completed and the results have been finalized. If you would like to learn more about the findings from this study, you are invited to attend a PowerPoint Presentation presented by Maggie Anderson. The presentation will be held at Westridge Middle School on _____, 2014 from 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM in Room 117.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Maggie Anderson at 407-766-9004.

_____   _____

Maggie Anderson, Primary Investigator   Date

APPENDIX E: THE MIDDLE GRADES SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement

Thank you for your participation in this survey. These questions cover a wide range of topics related to your middle school experience, including your work, feelings, beliefs, and interactions with teachers and other students. *Engagement* is a term often used to mean "involvement" or "participation." We are particularly interested in the ways in which you engage in learning and activities within your school. Your responses, along with responses from other students, will help your school better understand your needs as a student in order to create a school environment that is engaging, challenging, and productive for you. Please answer thoughtfully and honestly – we appreciate the time and energy you put into this survey.

This survey is administered by the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, 1900 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, Indiana, 47406.

	5th	6th	7th	8th
1. What grade are you currently in?	○	○	○	○
2. In what grade did you start attending *this* school?	○	○	○	○

3. What sex/gender are you? ○ Male ○ Female

4. About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing each of the following? How important are these activities to you?

| | Number of Hours | | | | | | How Important to You? | | | |
	0	1 or fewer	2-5	6-10	10+		Not at all	A little	Somewhat important	Very important	Top priority
a. Doing written homework	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
b. Reading and studying for class	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
c. Reading for yourself (books, magazines, newspapers, online articles, etc)	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
d. Participating in school-sponsored activities (clubs, athletics, student government, etc)	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
e. Practicing a sport and/or musical instrument and/or rehearsing for a performance	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
f. Doing volunteer work	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
g. Exercising	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
h. Watching television, playing video games	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
i. "Surfing" or chatting online	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
j. Talking on the phone (including cell phones)	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○
k. Socializing with friends outside of school	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○

5. How do you feel about the following statements related to your school?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Overall, I feel good about being in this school.	○	○	○	○
b. I care about this school.	○	○	○	○
c. I feel safe in this school.	○	○	○	○
d. I am treated fairly in this school.	○	○	○	○
e. I feel that I fit in at this school.	○	○	○	○
f. This school makes me feel confident about who I am.	○	○	○	○
g. I have a voice in classroom and/or school decisions.	○	○	○	○
h. My opinions are respected in this school.	○	○	○	○
i. I am an important part of my school community.	○	○	○	○
j. There is at least one adult in this school who cares about me.	○	○	○	○
k. There is at least one adult in this school who knows me well.	○	○	○	○

5. How do you feel about the following statements related to your school?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
l. I feel supported by the following people at this school:				
i. teachers	○	○	○	○
ii. administrators (principal, assistant/vice principal, dean)	○	○	○	○
iii. counselors	○	○	○	○
iv. other adults (secretaries, custodians, etc)	○	○	○	○
v. other students	○	○	○	○
m. My teachers care that I come to school.	○	○	○	○
n. Adults in this school want me to succeed.	○	○	○	○
o. Teachers try to involve me in classroom discussions.	○	○	○	○
p. I am challenged academically by my class work.	○	○	○	○
q. I have opportunities to be creative in classroom assignments and projects.	○	○	○	○
r. I can be who I am at this school.	○	○	○	○
s. This school's rules are fair.	○	○	○	○
t. This school's rules are applied and enforced consistently.	○	○	○	○
u. Student needs come first at this school.	○	○	○	○
v. All students are treated equally at this school.	○	○	○	○
w. All students are treated fairly at this school.	○	○	○	○
x. If I could choose a school right now, I would choose to go to this same school again.	○	○	○	○
y. I am engaged in school.	○	○	○	○

6. During this school year, how often have you done each of the following?

	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often
a. Eaten breakfast in the morning	○	○	○	○
b. Shown up for school late (unexcused)	○	○	○	○
c. Asked or answered questions in class	○	○	○	○
d. Talked to a teacher about your class work	○	○	○	○
e. Made a class presentation	○	○	○	○
f. Prepared a draft of a paper or assignment before turning it in	○	○	○	○
g. Written a paper of fewer than three pages	○	○	○	○
h. Written a paper of more than three pages	○	○	○	○
i. Received helpful feedback from teachers on assignments or other class work	○	○	○	○
j. Attended class with all assignments completed	○	○	○	○
k. Attended class with no assignments completed	○	○	○	○
l. Turned in a homework assignment late or not at all	○	○	○	○
m. Worked on a paper or project that required you to do research outside of assigned texts	○	○	○	○
n. Worked on a paper or project that required you to interact with people outside of school (for interviews, observations, etc)	○	○	○	○
o. Worked with other students on projects/assignments during or outside of class	○	○	○	○
p. Discussed questions in class that have no clear answers	○	○	○	○
q. Taken a test in class with multiple-choice questions created by your teacher	○	○	○	○
r. Taken a test in class with essays or show-your-work problems created by your teacher	○	○	○	○
s. Connected ideas or concepts from one class (or subject area) to another in doing assignments or participating in class discussions	○	○	○	○
t. Discussed grades with teachers	○	○	○	○
u. Discussed ideas from readings or classes with teachers outside of class	○	○	○	○
v. Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (friends, family, etc)	○	○	○	○
w. Had conversations or worked on a project with at least one student of a race or ethnicity different from your own	○	○	○	○
x. Had conversations or worked on a project with at least one student who differs from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, income background, or personal values	○	○	○	○
y. Been picked on or been bullied by another student	○	○	○	○
z. Picked on or bullied another student	○	○	○	○

7. How do you feel about the following statements related to your beliefs about working and learning?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I place a high value on learning.	○	○	○	○
b. I have the skills and ability to complete my work.	○	○	○	○
c. I put forth a great deal of effort when doing my school work.	○	○	○	○
d. I am motivated to work by a desire to learn.	○	○	○	○
e. I am motivated to work by a desire to get good grades.	○	○	○	○
f. I am motivated to work by teachers who encourage me.	○	○	○	○
g. I am motivated to work by a desire to succeed in the world outside of school.	○	○	○	○
h. I take pride in the quality of my school work.	○	○	○	○
i. I have worked harder than I expected to in school.	○	○	○	○
j. I like discussions in which there are no clear answers.	○	○	○	○
k. I enjoy the opportunity to be creative in school.	○	○	○	○
l. I enjoy working on tasks that require a lot of thinking and mental effort.	○	○	○	○
m. My school work makes me curious to learn other things.	○	○	○	○
n. In general, I am excited about my classes.	○	○	○	○
o. I value the rewards (grades, awards, etc) that I get at school for my work.	○	○	○	○
p. I see how the work I am doing now will help me in high school.	○	○	○	○
q. I feel good about who I am as a student.	○	○	○	○
r. I feel good about who I am as a person.	○	○	○	○

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	None	1 or 2	Some	Most	All
8. About how many of your teachers want you to do the best work you can do?	○	○	○	○	○
9. About how many of your teachers believe you can do excellent work?	○	○	○	○	○
10. About how many of your classes challenge you academically?	○	○	○	○	○
11. About how many of your classes *do not* require you to work hard?	○	○	○	○	○
12. In about how many classes do you give your maximum effort?	○	○	○	○	○
13. In about how many classes do you put in very little effort?	○	○	○	○	○

14. **To what extent do you believe your school emphasizes each of the following?**

	Not at all	A little	Some	Very much
a. Memorizing facts and figures in work for classes	○	○	○	○
b. Understanding information and ideas in work for classes	○	○	○	○
c. Analyzing ideas in depth in work for classes	○	○	○	○
d. Spending a lot of time studying and doing school work	○	○	○	○
e. Spending a lot of time preparing for state and district standardized tests	○	○	○	○
f. Participating in school events and activities (athletics, plays, etc)	○	○	○	○
g. Using computers for class work	○	○	○	○
h. Exploring new ideas	○	○	○	○

