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The Effectiveness of Afterschool Programs in Improving Fifth Grade Academic Performance: A Case Study of Two Select Metro Atlanta Afterschool Programs

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ABSTRACT

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN IMPROVING FIFTH
GRADE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SELECT
METRO ATLANTA AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Committee Chair: Dr. Barbara Hill

Dissertation Dated May 2014

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to research strategies of successful afterschool programs and their effectiveness in promoting student achievement and closing achievement gaps. Many afterschool programs have boasted of their ability to improve student achievement. Some students who participated in afterschool programs have shown an increase of improved academic performance. However, studies have indicated that students are still performing below grade level on national and state curriculum standards. Data have shown that fifth graders across the state of Georgia are struggling in math, social studies, and science. Effective academic afterschool programs may have assisted struggling students in raising their Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT) scores. Afterschool programs have the ability to help students socially, emotionally, culturally, behaviorally and academically. The variables addressed in the study are (a) program effectiveness, (b) student motivation, (c) parental involvement, (d) successful program structure, (e) student attendance, (f) student involvement/

socialization, (g) climate of the program, and (h) student expectations. Data were gathered using observations, face-to-face teacher interviews, document analysis, teacher questionnaires, and student questionnaires.

The sample was 24 (18 students from school A and 6 students from school B) fifth grade students in two select afterschool programs whose CRCT data were compared to students in the same school but do they did not attend the afterschool program. The comparison group was 18 fifth grade students from school A and 15 fifth grade students from school B. The CRCT test data revealed how well students may perform on standardized tests even if they do not attend the afterschool program. Although CRCT test data were used to help determine the effectiveness of the afterschool program in improving academic achievement in fifth grade students, there may be other factors that contributed to student success. The fifth grade students were selected because they are mandated to take Georgia's standardized CRCT. In most Georgia counties, if students do not pass all parts of the CRCT, they will not be able to move on to the next grade level.

The results revealed that students in the study enjoyed attending the afterschool programs. After review of the CRCT data, it was determined that most of the study participants and the non-study participants mostly met or exceeded in reading and math. School A had an adequate study group of 15 students. School B only had four students' CRCT test scores. Two students in school B scored below grade level in math. The study also revealed that there may be other factors as to why students perform well on the CRCT.

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GRADE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SELECT
METRO ATLANTA AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

A DISSERTATION

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BY

ROBYN ELLISA MEDLOCK

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 highlighted concerns within America's struggling educational system. NCLB had many goals, but one dealt directly with helping failing students achieve success by implementing afterschool tutorial programs. NCLB developed a plan to help some of the struggling students called supplemental educational services. Often, there was not enough time in the school day to help struggling students master concepts. Students could benefit from attending extended day schooling. The remediation strategy most often tried for struggling students was to place students in afterschool programs. Some of the more popular afterschool providers included (a) Boys and Girls Club of America, (b) Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), (c) churches, (d) schools, and (d) Sylvan, Huntington, and Kumon Learning Centers and the like. The Georgia Afterschool Investment Council (2011) partnered with over 70 stakeholders to create The Georgia Afterschool Quality Standards [GAQS] (2011). The Georgia Afterschool Quality Standards helped to ensure that afterschool programs are first-rate and that students obtain the best expanded afterschool and summer learning opportunities available. GAQS established eight categories of quality standards that will drive afterschool quality in Georgia. The eight categories are:

1. Active and Engaged Learning;
2. Linkages to the School Day and the Common Core State Standards;
3. Health, Nutrition, and Physical Fitness;
4. Environment (Indoor and Outdoor Space);
5. Relationships, Culture, and Diversity;
6. Staffing, Volunteers, and Professional Development;
7. Leadership and Management; and
8. Continuous Improvement. (GAQS, 2011, p. 4)

Afterschool quality standards are a guide for practitioners, parents, participants, funders, and policymakers to what quality should look like in afterschool programming (GAQS, 2011, p. 4). Afterschool programs offered possible strategies for students to achieve academic, social, interpersonal, and motivational skills to help them become more successful students in the classroom and in their community.

In the past, afterschool programs were mostly located in off campus settings where students were assumed to be in safe environments while their parents continued to work late hours. Sometimes, those afterschool programs offered homework help, study time or peer tutoring. However, the goal was not to help improve student achievement, but rather to help students complete their homework prior to leaving or to ensure they were safe until their parents arrived. Today, the trend has shifted. Society continues to take a closer look at the role of schools in educating young people, and educational systems now require transparency. Student achievement in classrooms has the potential for greater success than what standardized test results have shown. According to section

1116 (e) of NCLB legislation, attendance of an afterschool program could be a possible solution to increasing achievement within classrooms.

