

Extracurricular Activities and Academic Achievement in Fourth Grade Students

Abstract

This action research project will investigate the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement of students in the fourth grade.

Students' achievement scores on the FAIR exams will be the measure of academic success.

Analysis will consist of a correlation between extracurricular activities and academic success.

Statement of the problem

Students deal with the struggles of schoolwork, family, friends, and extracurricular activities. Students today are involved in countless extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, music, arts, hobbies) that are not a part of a regular school schedule, but for which they generally need to enroll. Children differ in the type and extent of their involvement in extracurricular activities. The purpose of this action research study is to investigate the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement of students in the fourth grade

Purpose/Research Question

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement of students in the fourth grade.

Literature Review

Researchers have suggested that students' academic achievement can be affected by engagement in extracurricular activities. Although the current study investigates

whether extracurricular activities facilitate academic achievement, the literature proposes that it may be harmful. For example, Fredricks (2012) reported that students are over scheduling themselves with extracurricular activities, and in turn, there is a strain being placed on a student's academic achievement. The literature has investigated extracurricular activities that are not a part of a regular school schedule, but for which they generally need to enroll, (e.g., sports, music, arts, hobbies). Research has also investigated the influence of social, cognitive and economic factors on the relationship between academic achievement and extracurricular activities. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement of students in a fourth grade class.

Methodology

The participants of this study are fourth grade students, at an Urban K-8 Center in Miami. Students will complete a questionnaire, addressing questions such as the number of extracurricular activities they are involved in, the extent of their participation in such activities, and their perception of the influence it may have on their schoolwork (e.g., homework, projects, class work, studying/reading) The questionnaire will collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data will be coded to identify themes, to inform interpretation of the quantitative findings. Two correlational analyses will be produced: (a) The correlation between the number of activities in which the student is engaged and the student's FAIR score and (b) the extent of each student's participation and the student's FAIR score. The researcher will use the FAIR scores from August-October, and January – March, as a longitudinal measure.

Findings/Results

Given previous research findings and my own observations in the field, I expect to find a correlation between student engagement in extracurricular activities and their academic achievement levels. This correlation may be a negative correlation, meaning that the more students are involved in extracurricular activities and for longer periods of time, the lower their academic achievement levels become. On the other hand, there may instead be a positive correlation between the two, meaning that, the more the student is involved in extracurricular activities, the higher their academic achievement levels are. The research and observation will begin during the month of January 2015. Results, interpretation, and preparation of findings for presentation will be concluded by the beginning of May 2015.

Implications for the field

The results of this research may be beneficial to students, teachers, administrators and parents alike. Regardless of the relationship that is observed between extracurricular activities and academic achievements, the new found data may help parents and teachers to help students in making informed choices about students' lives outside of the classroom. If there is found to be a negative correlation, then maybe one may need to reconsider the involvement of students in extracurricular activities to a certain extent. If there is a positive correlation, then teachers and parents may look for opportunities to provide students with extracurricular activities.