15. **How much has your experience at this school contributed to your growth in the following areas?**

	Not at all	A little	Some	Very much
a. Writing effectively	○	○	○	○
b. Speaking effectively	○	○	○	○
c. Thinking critically	○	○	○	○
d. Reading and understanding challenging materials	○	○	○	○
e. Using computers and the internet	○	○	○	○
f. Working well with others	○	○	○	○
g. Learning independently	○	○	○	○
h. Solving real-world problems	○	○	○	○
i. Gaining awareness of conditions in the community outside of school	○	○	○	○
j. Learning about different careers	○	○	○	○
k. Understanding the relevance of school work to life outside of school	○	○	○	○
l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	○	○	○	○
m. Understanding yourself	○	○	○	○
n. Treating people with respect	○	○	○	○
o. Developing personal beliefs and values	○	○	○	○

16. **Which of the following have you done during middle school?**

	Yes	No
a. Participated in community service or volunteer work	○	○
b. Participated in a tutoring program in or outside of school	○	○
c. Participated in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP)	○	○
d. Participated in an arts program or arts project in school	○	○
e. Participated in an arts program or arts project outside of school	○	○

17. **Why do you go to school?** *Fill in all that apply.*

- ○ Because I enjoy being in school
- ○ Because of what I learn in classes
- ○ Because of my teacher(s)
- ○ Because of my peers/friends
- ○ Because I want to go to college
- ○ Because I want to acquire skills for the workplace
- ○ Because it's the law
- ○ Because my parents/guardians make me go
- ○ Because I want to get a good job
- ○ Because there's nothing else to do
- ○ To stay out of trouble
- ○ Other: specify reason _____

	Never	Once or twice	Many times
18. Have you ever skipped school?	○	○	○
19. Have you ever thought about dropping out of school?	○	○	○

20. **If you have thought about dropping out of school, why?** *Fill in all that apply.*

- ○ The work was too hard
- ○ The work was too easy
- ○ I didn't like the school
- ○ I didn't like the teachers
- ○ I didn't see the value in the work I was being asked to do
- ○ I was picked on or bullied
- ○ I didn't feel that I fit in
- ○ I needed to work for money
- ○ No adults in the school cared about me
- ○ Family issues
- ○ I felt I was too far behind in classes
- ○ Adults in school encouraged me to drop out
- ○ Other: specify reason _____

			Yes	No
21. Have you ever failed a class?	. . . .		○	○
22. Have you ever been held back a grade level in school?	. . . .		○	○

	Never	Once or twice	Once in a while	Every day	Every class
23. Have you ever been bored in class in this school?	○	○	○	○	○

24. If you have been bored in class, why? *Fill in all that apply.*

- ○ Work wasn't challenging enough
- ○ Work was too difficult
- ○ Material wasn't interesting
- ○ Material wasn't relevant to me
- ○ No interaction with teacher
- ○ Other: specify reason _____

25. To what degree does each of the following types of work in class excite and/or engage you?	Not at all	A little	Some	Very much
a. teacher lecture	○	○	○	○
b. discussion and debate	○	○	○	○
c. individual reading	○	○	○	○
d. writing projects	○	○	○	○
e. research projects	○	○	○	○
f. group projects	○	○	○	○
g. presentations	○	○	○	○
h. role plays	○	○	○	○
i. art and drama activities	○	○	○	○
j. projects and lessons involving technology	○	○	○	○

26. How old are you today? ○ 10 or younger ○ 11 ○ 12 ○ 13 ○ 14 ○ 15 or older

27. What language is primarily spoken in your home? *Fill in all that apply.*

- ○ English
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Other language(s) - specify: _____

28. Were you born in the United States? ○ Yes ○ No

29. How do you identify yourself by race and/or ethnicity? *Fill in all that apply.*

- ○ American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Native American
- ○ Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- ○ Black, African, African American, or of Caribbean origin
- ○ Latino, Hispanic, or of Spanish origin
- ○ Middle Eastern
- ○ White, White American, or European
- ○ I prefer not to respond

30. Are you eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch at your school?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes
- ○ Don't know/Prefer not to answer

31. How far do you want to go in your schooling?

- ○ Will not finish high school
- ○ High school diploma or GED
- ○ Community college or trade school degree
- ○ Four-year college degree (Bachelor's)
- ○ Master's, Doctorate, or other advanced degree
- ○ Don't know/Not applicable

32. What is the highest level of schooling that any of your parents or guardians completed?

- ○ Did not finish high school
- ○ High school diploma or GED
- ○ Community college or trade school degree
- ○ Four-year college degree (Bachelor's)
- ○ Master's, Doctorate, or other advanced degree
- ○ Don't know/Not applicable

33. Which one of the following categories describes most of your middle school grades?

- ○ Mostly As
- ○ Mostly As and Bs
- ○ Mostly Bs and Cs
- ○ Mostly Cs and Ds
- ○ Mostly Ds and below
- ○ Grades not used/Don't know

34. Which one of the following categories describes your academic track or most of the classes that you take?

- ○ Career/Technical/Vocational
- ○ ELL/ESL/Bilingual
- ○ General/Regular
- ○ Honors/Advanced/Gifted & Talented
- ○ Special Education/Inclusion
- ○ Don't Know

35. What are the things about your school that make you want to be there and learn?

_____

36. What are the things about your school that turn you off to being in school and learning?

_____

37. Would you like to say more about any of your answers to these survey questions? Please do so in the space provided here.

_____

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you think is meant by student engagement?

2. Please choose one of the answers below to tell us how much do you trust Mr. Lords.

3. What does Mr. Lords do to show you that he cares about you as a student and to motivate you to participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program?

4. Do you feel that your participation in the Future Problem Solvers Program, as well as your relationship with your teacher and the other students will help you be a better student?

5. What do you think you do to show Mr. Lords that you trust him?

6. Why did you choose to participate in the Future Problem Solvers Tutoring Program?

APPENDIX G: OPEN ENDED TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you describe student engagement?

2. How would you describe ethical care?

3. How would you describe moral education?

4. How would you describe the level of student engagement at Westridge?

   a. In what ways do you feel students are engaged at Westridge?

   b. What do you think keeps students from becoming engaged at Westridge?

5. Thinking about the Problem Solvers Program, over 78 students were interested in participating in the program. However, there was only enough space for 50.

   a. Why do you think the students wanted to participate in the Problem Solvers Program?

   b. How do you think the students felt when they were not selected for the program?

   c. What do you think motivated the students to return to the program week after week?

APPENDIX H: TEACHER INTERVIEW: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS TRANSCRIPTS

MAGGIE: Scott this research is basically looking at one of the reasons I wanted to do the research with you as we've talked about before is because I feel like the kids that come to the future problem solving come for more reasons than just because they have to and so my hypothesis is is that there's more to their reasoning for being here one of which is I think they feel engaged student engagement they participate and those things but also I think that they come because they feel a sense of ethical care that they feel a sense that you care about them and my sense is that they care about you and so this program this research design is really focused on trying to test that hypothesis that major hypothesis and so what were doing today is the first interview with you I've already done the first computer interviews with the kids the surveys with the kids and then well do those again at the end of the school year to see if there's any change but also to evaluate what's going on with their thinking and what the thinking of you'll be interviewed Dr. Camacho will be interviewed and then a third party which is um um Maritza Martinez just to have a third party in there and so today we have about 6 major questions and then there are some little subset questions in there OK. So if you could talk and just let me here your voice.