Although in flux, Common Core Standards (CCS) has become the newly established standards across the majority of the country. Common Core Standards were not developed by the Federal Government, but by the nation's governors, education commissioners, educators, parents, and experts (corestandards.org, n. d., para. 1). The goal of the Common Core Standards was to ensure that each child across the nation has equal access to education regardless of their home state. CCS will meet the goal by ensuring students learn educational material and are able to meet or exceed on assessments. Theoretically, CCS expected that students focus on what and how they are learning educational concepts rather than grades they may earn. Students can benefit from additional assistance in an afterschool program. This additional help will allow students to gain equitable access to information in their classrooms. Students who have attended afterschool programs are more likely to obtain needed additional learning time in order to be successful in class and society.

Nationwide, schools were making strides towards implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; but supplemental educational services were not monitored to determine if any improvement of student achievement occurred. As a result, states have failed to show gains in student achievement of students enrolled in afterschool programs. This research explored select best practices of quality afterschool programs in two select metro Atlanta afterschool programs. A surge in afterschool programs has occurred lately due to three major societal concerns: (a) children are home alone for long periods of time

unsupervised, (c) many children may need extended learning time to be successful, and (c) youth crime and youth victimization is on the rise. Students need a safe place to go after school, help with homework, and a chance to obtain additional learning time.

Although students need additional learning time, they should have some enrichment time as well to help build relationships with peers and adults. “Additional program goals for afterschool programs should include providing a safe environment in which students can learn valuable social skills, receive nutritious meals, and participate in recreational activities” (Fashola & Cooper, 1999, p. 131).

Students need afterschool programs. “Dozens of empirical studies from the past decade show the same results, particularly among disadvantaged students: more learning time, in the form of high-quality afterschool and summer programs, leads to greater achievement” (“Close the Achievement Gap,” n. d.). Students want academic help. According to McElvain and Caplan (2001), “2 in 3 teens (67%) said they would probably participate in afterschool programs designed to help them improve their grades, develop leadership skills, and involve them in the community” (p. 36). Students want to see their friends, have fun and learn a few new things. Afterschool programs should be appealing to students. Students are interested in many extracurricular activities. Activities in an afterschool program must be fun, structured, and engaging. If afterschool programs offered the enrichment activities students enjoy in addition to tutoring student achievement may be positively impacted. If students did not attend the afterschool program, they could not take advantage of what the program offered. “Youth cannot reap

the benefits of out-of-school time (OST) programs if they do not attend” (Little & Lauver, 2005, p. 8).

Clearly, afterschool programs benefit the students who are able to take advantage of them. Research from the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council declared, “youth who participate in expanded learning opportunities are less likely to drop out of school, have higher rates of school-day attendance and engage in less risky behavior” (Georgia Afterschool Quality Standards, 2011, p. 1). Students will not come to an afterschool program if the atmosphere is not inviting. Unfortunately, there are small amounts of afterschool programs for middle and high school students. “School districts tend to develop after-school programming more for elementary school children than for middle and high school students” (de Kanter, 2001, p. 13). Middle and high school students could benefit from additional learning time.

“Parents are essential to the education of their children” (Bracke & Cortis, 2012, p. 199), and want a safe place for their children to go after school whether the afterschool program includes an academic component or not. Parental involvement was one way to provide support to students while they are in the afterschool programs. Research shows parental involvement is very low in most afterschool programs. Parents should become more involved with what goes on during their child’s afterschool experience. “Parents’ interests were evenly split among the three major types of activities that afterschool programs tend to offer (a) academic preparation and skills, (b) athletics/sports, and (c) art, music, and dance activities” (Wu & Van Egeren, 2010, p. 594). Many afterschool programs have provided parents with only child care services where children engage in

play without much structure. Within other programs, homework help was provided along with childcare services. In order to assist the afterschool programs with academic improvement, parents should get involved with their children and the afterschool program their child attends.

Schools have not demonstrated academic progress because students continue to struggle educationally in their classrooms. This signaled that schools are in need of additional help with their struggling students. "Schools were aware of the growing demand for enrichment opportunities" (de Kanter, 2001. p. 13) and were looking toward afterschool programs as possible ways students can gain valuable educational assistance. Students have to attend afterschool programs consistently and engage in most activities in order to see some academic progress.

Further, students attend afterschool programs based on the climate of the program. Students are more willing to participate in the afterschool program if the environment is warm, inviting, and structured. Students are interested in afterschool experiences that are different than those found previously in schools. Effective afterschool programs would have a link to the school day but in a very different format. Students need additional educational time but at the same time, prefer enrichment and relationships with peers and adults. Additionally, retaining quality afterschool personnel is a must for older students. Successful programs are staffed by the same people who have worked in them for years. Students continue to attend the afterschool program because they feel safe and valued.

This research investigated the impact students' participation in afterschool programs that offer social interaction and academic engagement has on their academic success. Although not every afterschool program is destined to lead to an increase in academic performance, there are some afterschool programs that have that ability. Students who are able to obtain extra time on educational concepts will possibly help their school meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) or end-of-school-year goals. AYP is determined by a student's scores on standardized tests in reading and math, graduation rates, and at least one academic indicator. Meeting the AYP standards is the minimum benchmark students should be able to master when they take state standardized tests. The issue occurs when students have attended school all year and are still not able to meet AYP. Afterschool programs could assist in this trending gap.