SCOTT: Hello I'm Mr. Lords I have a tutor program called future problem solving and it consist of almost 50 kids when they do come.

MAGGIE: OK I think it works.

DR. HOPP: OK and when does that happen.

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SCOTT: Um Tuesday Thursday for one batch and then Friday for the other batch he's only given me a limited amount of time um plus we have meetings on Wednesday um and Monday seems to be a day I catch up with everything so

DR. HOPP: OK great so how many kids   show up to the program.

SCOTT: Usually about 24 per sessions so almost 50

DR. HOPP: OK OK great

SCOTT: But some kids don't come so I replace them with others and this time of year I want whoever needs wants to comes at this point

DR. HOPP: So what do you do with the kids?

SCOTT: Well I basically teach them from day one what they should have learned 6th 7th and 8th grade I go with a backwards curriculum where I give them little activities to do based on the big ideas that they need to cover for FCAT so it's all about how to get teach FCAT a different way in a little extra time to do it. The kids have been willing to come I've had kids since august that have been here religiously straight through the line and it's good to see them everyday in a different light because after I do this they go get breakfast and then they just chill in the classroom for about 1/2 hour before the bell rings so.

DR. HOPP: So how long have you been doing this?

SCOTT: Well I've taught 15 years um I've off and on made up my own sort of extra curricular activities um so in this school I've done it two years. um but I have done after school programs before school programs just to give the kids a way to have another sort of way to get an education without it actually being rigorous.

DR. HOPP: Right.

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SCOTT: To the point where they don't want to do it so it's more sort of a one on one

               relationship with everybody but it's sort of at the whole time so.

DR. HOPP: OK OK so in terms of this research where were talking about a couple of different

               what we call constructs in terms of what it is were loOKing at when kids are

               doing work. Um I want to start with student engagement so how would you

               describe that

SCOTT: The engagement of this um of this problem solving program um typically it's they

               want to come to extra work extra time extra ideas extra ways to get an edge where

               in regular classrooms a lot of teachers don't give that edge they don't even give

               them what they need so they come to me because for some reason they see that

               from day one I tell them you know it's all about care it's all about you know what

               do you feel what you need to do and FCATs difficult for a lot of kids I don't care

               if your an honor roll's kid or your a low level kid so this year I was lucky enough

               to have advance and honors so that was my pickings but I've had um extra

               curricular activities where you get the low level kids and they actually jump to the

               occasion I had one girl in mass she spOKe no English she came to my morning

               tutoring she came to my after school program I basically was her kind of like

               surrogate dad because her dad was in jail and she spOKe no English she passed

               the state exam in science at the end of the year. And people go well how the heck

               did you do that it's because she cared and she understood that I cared and that

               pushed her to do what she had to do

DR. HOPP: K you talk about care which takes me to the next question um and i want to

              expand on it a little bit before I get to the next um the other part of it so when you

              say care tell me what you mean by that.

SCOTT: They know I'll do anything for them 24-7 they have my email I've people that are

              you know crying because their parents are doing this their parents you know I'm

              not a counselor but for some reason they come to me for any sort of assistance

              moral support anything that says OK I have another person I can go to cuz it's

              usually the parents at this age um it's a no no because the parents are against them

              I'm a parent I understand what's going on um but you give them ideas that you

              know there's other ways to do things cuz the middle school age it's usually the

              wrong way because they don't think before they do it and by giving them a

              chance to see me in the morning and see me doing something a little different

              they thrive on that because for some reason they don't have that anymore they

              don't sit at a dinner table anymore and talk to their family they're always on the

              internet this and that and there's no social aspect so they come in here for that

              social end of the deal which is good to see and for the most part it's mostly

              females now why is it mostly females instead of males a lot of males at this age

              done care they it's either they know it or you don't.

DR. HOPP: And at the especially at the middle school age they're in such a state of you know

SCOTT: But the females need that sort extra sort of loving care and they need to see that

              somebody sees that and once they grab onto that they will do anything for me so

              the caring is a two way street it's not just one way they see that I will do anything

              for them and now they'll do anything for me.

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DR. HOPP: OK.

SCOTT: But it's a battle it's not always I'm not always Mr. goodie two shoes all the time i

              go off on them I make sure that they have what they have so it's that love hate

              relationship that I have constantly with them.

MAGGIE: So Scott you do have some of the boys that do come.

SCOTT: Yes I do.

MAGGIE: They're not as many and clearly.

SCOTT: They're not as many and those boys tend to they're very intelligent and they don't

              quite fit in with the rest of the gang so why not come with 20 girls it's a way of

              saying OK i need to fit in somewhere and these kids are good kids but they don't

              want to deal with all the drama that's involved in everyday life.

DR. HOPP: So when the boys come um they see what's going on.

SCOTT: They interact with the girls just fine.

DR. HOPP: They interact but do they do they finally kind of get in with the work and do their

              work as well.

SCOTT: Oh yeah oh yeah they do just as much.

DR. HOPP: OK OK.

SCOTT: So

DR. HOPP: In the um-in research what you hear a lot is as you describe care but um what

              would you say um ethical care is?

SCOTT: They know that I'm here to do a job my job is to get them from point A to point Z

              now the problem is a lot of the teachers along their way in their opinion haven't

              done their job so they come to me for that support of you have it you know what it

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takes you've been there let me ride on your coat tails and take you know they wanna come with me to that Z so they don't want to stop because it seems like all their education so far in their life it stops and then over the summer it goes backwards and they they forget everything and it's maybe because in my opinion the teacher doesn't fit in with the kids now it's that relationship that you have to have and a lot of teachers the kids put up their wall because the teacher says something to them and the wall never breaks down so I tend to break the wall down if I even have one at the end of the year.

DR. HOPP: Right right and there's always that you know I taught as a Seminole school teacher and you know they come in after the summer as you say and you start talking about anything that has anything to do with academia um what I found was that when they could make a connection like when you get your kids back do you find that there has been some sort of a connection made and they'll go from that point you know with you um and maybe you haven't had that experience with them yet but which relates to another part of our question in terms of defining education we have care we have ethical care how would you define moral education

SCOTT: A lot of these kids don't know how to deal with things they've never been taught they don't understand the difference between right and wrong because you know they learn it the home life which is totally different than the sort of friendship life which is totally different than the school life and they have to try to battle which one is one and so they come to me for you know I have a problem with this what do you do. So they love to ask these kids love to questions so not only am I

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teaching them the curriculum from back to forth but I'm also saying OK well

what do you need at this time what I can I help you with this time and as soon as

you open a floor up they open up and you see them in a totally different light

where in classroom they're like they're listening but they're not always there.

Where in the morning it's more like they need to know the difference between

right and wrong. And I say everyday you choose your friends wisely you choose

what you are and by doing the extra two hours a week with them they seem to

understand that there is a different life than what they have and when they get in

higher education they're going to understand what I'm talking about it's not just

now I have kids from 15 years ago that still email me thank me for why I touch

them in a totally different light than everybody else did and it's not that I'm doing

it cuz you know I'm whacked it's because teaching is about caring teaching is

about showing them the difference between right and wrong and a lot of teachers

don't do that anymore they have a curriculum that's you gotta do this forget about

anything else I'm gonna teach the curriculum and that's when the kids shut down

and the kids will not do you know in my curriculum leader meeting they said why

are your kids scoring higher on these tests where your math and your reading

they're not scoring as high. I'm like because they go forth and give me the effort

that I give them.

DR. HOPP.   ()

SCOTT: And because I give it to them they give it back to me a lot of the teachers now a

days they have that shut down mode I'm here to do a job I'm here to teach and

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there's nothing else there and the kids feel left out and once they feel left out they

go elsewhere.