Afterschool programs offer tremendous opportunities to extend the school day for students who need academic support in areas such as homework and reading and for students who want to participate in cultural and technological enrichment as well as recreational activities. (de Kanter, 2001, p. 14)

Statement of the Problem

This research investigated the effectiveness of two select metro Atlanta afterschool programs in improving the academic performance of fifth grade students' performance on the Georgia Criterion- Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). A large component of improving academic performance in afterschool programs is how well the staff works with the students during the afterschool program. Another issue when preparing students for success in the afterschool program is whether or not the staff is

qualified to help students. Data at local schools show student academic performance is on the decline. In 2011, 27.3% (613) of Georgia's 2,246 schools did not make AYP. "As countries in the rest of the world have continued to advance, U.S. reading and math scores are frozen" (Weber, 2010, p. 17), and these measures can be directly linked to academic performance. Afterschool participation can increase academic achievement, student motivation, student confidence and improve student attitudes about learning. This study determined if select afterschool programs in metro Atlanta were effective in closing the achievement gaps and improving student academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to research strategies of successful afterschool programs and their effectiveness in promoting student achievement and closing the achievement gaps. Many afterschool programs boast of their ability to improve student achievement. Afterschool participation has been associated with improved academic achievement. However, studies indicated that students are still performing below grade level on national and state curriculum standards. Data show that some fifth graders across the state of Georgia have struggled in math, social studies, and science. During the testing window of the 2011-2012 school year, fifth grade students did not meet the standards in reading (8.51%), English language arts (5.62%), math (16.32%), social studies (23.39%), and science (22.04%) on the Criterion- Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). Effective academic afterschool programs could have assisted struggling students in raising their scores. Schools are still struggling to meet standards school wide in many parts of the nation. "Almost thirty years after *A Nation At*

Risk, too many schools are still failing” (Weber, 2010, p. 9). This poor performance is widespread among diverse student populations. As a result of this study, the researcher sought to examine how successful afterschool programs can improve student achievement.

The study findings demonstrated how other factors such as school climate and school culture can prove significant in determining student achievement. The research examined the need for stakeholders to review other methods to determine student achievement. Students have to take standardized tests. However, all students are not always successful on those tests. Students in afterschool programs may exhibit student achievement in other ways due to their attendance in the afterschool program.

Research Questions

- RQ1. What is the level of attendance of students in the afterschool program?
- RQ2. What is the extent of student involvement/socialization in the afterschool program?
- RQ3. Does an afterschool program enhance student motivation in order to promote academic achievement?
- RQ4. How well is the afterschool program structured and organized to enhance academic achievement?
- RQ5. How satisfied are students with the structure and activities outlined in the afterschool program?
- RQ6. How does the climate of the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the school-based afterschool program?

- RQ7. How can student expectations of obtaining more learning time encourage academic achievement at the school-based afterschool program?
- RQ8. How does parental involvement of students in the after school program encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?
- RQ9. How effective is the afterschool program?

Significance of the Study

The research is significant because many students who attended afterschool programs fail to show improvement in student achievement even though programs promote such claims. Since major research on afterschool programs is limited to only the last two decades, this study will add to this vital and growing body of research. The research collected provided adequate information on program structure, improvement of student outcomes, lack of parental support, student motivation, student attendance, extended learning time, program structure, student expectations, climate of the program, and student involvement and socialization. The research failed to adequately link afterschool programs to the following: school day, parental expectations of afterschool programs, parental support, youth attendance, high school attendance of afterschool programs and engagement.

Many afterschool programs are designed to be safe havens for students, to help students achieve what may be lacking in their daily school setting, or to offer homework help. Afterschool programs can be an influential resource for academic improvement. Student success is a tremendous gain for all stakeholders, parents, students and educators involved. (GAQS, 2011, p. 1)

Research from the GAQS also shows that “youth who participate in expanded learning opportunities are less likely to drop out of school, have higher rates of school-day attendance and engage in less risky behavior” (p. 1).

Findings from this research may assist afterschool programs across the nation. Students need valuable, affordable afterschool programs that will support them in obtaining and improving academic success. This research will also help students overcome obstacles faced in the classroom. If students are able to obtain additional help from afterschool programs, they may accomplish more gains in the classroom. Subsequently, findings from this study will help those who design educational afterschool programs ensure that their program improves academic performance and closes achievement gaps for all students.

Expected implications of this research will positively impact national policies and procedures. Currently, many afterschool programs do not align their curriculum to what students have learned in the classroom. Students will potentially have greater success if they are allowed to continue the learning that which is started in the classroom. Currently, there is limited research on aligning afterschool programs to the regular school day. Closing the achievement gap and helping students learn are current educational goals that help ensure the society will be able to maintain its infrastructure for the next generation.

The potential impact of this research is encouraging. If students are not prepared to fill vacant job positions, problems will continue, especially among demographics that currently show high rates of unemployment. “Youth will need to succeed as workers,

citizens, and family and community members in the global world” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 1). In the circle of life, as young people take their rightful place in the workforce, students must be educationally prepared. Students of today will be required to understand complex problems and possess effective communication skills in order to compete for employment opportunities as they arise. Studies show that regular participation in afterschool programs is associated with improvements in work habits and task persistence (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, students who struggle in their academics today will have job and career issues in the future.

Summary

Most afterschool programs are not mirror images of each other. Some programs help students academically. Yet, others help students socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. While there are other programs that help students academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally, an educational afterschool program can help students learn new concepts and skills or reinforce skills after the traditional school day has ended. Nationwide, students are not able to meet end of school year goals and this issue must be addressed. “Research suggests that outcomes can be achieved through sustained participation in well-structured and well-implemented afterschool programs and activities” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 1). Quality afterschool programs offer students a safe place to develop socially, educationally, and emotionally, and provide opportunities to work on community projects.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

Organization of the Review

This chapter presents the review of recent educational literature directed to the factors related to the effects of students attending afterschool programs and student improved outcomes. The review of the literature examined background information about the variables and their relationship as it relates to the effectiveness of afterschool programs. Eight themes emerged from the literature: (a) improve student outcomes, (b) student attendance in afterschool programs, (c) linking schools and afterschool programs, (d) program structure, (e) educational reform, (f) student motivation, (g) climate of the program, and (h) program evaluation. These eight themes are some of the reasons afterschool programs are successful in improving students' academic performance. Following this section, the explored themes will highlight the commonalities among successful afterschool programs. Research shows that when the eight themes are present in the afterschool program, students have an increased chance of experiencing gains in academic performance.

Emergent Themes

Improve Student Outcomes

Improved student outcomes are the goal of many afterschool programs. "Afterschool programs have the ability to improve student outcomes and impact

academic performances in a number of ways, including moving the needle on academic achievement test scores” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 2). However, students will not achieve such success unless they attend on a regular basis. Roth, Malone, & Brooks-Gunn (2010) state “participation in supervised, organized activities often results in increased educational attainment and achievement” (p. 310). Students attend afterschool programs because they are able to socialize with friends, learn new concepts and get additional help on homework. Students who are actively engaged with the afterschool program can experience positive outcomes socially, educationally, behaviorally, and academically. According to Catalano et al. (1999), Exxles and Gootman (2002), and Feldman and Matjasko (2005) (as cited in Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2010), “participation in school-based and community-based after-school programs is associated with a variety of positive developmental outcomes, including higher motivation and academic performance, lower incidence of problem behavior, enhanced social competence, and improved mental health” (p. 370).

Studies have shown that students who attend afterschool programs from 45-85 hours had a tremendous impact on reading and math educational gains. Attendance is a must for students to see any academic gains. “Spending time in afterschool programs has led to improvements in students’ test scores, school behavior, attendance, and graduation rates” (Hall, Williams, & Daniel, 2010, p. 2). Students in afterschool programs had constant access to feedback from the adults directing the program. In educational afterschool programs, students are receiving constant feedback from the afterschool teachers about homework. In most cases, students do not have the traditional wait time as in a traditional classroom setting. “Since feedback was ongoing and participants have

access to the activities and strategies of more expert participants, teaching and learning become ingrained as a natural part of the process of participation” (Nashir, 2008, p. 532). Tutoring, small group instruction, and mini lessons have proven to be quite effective in afterschool programs. Rothman and Henderson (2011) suggested “one-on-one tutoring had the strongest effect on reading achievement, while small and mixed instructional practices had the greatest impact on mathematics achievement” (p. 2).

Student Attendance in the Afterschool Program

In addition to successfully improved student outcomes, students have to attend the afterschool program in order for them to partake in any learning outcomes. Studies show students who attended afterschool programs on a regular basis have better success in their school achievement and attendance. Students must attend the programs regularly in order to show success. “Balancing academic support with a variety of engaging, fun, and structured extracurricular or co-curricular activities that promote youth development of real-world contexts appear to support and improve academic performance” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008, p. 4). Attendance in most afterschool programs is voluntary. Even though attendance is voluntary, students must take ownership of their success while in the program. However, according to Dietel (2009), “students with high after-school attendance were more likely to attend school and spend more time on homework and high dosage was important” (p. 64).

In order to see academic improvement with students, consistency in the afterschool program is essential. Students have to recognize and appreciate the assistance they are given to better themselves. This observation is one of the major differences of

attending an afterschool program and going to school. Students have to believe that their learning is important.