DR. HOPP: So what is a response I mean when you say when you say what you think and

why you think it happens and why you think your kids are doing better what kind

of response do you get?

SCOTT: From like admin and stuff?

DR. HOPP: From anybody.

SCOTT: They want to do what I do

DR. HOPP: Right right

SCOTT: They wanna go ahead and say how in the heck do you get 50 kids to come in in

the morning tired grumpy wanting to do something else and you get them to learn

how do you do that because the lower level kids are the ones that really need to

pass the FCAT and they never do so we have the lower level kids on this side in

8th grade and on this side and I've been thinking so long how do I get those kids

and those kids to come see me because for some reason their relationship with

their teacher is not good and they said anytime you want to come after school

tutor them go ahead bring some more people in and we want to know more about

how you do this and it's it's just that relationship that nobody else seems to get

but it's easy once you open up as a person and you say you know they call me

every once in a while grumpy old man I have a black heart I have this I have that

but it's because they understand that sometimes you gotta get down and do work

and I push them overboard I push them I throw them off the cliff everyday like

I'm throwing you off the cliff today this time I'm not catching you 'what do we

do' well you gotta hold on somehow you gotta do your part now this time of year it's hit or miss I've had groups that falter this time of the year and they say nope it's just too hard I have kids that push that extra mile DR. HOPP keep pushing right right cause they know you care. Well which is a good segue into the next question. So how do you engage your kids um you've sort of hit on it in terms of engagement that happens around you how would describe engagement at Westridge.

SCOTT: My engagement?

DR. HOPP: In general in general just how do you feel kids are engaged?

SCOTT: Engagement is a way to interact with the kid not just say in a lecture you have to open up to kids you have to have those certain kids that you can play with as far as you can joke around with them they can joke around with you now there's some kids I can't joke around with so I pick and select based on beginning of the year I'm all automatically I know exactly who I can do what with you have to know the kids emotions what they do how they do it and what makes them tick what gets them mad and a beginning of a year thing and once you get that established then you go further OK well I can treat this one differently OK I can treat this one differently and then what I do all of the time every once in a while is I change up I do things differently because you have to be flexible as a teacher if it don't work this way you do it the next way the next period you don't stop and wait well OK lets change it next time you do it immediately so I'm sort of an on the spot type person.

MAGGIE: And how do the kids respond to that

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SCOTT: Because I knew them from day one they're OK with it and they will roll with it

I'm like this is crap what is this this is not good work and they understand that's

another way of saying 'I gotta do better' and I challenge them I'm like well this is

this is horrible your an honor student and your giving me this and it gives them

now again sometimes occasionally it will backfire and then I have to reroute

myself and say OK oops lets figure out how to do it a different way but 99% of

the time it does not backfire because it's kind of like tough love they have to have

it because that's how they've been brought up and I cant do in this school what i

do in other schools you have to pick and choose based on the personality of say

the child and the actual um area you gotta understand what they need and what

they want from you.

MAGGIE: And how do you come to know that how do you come to establish that

relationship so that the kids share with you or how do you know this population.

SCOTT: You gotta talk to them. You have to not just say OK what are your favorite

subjects at the beginning of the year you cant do that you have to be one on one

with those kids every once in a while they need that extra you go out in the

hallway they need that extra I mean I'll have a crowd hanging around me I mean I

have 30 hugs a day just because the kid understands that I'm there for them

there's nothing like that

MAGGIE: And how do you set excuse me how do you set boundaries with the kids how do

you think you've established a boundary so those kids know where that line is.

SCOTT: Because I I kind of it's not like where I show it they understand it based on my

disposition my face my understanding I'm there but there is a teacher student

boundary am I the boss you are the people you have to understand that there is

and it's not that I say it they automatically understand what's going on.

MAGGIE: OK

SCOTT: And that's been throughout the whole years.

DR. HOPP: And you set those boundaries and they understand what they are

SCOTT: Yeah there just like sort of magical boundaries that they know not to not to cross

             and again everybody I have that gives it all they got it's kind of like family and

             family doesn't exist anymore in a lot of places and you go OK since this kid is

             misplaced maybe mom and dad broke up the kid needs somebody and I'm that

             extra person just in case and for some reason they always go to that side.

DR. HOPP: So what is it that you keep bringing up because you engage the kids and it's very

             obvious that you really you care about them and you demonstrate those things but

             what do you think keeps kids from from being engaged here

SCOTT: Boring work the lack of interest the lack of real life sort of science science can be

             very boring if you're not a very good you know person that manipulates things

             you're gonna shut down immediately so you have to engage them in many

             different variety of things um so I change up everyday because I know once they

             get to the high school you have to be very flexible teachers they like you know

             they have their own little niches they have this and that and if I change it every

             once in a while um it gets the it keeps the kids on their toes and they need that

             extra OK he's different this time and certain times of the year I'm more angry than

             other times of the year and it brings them an understanding where you know it not

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you know you're not always sweet and nice to them sometimes you have to do
what you have to do.

DR. HOPP: So they expect you think they expect that from you.

SCOTT: Yeah and they need it they want it and if they don't get it I told them I'm like I'm
gonna change up this time and I'm not gonna do this and I said that I'm gonna be
nice one day I'm gonna be totally nice to everybody for one day they hated me.

DR. HOPP: Laughter they wanted Mr. Lords back.

SCOTT: I don't want that I don't like that you're nice to me I want that other end but you
have to change it up once in a while you have if it's not fun I'm not doing it
anymore and I have fun I come in and I have fun and you challenge the kids in
some many different ways because they're the ones that have to push on in life
and if you show them there's other ways to do it than your typical lets open up a
book lets read this lets read that they actually want that.

MAGGIE: So why do you why do you if the kids are bored they don't engage why do you
think other teachers don't have that kind of make it interesting what do you think
leads to that.

SCOTT: I think they have a lot of stuff on their table and do to the fact they have a lot of
stuff on their table they have they cant sort of cut it into two different pieces they
have to they keep that whole piece and by doing that it saying OK I cant get the
kids to do this and it has lots to do also with personality and if you don't like what
you do you just come everyday ah I gotta go to work. These kids know it these
kids are smart they know exactly what's going on when it's going on so.

DR. HOPP: So why do you think um the kids come to the problem solvers program.

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SCOTT: They typically come because what else are they gonna do what else are they

                gonna do and if a person is offering me something that I need I really really need

                why not try it why not get into it and say lets jump in all the way so I I feel that

                they come one because there's nothing else better to do and that's typically what

                the mornings are all about and two they want that extra that teachers don't give

                them.

DR. HOPP: So when they discover that what you are actually doing is academic you know

                and that you you've I gather that you can probably disguise that pretty well but

                once they you know you've got a got a pretty high rate of return you know that the

                kids keep coming so why do you think that is.

SCOTT: Because once they once you taste the chocolate you want more once you get that

                sweet taste in your mouth of success. now I I not only do I do the backwards

                curriculum I say OK let's see what you did in 6th grade and I also say OK before

                an exam lets go over it lets go over it in a little bit more detail. And you give that

                kid that extra power to say I'm gonna be successful on that test. now most kids

                fail my tests 90% of my kids fail my tests now why it's because I push them off

                the cliff and they don't know how to get back. So I give them a problem that is so

                difficult for them they don't get it do I fail them for that no i back track and say

                OK well why did you do this or why did this happen and again they want more

                just from that so.

DR. HOPP: So how are the kids selected for the program?

SCOTT: At the beginning of the year I had sort of a volunteer set up and said OK the

                people interested what I did was I played it I played it I said OK the kids from last

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year that were very successful on the FCAT 90% of them came to my FCAT

tutoring now why did they do that because they found goals out in the middle of

the year and they said I want to get to that goal. So by selling it then you say OK

who wants to do this and you have volunteers and then I look at em and I go OK

good fit not a good fit good fit you look at the personality and you say OK if this

kids going to be a jerk in class I don't want them here OK because I want this to

flow and I don't have to babysit I don't get paid enough to babysit in the morning

so I go OK is this person really playing the system does he really want to do this

does she really want to do this or is it just because their friends are doing it. so I

select on how I see their overall disposition the whole year not just to the moment.

DR. HOPP: So how do you think the kids feel when they don't get selected?

SCOTT: They'll find a way to get in anyway sooner or later if they aren't like at this time

of the year Friday I say anybody that wants to come in come in and again I

rerouted it about a week ago I said OK if you're not showing up for Tuesday

Thursday I don't want you here somebody else is going to take your spot I said so

on Friday everybody that wants to be here on Friday this is the time to do it

because once FCAT once the FCAT is gone I cant have this program I don't'

have the principal doesn't have the money to give this to me so. They go well is it

about money? I go no I will do this without money but you gotta understand a lot

of the kids once the success has been made they're not they need that break at that

time so. They have set up goals at the beginning of the year you know the kids

that don't they find a way they'll find a way to come in.

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DR. HOPP: Lets talk about the kids some more um how would you describe their

relationships with one another?

SCOTT: In that program they're pretty close now again you have little groups you have

groups like these are the geeks and these are the jocks these are the this so they

find they're own little niche within the class and sometimes you have the um you

know kind of like sibling relationships where they battle each other but it's more

of a way of it's pretty close I never had a problem in FCAT tutoring as far as

relationships are concerned I say it's family if you don't want to be in my family

get the heck out it's all about you have to be wanting to help out another I always

tell them relationships are never 50-50 and they go what are you talking about

they they have to be and I go no because sometimes that partner needs a little

extra sometimes they need a little bit less and you need a little bit more and if you

balance it so again it's never 50-50 cause it's not life isn't fair and you gotta

figure out how to get there how to be successful in life.

DR. HOPP: So and you talked about your relationship um their relationship with you um so

what do you think and I want to make sure that I have this question right that um

when you ask this question.

MAGGIE: Are you talking about what do you think the teacher did to encourage the student

participation do you mean Mr. Lords do you mean the other teachers uh I'll ask it

both OK other teachers understand this program and they what it is?

SCOTT: Not really DR. HOPP they don't.

SCOTT: So.

DR. HOPP: So do they encourage participation in the program or do you get teachers that say listen I got kids who really need to be in the program. SCOTT since they won last year Dr. Camacho saw that these kids for some reason feed off of me and he wants other teachers to do he instituted the SWAG program this year because he goes you know what I don't need my honors and my advanced kids to do this i need my other echelon that have you know everything is FCAT not just the top so he encourages a lot of different activities if you wanna tutor you can get money to tutor you can have that and for some reason teachers just don't care to do it. Because for them it's more like an extra job

DR. HOPP: Right

SCOTT: Extra this and extra that and unfortunately that's why the teachers don't do it so they don't really know how and why I get so many people in here but they look in my room like what's wrong with you why do you have all these people in here it's because they want to be here they know that there's a different way to do things so I don't think it's out enough how I do things what if do and I'm trying to get the two other 8th grade teachers since they want to do it and it's just I cant wake up early enough in the morning I cant prepare and then there's more excuses than that

DR. HOPP: Uh um

SCOTT: And for me it's like I've never been late to anything in my life it's always about your here on time you do your job and if you have a little extra time what you your a teacher your supposed to be here for them so find ways to get to them.

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DR. HOPP: Do you think that the kids um you know I always think the kids can sell a program and it is it is you based upon participation but how much of that do you think happens as kids talk about what they do with you.

SCOTT: I think in certain realms they talk about it um I've had people that have been in both of these classrooms want to come into my program um and I'm uncomfortable with that at this point due to the fact that I haven't had them for three months of three quarters so it gets sold because they have a place to go and they're actually learning now a lot of kids especially in middle school especially this year every year has a personality this personality is monotonous it's very slow it's I don't I'm lazy I don't wanna do this where last year it was like get up and go and it was a select few that said lets get up and go so you gotta it's like a touchy feely thing with every single sort of class that comes through this class is a I don't wanna do anything now it all came from last year unfortunately um last year was the year that these kids had the ability to sit on the counters during class chill not do work and no discipline was done so they found ways to laughter you look at me this is this is how I see it and this is how it's been happening these kids last year had no discipline at all so they know how to run this system OK so this year they're gonna try to do the same thing but for my class for one I've never thrown anybody out of my class I give rarely detentions because they know exactly from day one what their behavior has to be it can't be like it was last year you cant sit on the counter you cant do this you cant you know cuss this word and do that unfortunately i got to them they have not and it's three quarters in so she's

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a rookie I'm I'm mentoring her she is doing her job but everyday they look at her like a piece of meat.

DR. HOPP: Right right I suppose students do that.

SCOTT: And even today like two days ago she wrote a referral because a kid called her a blanking blank and right to her face in the middle of class so and then this one 15 years no actually I think he's 20 into he's a high school teacher he comes down here and he can't control the kids

DR. HOPP: Wow

SCOTT: So it's all first of all about the discipline so every class has their own they think they can play and they learn that from past years and unfortunately the discipline has not changed.

MAGGIE: So are you letting students in from the other classes at all.

SCOTT: They haven't really asked because they're afraid of me I mean I have a sister of

DR. HOPP: the kids or the teachers.

SCOTT: The kids the kids are afraid of me they they're afraid of me because they know that I'm a hard ass they know that if your gonna come to me your gonna work so that's why most kids are afraid of me they don't understand once you get what you know what you really need you want more but most kids are lazy … I was gonna do starting you know this week and next week a couple of weeks of whoever wanted to come in from them but it's just too much. I have a mission right now with my kids and I don't want to fault with mine to try to bring in something else at this point and I don't think it's fair to my kids to give up on them and share the wealth I need to concentrate on my kids.

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DR. HOPP: Well I think you know the other thing you've alluded to is consistency.

SCOTT: Oh yeah it's all about consistency.

DR. HOPP: it's about consistency. So if you had to describe your students how would you describe them?

SCOTT: This year?

DR. HOPP: Um… you talk about the personality but

SCOTT: They're consistently they're consistently lazy this year. They consistently need to be pushed I have pushed more this year than I ever pushed and it like sometimes it's like a deer in the headlights it's like what are you doing it's like all this and you're giving it up your behavior is now starting to suck why is that and you consistently have to reinforce what your all about and what you want all these kids to do. I mean they had a test where I virtually went over every single answer except lets say like five of them and these kids failed the test and you go what are you doing are you giving up on me now three weeks to go before FCAT what are you doing and I blasted them I'm like you know what I'm gonna do I'm gonna go ahead and put this on progress I'm gonna make you eat this grade and they look at me like you wouldn't dare and I did and they look at me like holy crap I got like a 70 now and I'm an A student I'm like cause your not doing your job I don't give you a free pass because your nice to me cause you want a hug every I don't give you a free pass free passes are not allowed it's all about you push you push you push and then you give up you push some more

DR. HOPP: Right

SCOTT: There's no such thing as giving up and unfortunately this class they're giver

            uppers they like to give up with no trying so.

DR. HOPP   So then after you push you know and they know you're gonna push and you've

            had them since august right.

SCOTT: M hum.

DR. HOPP: OK they know that you're gonna push they know how you're going to react so

            what kind of reaction do you get I mean do they?

SCOTT: I have some kids that don't come back

DR. HOPP: Oh.