In the final analysis, students have to feel connected to their learning in order for it to have relevance, the only instructional program that makes a difference is one that involved students in their learning, demonstrated their social connectedness, and secured their investment in the future. (Kidwell, 2010, p. 30)

Linking Schools to Afterschool Programs

Additionally, the possibility of linking students' school day to afterschool programs has strong implications. Principals and afterschool directors need to work together. "To develop a culture of integration, principals must determine how to forge partnerships between afterschool staff and school staff, and how to link afterschool programs to the school curriculum" (McElvain & Caplan, 2001, p. 40). Although research on linking afterschool programs to the school day was limited, the benefits to students who will have better opportunities for success and more chances to show gains in student achievement in the classroom and on standardized tests are tremendous. "It is certainly no easy task to align afterschool and school day curricula" (Afterschool Alliance, 2011, p. 7). Schools and afterschool programs have to communicate in order to show alignment. For the sake of students, schools and afterschool programs should collaborate to benefit students (Hirsch, 2011). Students need to see the connection to the school day in their afterschool program. "If afterschool programs are to find credibility, they must be perceived as being an extension of the school day, not as an add-on or afterthought" (Crawford, 2006, p. 52). Eventually, students will need to master standards

at the end of the school year. Obtaining additional support will only help students meet those goals.

Afterschool programs that are aligned with the school day curriculum can support student learning and attack the achievement gap by offering additional supports to struggling students that complement and reinforce learning that takes place in the classroom in new and exciting ways. (Afterschool Alliance, 2011, p. 1)

Students should see how the school day connects to the afterschool program.

“Children begin to see the link between what they are learning during school and in their afterschool programs and understand that in order to fully enjoy afterschool, they have to attend school as well” (Afterschool Alliance, p. 2). One possible way to help with collaborating or linking schools and afterschools would be to hire teachers from the school. Seeing a familiar face in the afterschool program could help a child see the connection to his learning.

As the tutoring partnership progresses, the student begins to see a clearer connection between tutoring and school work. This connection to the school setting is vital to the student’s academic improvement and is more easily achieved by a district teacher. (Rothman & Henderson, 2011, p. 3)

The unique relationship between the regular school day and afterschool can provide distinctive methods for student success during the school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). Afterschool is at its best when it complements and coordinates with the learning that occurs during the formal school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2011).

Program Structure of the Afterschool Program

In addition to possibly linking afterschool programs to the school day, a strong emphasis on effective program structure is necessary to assist with closing the achievement gap. The program structure is an important part of successful afterschool programs. “Most afterschool programs share a common activity structure—a mix of homework help, snacks, free time, arts, crafts, table games, gym or playground time, cultural awareness activities, and field trips” (Halpern, 1999, p. 85). Students need to understand how the afterschool program operates. The afterschool program structure should be simple and clear. Students should know all of the routine activities of the afterschool program. The structure of the afterschool program may determine the effectiveness. Typically, afterschool programs have a dedicated director who knows all of the inner workings of the afterschool program. “Few successful afterschool programs run without a staff member dedicated to the coordination of the program” (Kugler, 2001, p. 7). Additionally, successful programs have very low staff turnover. Low staff turnover implies students will be able to build relationships with the staff. Programs with low staff turnover usually have a mix of staff members (Kugler, 2001). Principals and afterschool directors should complete a needs assessment of the students in the program to determine which activities and resources to use with the students in the program. “When developing a [school] program, principals must make a number of decisions about design and operation, including how to match activities to participant’s needs, how to use resources effectively, and how to recruit participants” (McElvain & Caplan, 2001, p. 38).

Educational Reform

When educational reform such as NCLB required the use of afterschool programs, schools monitored student data to determine who would possibly benefit from attending. Regardless of the situation, students have to take ownership of their learning. Subsequently, data from the Georgia Department of Education (2013) compared high school graduation rates over three years and the data clearly show that students had an issue with graduating on time. In fact, Georgia high school graduates from the 2010-2011 and 2008-2009 school years had lower graduation rates than the 2009-2010 school year across nearly all ethnicities. Surprisingly, the number of students increased by 17,648 from 2009-2010 (113,364 students) to 2010-2011(131,012 students). What if some of those students attended effective afterschool programs? Afterschool programs usually offer different types of instruction than schools. “This less-structured environment will most definitely appeal to students that do not flourish in the typical school setting” (Russell, 2006, p. 53). Students tend to thrive educationally and socially in the afterschool setting because it is different from the typical school setting. “After-school programs are more open to experimentation than are schools” (Hirsh, 2011, p. 68). Students are allowed to form relationships with their peers, work on various community projects, showcase leadership abilities and are able to be themselves in afterschool programs. They “(afterschool programs) serve thousands of secondary students by providing high-quality extra learning opportunities” (Kugler, 2001, p. 10).