SCOTT: I have some kids that say OK this is too much for me I have too much on my table

            and this is just not what I'm looking for but most of the time they step up their

            game and they'll say hmmm I really need to finish what I started and

            unfortunately you know their home life and their friend life is not the same.

DR. HOPP: Right

SCOTT: Because they never can finish what they started they never can communicate and

            here it's you know if I give you that sense of security that you know you can do it

            you can do it you can do it then I push them I knock them down all the time then I

            pick them up I knock them down and I pick them up it's that tough love and by

            knowing that they want that they consistently will fight.

MAGGIE: Do you hear back from the students who leave do you get feedback from them do

            they then try to come back or do they try to come back or do they say you know

            I'm better off now do you get feedback from them?

SCOTT: Last year's students have been coming back in sort of fluency they come back all

            the time to say hi what you been up to I thought you were leaving and this and

            that cause they understand I have a life too and you know life's an education they

            always get thrown into the mix so they always want know you know what's going

            on with me cause they see when I left them they were in tears they were in tears

            and you know they wanna know what happened what's going on right now.

MAGGIE: How about the kids from this year that didn't come back they were here and then

            they felt like it was too much whatever their reasons were and they left do they

            give you any feedback about what they're thinking about ?

SCOTT: Well it's not a lot that do that it's my mom wont let me do it anymore or like

            there's other reasons for saying that uh Mr. Lords a hard ass this and that it's

            more like there's a lot of other things going on that I cant do.

MAGGIE: Got ya

DR. HOPP: So how else would you how else would they describe the experience with you

            after a year?

SCOTT: They would a lot of them would say it's fun it's it's an extra thing to do it's what I

            want to do some people will says it was a pain in the butt but it got me moving

            cause high school is an earlier day than this so if they start earlier they get used to

            it yeah they hate you for waking them up but they understand why and it sort of

            kicks starts a different sort of avenue for them.

DR. HOPP: M hm so overall how long have you been doing this in this school two years.

            Two years OK you did it.

SCOTT: Officially for two year I did it on my own you know without you know the
              official title and this and that

DR. HOPP: OK so

SCOTT: Because before a test I'd have a full house in here in the past you know I've been
              here five years here um and just before a test id have a full house because they
              understood one I throw it a different avenue so they understand how important
              tests are and how difficult my tests are so but officially two years here that I've
              really started a program and this year with my Tuesday Thursday I've also thrown
              in the recycling program and that gets a lot of other kids that OK well now I
              actually have title and I have a little badge that I go around and now I'm the boss
              you know I can walk around.

MAGGIE: And they are so funny they come to my class and they're just like they kind of
              beam with pride to pick up my recycled stuff it is just the funniest thing to watch
              them.

DR. HOPP: And you know from all of my experience with middle school students when they
              are cause there in this sort of maelstrom they don't know they go from elementary
              school to being coddled by this one person to this now I have 6 different
              personalities that I have to juggle SCOTT and they don't know how to deal.

DR. HOPP: They have no idea they have no idea their brains cannot handle it and then you
              give them that one thing that sort of elevates them to something you know in their
              heads and it makes a difference and to us it's a very little thing to them it's huge.

SCOTT: I had a kid yesterday she's not part of my future problem solvers she was in my
              6th period class you goes Mr. Lords Mr. Lords can I stay here I wanna do this all

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the time I don't wanna go anywhere else this is fun and the day before she hated

my guts because the day before I gave her a lab that was impossible to do and she

was she was disliking me and so from one minute to the next why would she say

that because she understands that she does not like what's going on outside.

DR. HOPP: You know I used to tell my students when I hear you say really good things that

who I think you really are you know rather than these really hurtful things there's

nothing like middle school drama.

SCOTT   Ah it's horrible.

DR. HOPP: Absolutely anywhere

MAGGIE: It's crazy.

DR. HOPP: I used to start my classes id give them five minutes after lunch to get all the drama

done because it from the cafeteria through the halls into your room and so you

know id say got five minutes they knew that they had that five minutes and as

soon it was done and id move to the middle of the classroom it was done but you

have to give them that time and I would have my colleagues would say I don't

have that kind of time and id say take it now because it's going to continue

throughout class and the other thing I did was take all the girls make-up I had a

basket you just put the make up there because I'd go your not going to sit in the

back of the classroom and put your make up on because your going to see what's

his name in the hall after class.

MAGGIE: I don't even let them have their backpacks at their seat.

SCOTT: See I let them be themselves in my classroom but theirs also that you know

there's school rules too we gotta do what we gotta do.

DR. HOPP: Exactly

SCOTT: But you have to let them be themselves and you know everybody says where's your seating chart well I don't have one if a kids not doing their job I'm gonna move them I'm gonna move them right there and I'm gonna mess up the whole freaking class ill even take the class that peeved me off one day and I'll make them take a number and sit them next to somebody they don't like to and I'll do that every single day for a week. As so as I do that they *"gasp"* and they understand I'm gonna let you sit with your friend but you do my work.

DR. HOPP: But you do my work yep yep yep.

SCOTT: Now occasionally a kid will try to stick something in his mouth and I understand that cause they're starving they wont eat this they wont and yet that's a fuel they need fuel but if it gets over time and I see this then I go off but you have to let them be themselves.

DR. HOPP: Right.

SCOTT: And unfortunately they say I'm mean and I'm this and that but really am i I'm a big fat teddy bear that's what they see me as I'm mean everybody else in the other classes say I don't want him because he makes us do this he makes us do that but they really want me.

DR. HOPP: And I will tell you this that when I get my pre-service teachers and I I teach methods at UCFand I ask them about because we started talking about classroom management and I ask them tell me about your favorite teacher and they always say that their favorite teacher was the one that had the most control was the one that expected more of them because what they did not like was going into teachers

classrooms that didn't have control. You know and it at to a person and I said you

have to remember that and then you have to figure out how do you balance that

you know that knowing what the boundaries are and being that you know that you

have standards you have very high expectations but you can still you know

MAGGIE: And a lot of these kids don't want to be in the drama I have kids wait for me at the

front door can they come up and get on my computers and if I have time I'll let

them if I have meetings then I cant cause they don't wanna be hanging out there

with all that drama they're just they don't want to be part of that.

DR. HOPP: Right

MAGGIE: And then you know I also uh am the advisor for the AVID council for the kids

they wanna come in they don't wanna be out now they have their own little set of

drama I'm not gonna lie about that.

DR. HOPP: Oh yeah.

MAGGIE: But they don't wanna be out in the bigger drama. They at least wanna isolate it to

within them but you know I just say you know 'really' you're really gonna do

that.

DR. HOPP: Exactly.

MAGGIE: Because why are you gonna do that so.

DR. HOPP: That's all the questions we have is there anything else you want us to know?

SCOTT: Uh just one of these things that was kind of interesting yesterday sort of brOKe

my heart but heather who was in my future problem solvers group last year she

was my student assistant last year she's I always say you go through my class and

if you have these three criteria you're good to go 'blood, sweat, tears' and last

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year I made her have all three and she's you know she'll sweat it out but it was a paper cut I gave her so there's your blood. She comes back yesterday she comes back because one she has service hours to do for the high school and she goes I have to tell you something. What is it is is drama is a boyfriend is she goes I don't know how to handle something and I need help and I go OK well what is it she goes death it rung a bell and I'm like there was a fire in the apartment complex and she goes I go is it about the fire she goes yes and I go was it about the fire this morning at the apartment complex I guess it was a mother and two kids.

DR. HOPP: Yes.

SCOTT: It was her relatives and she did not know how to handle it she goes how do you handle it Mr. Lords what do you do and I'm like your handling it pretty well and she's not like I don't know how to handle it and she starts breaking down so I was that extra sort of you know she needed it and how do you do that but she insisted that she had to come see me because she didn't know how to handle something.