Unfortunately, the achievement gap is a very dangerous problem for children of color. “Extended-day programs, with homework help, poetry and chess clubs, drama programs, field trips, and reading tutors, provide the extra learning opportunities needed

to help close the achievement gap” (Kugler, 2001, p. 4). Educational reform is necessary. Before students can achieve success, it is “important to recognize that there are factors that contribute to or hinder their academic success” (Somers, Owens, & Piliasky, 2008, p. 2), and such factors must be recognized in order for positive change to equate to student achievement. Educators in the school day and in the afterschool program need to know how to use culturally relevant pedagogy with children of color. “One way afterschool programs can assist in closing the achievement gap, is to make sure that educators understand how to support the academic development of students of color” (Somers, Owens, & Piliasky, 2008, p. 1). Students have to take ownership of their learning. When children of color are not successful, an achievement gap occurs. This gap further causes the need for educational reform. “Many urban children are from low-income families that are not only economically poor, but are often socially underserved” (Somers, Owens, & Piliasky, 2008, p. 2).

Climate of the Afterschool Program

The climate of some afterschool programs is substantial and can impact not only student attendance and participation, but staff morale as well. The climate of an afterschool program has the ability to entice student involvement. “Researchers found that youth preferred programs that offer learning opportunities and homework help, as well as activities that challenge them and let them try new things” (de Kanter, 2001, p. 16). If the environment is not warm and inviting or students are not receiving educational assistance, there could be a potential problem with students wanting to participate in the afterschool program; “to be successful, participants must have a say in

which programs are offered” (Witt, 2004, p. 111). The afterschool environment should include caring teachers. Students who need additional help should be able to obtain the help they need from caring, supportive teachers. “High achieving students found that caring teachers were supportive in and outside of the classroom, and this helped their achievement” (Wiggan, 2004, p. 339).

Students must feel that their teachers care about them. “People make the difference” (de Kanter, 2001, p. 18). The right teachers need to work in afterschool programs with students. The students should respect the teacher and the teacher should respect the student. If students feel a connection with a teacher, they will perform for that teacher and themselves.

Four aspects of teaching and learning in out-of-school practices that support learners’ sense of belonging and identification include: fostering respectful relationships, making mistakes acceptable, giving learners defined roles, and offering learners ways to participate that incorporate aspects of themselves.

(Nashir, 2008, p. 530)

The student/teacher connection allows students to focus on their assigned tasks. “Students felt that they could connect with caring teachers and receive support from them whenever the need arose” (Wiggan, 2004, p. 339). Students are drawn to the fun of learning; therefore, if teachers are engaging and interactive, student achievement will rise.

Student Motivation

“Some students do not excel in school because the expectation is not to excel. Some students may be expected to succeed academically, while others are not” (Somers,

et al., 2008, p. 3). What motivates students during afterschool programs? One plausible expectation is largely due to the student's teacher. When students are known to and cared for by adults, they "are more willing to take seriously the education adults wish to provide" (Strike, 2004, p. 216), and "are more motivated by teachers they perceive as caring" (Usher & Kober, 2013, p.11). All students can be encouraged to excel regardless of their socioeconomic status or educational status. Caring teachers can encourage student motivation; therefore, "rather than imposing a racial standard for achievement, excellence should be a standard for all students" (Wiggan, 2004, p. 318). Another explanation could be that students do not see the direct correlation between doing well in school and in afterschool. It is the roles of caring individuals within the afterschool program to help students make connections to what they are doing in school to what is happening in afterschool. "Many black students see high achievement as cultural agency and resistance against white supremacy" (Wiggan, 2004, p. 321). Students have to be engaged in all aspects of their learning process. "If students are not engaged in the learning process, all of the testing, data analysis, teacher meetings, and instructional minutes in the world will not motivate them to learn" (Kidwell, 2010, p. 30). In effective afterschool programs, students are afforded multiple ways to learn concepts. After learning those concepts, the students have an opportunity to utilize those skills in their regular classroom.

Students may have issues grasping the concepts their teachers share with them. This can have catastrophic and unintentional consequences since many schools prepare students for standardized tests, yet many students are not successful during testing time. "When students are self-motivated, they will own their education because it is a form of

self-expression, and they will be engaged with learning because they are learning what they want to learn” (Strike, 2004, p. 218). Students have to take ownership of their learning. One day, they will depend solely on themselves. If they are not prepared educationally, who will be to blame? The issues are very valid and some may question whether or not students will be prepared for the future. “The question of how well we are preparing young people to assume roles in the workforce, as citizens and as leaders in the 21st century has met with disappointing conclusions” (Kidwell, 2010, p. 28).

Program Evaluation

Afterschool programs need to be adequately evaluated to ensure academic success. Oftentimes, programs are created and claim they are excellent in helping students achieve success, but what instrument is used to measure that success? Who is responsible for ensuring that program evaluation occurs? These are some of the questions that should be answered. An evaluation is a valuable tool to determine program effectiveness and student performances in the afterschool program. Parents and funding agencies hold afterschool programs accountable for delivering stated goals and outcomes; thus “it is impossible to determine the effectiveness of an after-school program without an in-depth assessment” (Zhang & Byrd, 2005, p. 6). Program structures and student outcomes must be evaluated. “It is critically important to carefully establish evaluation procedures to effectively and accurately monitor the quality of afterschool programs” (Zhang & Byrd, 2005, p. 6). Many afterschool programs are not properly evaluated, which could lead to effective programs being closed. Evaluations should be evaluated by students, parents, program staff, and all other stakeholders. Evaluations of

programs would allow all stakeholders to determine if there are any areas that need improvement. If the afterschool program was aligned to the Georgia Afterschool Quality Standards, the program directors would be able to see exact areas of weakness.

Summary

Our schools need reform. “The cause of school reform is one that affects us all. . . and that redeeming the promise of a world-class education for all citizens is a cause worth working, and fighting for” (Weber, 2010, p. 10). Of the many plausible solutions to bolster educational reform, the effective use of afterschool programs for elementary, middle, and high school students is by far the most important. Currently, afterschool programs are utilized across the country. Although they are mostly in elementary schools, according to the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council [GAIC] (2011), 16% of all children in elementary and middle schools are enrolled in afterschool programs in Georgia. Parents in Georgia depend on afterschool programs to be safe havens for their students. Another possible solution that could assist reform is for afterschool programs to provide quality afterschool programs that help students with their school assignments and also reinforce learning utilizing qualified staff members. This possible solution would include linking the afterschool program to the regular school day. Another solution could be to create a multilevel evaluation approach. On one level, afterschool programs would be evaluated by students, parents, and the community; on another level, programs would be evaluated by a unbiased organization based on program quality, structure and proven strategies to improve student achievement. “With effective leadership and evaluation,

after-school programs throughout the United States can produce wonderful opportunities for those children most in need of our attention” (Zhang & Byrd, 2005, p. 9).

In order for afterschool programs to make gains educationally, schools, community, parents, and students must work together. “If policy makers, afterschool supporters, and researchers pushed for a common agreement on dosage levels and methods, we might substantially increase our knowledge of what works in afterschool programs” (Dietel, 2009, p. 64). There are few instances where all key players work for the well-being of afterschool participants. Stakeholders must make sure students are prepared for the global economy and marketplace. Students have to be able to compete with other students across the nation and internationally. Trends show that students are not being adequately prepared for the future, but some school districts are working tirelessly to change these statistics.

There is no denying that American students need more time to learn, but it is also important that children are learning in a variety of ways that build upon each other so that each child has a chance to succeed at something that truly sparks their interest. (Afterschool Alliance, 2011, p. 1)

Afterschool programs can help students obtain the additional time needed to learn concepts taught during their regular school day. “As students progress from upper elementary grades into middle school, instruction must become replete with content-rich classes that incorporate higher level thinking skills, writing skills, real-life skills and active learning strategies” (Kidwell, 2010, p. 30). Tremendous educational success can occur if afterschool programs work with the day schools to work with students to understand difficult concepts taught in school.

CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Afterschool programs have been in existence since that late 1800s. In light of recent developments within the former NCLB, society required more accountability and student achievement and realized that if students are not prepared to enter the global workforce, America's current infrastructure will fail. Next generation students have to become life-long learners, prepared for the 21st century and beyond. Students need adequate time to improve their educational skills in order to be more successful in the future.

A qualitative case study was used to study two select elementary afterschool programs in metro Atlanta, Georgia. The theoretical framework for this study focuses on the following theories: (a) Carl Rogers' (1951) Intrinsic Motivation, (b) Albert Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy, (c) B. F. Skinner's (1953) Operant Conditioning, and (d) Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Each theory helps the researcher explain how and why an afterschool program is beneficial to students. The study investigated the effects of the following independent variables on improving student performance in afterschool programs: program structure, student motivation, parental involvement, student attendance, student involvement/socialization, climate of the program, and student expectations. It is expected that program structure, student attendance, student

motivation, climate of the program, and student involvement/socialization will prove to be primary influences leading to improved academic performance, and that other variables will have minimal significance in improving academic performance.

First, Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation states that motivation comes from within the individual without any thought of the external reward. There are no outside sources that will determine if a student will achieve a goal. In afterschool programs, students are motivated by the success they feel for completing tasks and socializing with friends. One student participating in an extended-day program indicated that he was getting extra help with algebra after school and had moved his grade from a C to an A because of the help (Kugler, 2001). According to this theory, students who are not successful the first time are able to move past their failure in order to achieve success.

Secondly, Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy theory relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal. If a person thinks he or she is capable of obtaining success, he or she will. Bandura's Self-Efficacy is very similar to Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation in that both theories deal with the person ultimately being motivated and believing they can complete the task. In afterschool programs, students have to believe they can finish the task, improve scores, and learn to read better and/or faster. Therefore, it is necessary for students [in afterschool programs] to be offered multiple ways of learning and accomplishing tasks (Nasir, 2008).