APPENDIX I: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS TRANSCRIPTS

MAGGIE: So thanks for being here I know you have a lot to do I know you having

                     morning duty um so we want to start off with the question you know we

                     are looking at this whole idea of student engagement and student

                     involvement. So we are asking you how you would define student

                     engagement.

DR. CAMACHO: Its exactly that its interchange with involvement staying involved in an

                     activity um taking part in an activity being part of an organization

                     involving ones self um whether it be with a club whether it be with a sport

                     but its occupy ones time in an organization or a group that has a common

                     goal common direction common division.

DR. HOPP: So in the classroom that would um relate to in terms of what I hear you

                     say if there involved how would you relate that to what goes on in the

                     class.

DR. CAMACHO: Class well its really a shift from the instruction model as opposed to sitting

                     an listening anymore its now teachers are taking the facilitator role and

                     students become more engaged with the material as opposed to sit and

                     listen memorize it and restate for an assessment now they have to be able

                     to interact with knowledge and not only do and as a matter of fact I was

                     watching interestingly Ted Talk last night about involvement. That which

                     we get involved or engaged ourselves in are the ones we will tend to have

                     more knowledge in afterwards its practical its hands on and um the source

                     to learning is experience um and exposure to a situation but as far as

                     engagement that that takes it to a different level where you are emerged in

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it your interacting with um if were going to refer to the classroom your

interacting with knowledge interaction with others and the teacher

themselves take again more of a facilitator role as opposed to just

remember this information and restate it later.

DR. HOPP: OK so how would you describe ethical caring?

DR. CAMACHO: Well ethical when I think of ethics I think of morals now um but ethical

care is what um even Arthur Foshay wrote in his book the curriculum

matrix there is a different side of the curricula that we tend to forget about

and that's that the social uh the emotion the people skills curricula that we

do that's that unspoken curriculum sometimes that hidden curriculum but

ah again going back to the fact that ethical care embodies those forms how

we welcome someone we speak so much about relations being key to

learning relationships are what make rigor and relevance happen I've

heard that stated before learning does not exist until our relationship begin

first and certainly I've heard statements like this so when we talk about

ethical care we are talking about the moral side of the piece that has

someone feel safe comfortable uh allows for their needs first and a sense

of belonging well our most effective learning and our most effective

emotions come out when we have a sense of belonging. And its a good

feeling as opposed to anything else so it ties into ethical care knowing that

we have a responsible we have an obligation to care for an individual

provide a safe learning environment not only for the students but for all

individuals that come into this learning environment here our place here

school if you will. But we all have that obligation and that falls down to

ones ethics and quite frankly there's one saying that I heard years ago

there's no such thing as ethical leadership only ethical leaders. And its

what we do on a daily basis that makes the difference what environment

do I impose on myself as the leader of this school and what environment

am I going to allow - culture is what we allow so what culture am I going

to lead here and I always try to do that through ethical standards.

MAGGIE: And when we talk about ethical standards you talk about morals how

would you talk about moral how would you describe moral education.

DR. CAMACHO: Well moral education it it again ties into that ethical as well uh that hidden

side referring back to Foshay's curriculum matrix it's just there are other

components that we have to assure that students are obtaining in their lives

were raising people we are raising young people that are one day going to

take our spots. And I understand the entire piece of of the certain pieces

of curriculum needing to be taught the foundation of life mathematics

sciences things of those nature but there's also that moral piece that we

need to prepare students for on how to interact with others how to um

resolve conflict people skills almost and those are the areas we need to

emphasize a great deal um with our young people because sometimes they

don't obtain it elsewhere and its its by modeling positive behaviors a

simple hand shake to them and say good morning to you those are to me

moral education examples being displayed to them and how to say hello

and emote positive behaviors because we haven't because we have them

for a very short amount of time in middle school we have the smallest

amount of time of any other area in the educational system.

DR. HOPP: And, the most empathic age right?

DR. CAMACHO: Most definitely we have the most change physically, emotionally, socially

in looking back at Sheryl Feinstein's um Secrets of the Teenage Brain

that's when the actual the development of the brain happens more rapidly

than any other time in their life because they've hit the teenage years and

you get into the emotional sides of school of uh of the identity crisis as

Sheryl Feinstein writes in her book that teenagers go through when they

enter middle school it's not quite as common in high school because the

structure of high school is very similar to the structure of middle school

and they've already seen 3 years of that system systematic approach

different classes and so forth but from elementary to middle this is the first

time they've had that experience of now I can walk by myself to and from

and here we have all these opportunities and so forth so the day changes

but that still to me that gives us that shows the importance of the moral

education why its important to walk quietly in the hallway why its

important to if someone bumps you to say excuse me don't take offense to

it these are just the skills that we need to share with young people.

MAGGIE: Dr. Camacho here at West Ridge how would you describe the level of

student engagement.

DR. CAMACHO: The level of student engagement right now our student body of about 1250

students if I were to add up all of our sports all of our clubs morning

tutoring now I will include our after school tutoring we have throughout

the year I'm going to venture to say we about 400 and now if you include

our bands orchestra our dance clubs and so forth now we're were

blooming up to 500 students that are involved in these activities there's

extracurricular actives as well so when were talking about our

involvement here and how students are engaged its continuing to increase

just in my tenure I've started the Boys Scouts um through the support of

Ms. Wong I've started the uh Fellowship of DR. CAMACHOtian Athletes

through Ms. Salters and to me its about listening to where teachers express

their interests also. Because you have to have teachers that are also that

want to lead these things so to me my goal is to always provide teachers

the resources the things they need to make things happen. Um I'm proud

to say that neither one of those ideas came from me they came from our

teachers and I said where do I sign. How do you do it I as a leader have to

find my shining stars that are going to help me create that culture that I

referred to earlier and if we can create our culture based on organizations

like the Boy Scouts that deal with moral education service to community

to self to others then I know were heading in the right direction and those

are the organizations those are the opportunities I want to continue to

increase in our school because the message that they share because of the

moral teachings that they share.

DR. HOPP: So you know the student engagement in terms of the extra curricular um

which you know seems to be on the rise. Um and kids usually engage um

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I always had when I was a teacher always the you know the tutoring and the uh you know of course I engaged in the arts a lot so I had you know dance and drama as well. Um what I saw was kids being engaged not only in the activity itself but in the teaching of you know what was happening so in your experience in classrooms with the teachers and as you you know observe what how do you see the student engagement in the classroom.

DR. CAMACHO: Well that's the area that we need to continue to improve upon and I think the in my observation that's that also deals with teacher efficacy and how comfortable teachers feel with changing that model from a sit and listen to a facilitative model certainly the Marzano framework has leant a great deal to it. Domain one specifically in uh in the areas of three and four where we have um that's where students are more organized as groups um as opposed to being um cooperative were looking more for collaboration its one to organize students in groups and say here you go sure they'll cooperate with one another but is it truly on the topic at hand. So that right there is an area where were continuing to to um provide professional development on because for for many of us teachers I was a wonderful stand and deliver teacher and I'd like to say I was a good one a very good one. But was I organizing students to deepen their understanding as much as I could have? Not necessarily the case and that 18 years ago very different frame of education and so um what I see as far as engagement were were getting there but I do believe I do believe that's an area that is

going to take time to continue to improve because you have the factor of

teacher efficacy you also the factor of resources that teachers need to make

this happen um and then quite frankly to have the opportunity for teachers

to share ideas and observe each other and see what's working and what's

not working and to have those opportunities to continue to collaborate

themselves on what's working and what's not working and then come up

with that fine tune model of what we can were getting there um but it it

even in orange county public schools the number of schools that we have

no two schools operate the same way we have an overview of item we

have again we have the Marzano framework but the overall and that can

vary from school to school as well.

DR. HOPP: So if you were in uh in what you see in what you see in classrooms and I

think you've hit upon it in terms of the teachers having maybe even

needing the professional development or you know perhaps um feeling

more comfortable. When you see these students engaged what do you

think is the key when they are engaged in the classrooms?

DR. CAMACHO: Clear and set routines um structures that they've practiced it's evident I I

think you can see when a group has practiced it and its its so embedded in

their routine that its second nature and then the teacher goes right back

into that facilitative model and is able to do that but that takes time um

having clear roles for students whether your the record keeper keeper your

the time keeper these are nothing new to the education arena Kagen these

are very much cooperative Kagen strategies but that also goes into the

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professional development have we had it have enough teachers seen it

have they been exposed to it have they had the opportunity to do it and

most importantly reflect on it because the reflection is the key there that's

one item of the Marzano model framework that I really enjoy is that

there's a reflection piece to everyone of the formal observations and that's

its immediate feedback through the informal observations its instantaneous

there is more wait until we have a meeting it can be done instantaneously

instantaneous feedback and uh and those are that's critical I think you

want to improve a behavior and get feedback and then follow up on it um

but the more you do that the more feedback I can provide well then the

more insight a teacher has on their attempts or their work at that

collaborative work with their students.

DR. HOPP: So turning to the Problems Solvers Program um there were um I'm

thinking I'm looking here 78 students almost 80 students interested and

there was only room for 28 um and in thinking about the program why do

you think there were so many students that wanted to participate?

DR. CAMACHO: It's how you sell its how you sell that I give credit to the teacher its how

you sell it. If you think about it these students are basically coming in for

morning class we call it tutoring but it's a zero hour class twice a week

that they come in for and its really how the teacher sold it. I'm here to

help you I'm here to you be successful going back to the relationship piece

establish that relationship, guys this is what its about I know you can do it

were going to prepare for it were going to get you there he took a personal

interest in the students the students see that they believe his sincerity and

that's what's driving them here its not for a grade they're not getting a

grade for it its the extra support to do well

DR. HOPP: have you had a chance to um have any conversations or know anything

about the students who were able to get into the program?

DR. CAMACHO: Not in particular not the ones that didn't get in no.

DR. HOPP: Ok. Um and lets talk about motivation I mean you know you hit on a lot

of things that really um get at motivation so why do you think the students

keep coming back week after week?

DR. CAMACHO: I gotta go back to the teacher, because he has welcomed them he has set

the stage for growth learning personal learning also knowing that they're

not going to be alone in this he's going to help them get there and that's

critical that that when you know as person you have someone on your side

that's going to support you give you everything you need to be successful

I think that's a win win right there and that just gives you that positive

feeling to want to learn more you're not alone and that just just solidifies

support structures and when the support is there we as individuals will do

better.

MAGGIE: Now what I've observed in that environment - he's pretty tough on those

kids. Um much tougher than most instructors are so how do you think that

plays think that plays into this?

DR. CAMACHO: Well you have to have a fine balance at some point and knowing the

teacher he's constantly giving them that zone of proximal development if

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you will. Alright guys this is where you are but were still going to keep

stretching there's more to do there's more to learn I'm gonna get you

there.   And its not just coming in alright guys were done we've made it

good great. No its a continued pursuit of more its as simple as that just

more and that's what keeps bringing the students back.

DR. HOPP: When you've been you've um and you've been in the classroom to watch

what goes on a little bit ok just tell me in general what you've seen you

know what you've noticed about the kids in that classroom?

DR. CAMACHO: In that specific classroom?

DR. HOPP: In the Problem Solvers

DR. CAMACHO: That they're engaged they're involved I um I by observation I believe they

understand the purpose behind it that they're and it goes back to a

fundamental belief that when you know the purpose and you understand

the purpose behind it that's your cause, people follow causes they don't

follow people but I do believe they follow powerful people that lead that

cause you gotta have that strength and in this case that teacher has

solidified that purpose with them and the students understand why and you

understand they why you know we hear so much about Simon Sineks

work the why and the how and the what will come the achievements will

come but they know the why they know that if they work hard that

positive outcomes will occur

DR. HOPP: Did you notice anything about the relationships with the teacher?

DR. CAMACHO: Yeah as Ms. Anderson pointed out he's got a tough love situation with

them I'm here to throw you off the cliff and he'll tell them you're gonna be

thrown off the cliff your gonna see things you've never seen your quite

frankly going to see things you don't know how to do and that's ok

because the message is clear the students are going to see problems that

they're going to challenge they're going to scratch their head they're going

to have to collaborate with their uh partner and the end they still may not

know the answer but they're going to keep working at it until they do. We

talk about so much about skills that young people need yeah there's the

foundation skills but there also need to be able to be a problem solver a

creative thinker and a uh team work team worker those kind of things

these are skills they need to see to prepare for their lives ahead of them

that's the way our society is moving towards that's our society is

involving and the education of not only young people but of even adult

learners is drastically changing very very different um watching an

interesting piece on that last night as well on distant learning uh how that's

changed the face of education so were also having to prepare our young

people for a different mode of learning as they move on to their post

secondary school

DR. HOPP: Ok and I think last thing have you ever had a chance to talk to any of the

students that are in the program?

DR. CAMACHO: Yes I have as a matter of fact we got to send them to a um a neat and this

was in thanks to our school board member Kat Gordon who invited our

Problem Solvers to a uh STEM um field trip and that was probably about four months ago and we got to take our Problem Solvers group to that and I'm so thankful. I got to see them before they came back because they were supposed to arrive back after school closed but they showed up right when school was ending. I got to see them and positive feedback on what they observed they got to see hands on people in their profession in the science profession speaking to them sharing ideas about future education opportunities for them what kind of classes they can focus on in high school um that's a key piece right there is what offerings do high schools also provide to young people so that they can get a taste of what lies ahead of them I think that's so important. I as a father to a future 9th grader next year trying to steer him into this is the direction you'd like to take after high school you should start taking these kind of classes to give you an idea if your even interested in it and if not then in college shift gears shift gears then don't wait till college to figure that out um.

DR. HOPP: Yea those kids were in awe of that STEM program.

DR. CAMACHO: They were.

DR. HOPP: They were totally in awe.

MAGGIE: Where was it?

DR. CAMACHO: Oh SeaWorld I think I'd like to say SeaWorld.

DR. HOPP: Yea ok ok so once you know and here again once they get exposed to it and once they see um you know I'm working on a project at Jones High School and were looking at um looking at girls in STEM and career

choices and things like that so you know its once they see and get a taste

of it sort of they say so how can i do that so

DR. CAMACHO: Yeah.

DR. HOPP: Do you have any other questions?

MAGGIE: I don't and I know that you have morning duty so we want to make sure

that we don't hold you up from that but um I'll go ahead and stop this.

APPENDIX J: UCF IRB

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
          FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Marguerite Anderson** and Co-PIs if applicable: **Carolyn W. Hopp**

Date: **November 12, 2013**

Dear Researcher:

On 11/12/2013 the IRB approved the following human participant research until 11/11/2014 inclusive:

Type of Review:	Submission Response for UCF Initial Review Submission Form Expedited
Project Title:	Student Engagement and Ethical Care in a Title I Middle School Program
Investigator:	Marguerite Anderson
IRB Number:	SBE-13-09774
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu .

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 11/11/2014, approval of this research expires on that date. <u>When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.</u>

<u>Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required.</u> The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the <u>Investigator Manual</u>.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Patria Davis on 11/12/2013 11:47:05 AM EST

IRB Coordinator

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