Operant Conditioning is a method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behavior. Through Operant Conditioning, an association is made between a behavior and a consequence for that behavior. Usher and Kober (2013) state

that “students were more engaged, performed better, and had higher self-confidence when their teachers emphasized student mastery over grades and performance and encouraged students to take on challenges” (p. 11). “Teachers who are most effective at diagnosing and improving motivation tend to focus on interpersonal dealings with students, link education to things students value, and encourage autonomy more than control in their classrooms” (Usher & Kober, p. 11). Students will rise to various challenges in educational settings; thus, for some students, operant conditioning may be the only method to entice students to attend afterschool programs regularly.

Finally, Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs states that basic needs must be met before a person can advance to other levels. “Findings supported the principle that a positive effect on student achievement exists when the developmental needs of the children were met” (Hall, Williams, & Daniel, 2010, p. 15). The most basic level of needs include having water, shelter, food and clothing. The next level is safety; individuals feel secure in their body, resources, and family. After feeling safe and secure, individuals desire to belong or feel loved in terms of family relationships and friendships. The fourth level in the hierarchy focuses on esteem. Once individuals move to this level, they are confident, have good self-esteem, have respect and respect others. The final and most difficult level to reach is self-actualization. Here individuals are able to be creative, solve problems, and are accepting of facts. Students who attend afterschool programs should have their basic needs met first. In an afterschool setting, students have to feel safe and secure, they have to feel that their opinions matter, and that they are an active

part of the organization. According to the hierarchy, once their needs are met, the student can proceed up the hierarchy.

Summarily, the goal of many afterschool programs is to help develop the whole child and to help him or her be successful, responsible, productive citizens in a global economy and society. “Available evidence on the effectiveness of various supplemental instruction programs and the best models for their delivery in urban schools and large city school systems is still somewhat sparse” (Chatterji, Kwon, & Sng, 2006, p. 5). To that end, this study was designed to include seven independent variables and one dependent variable. The goal is to see variables interrelate (Figure 1)

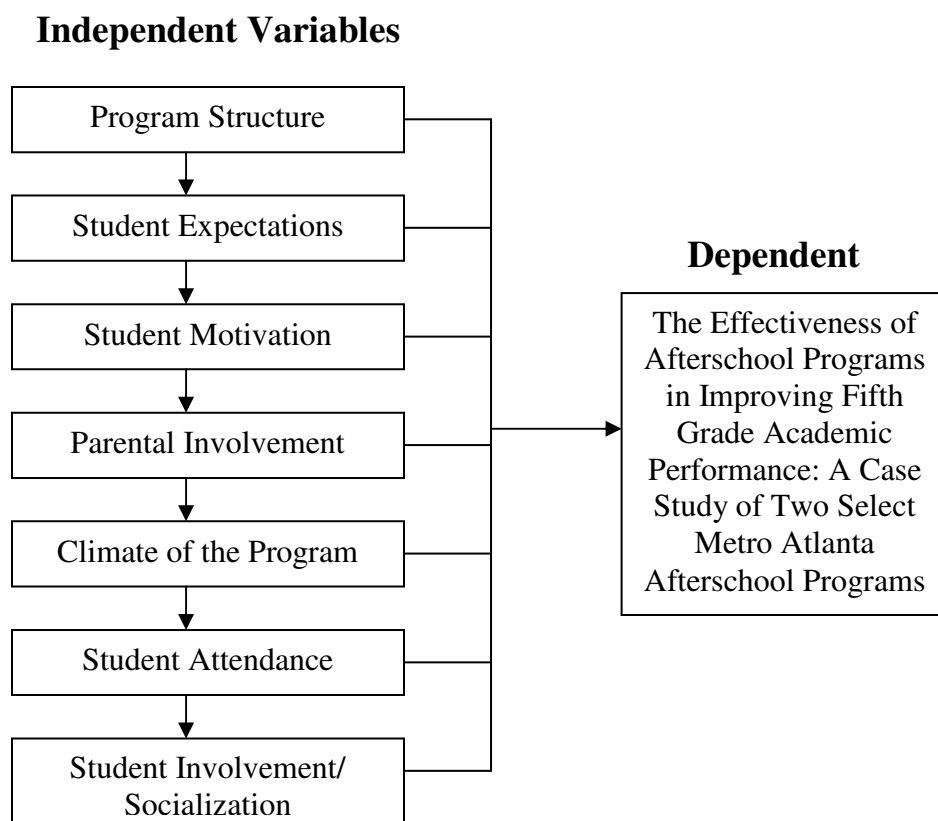


Figure 1. Relationship among the Variables

Definition of Variables

Independent Variables

Program Structure: The extent to how the program operates. Are students in age-appropriate/grade level groups? Is information readily available and organized to show what occurs each time a student is in the afterschool program? Does the program operate safely and effectively?

Student Motivation: The extent to which students have an internal desire to motivate themselves to come to the afterschool program, participate and complete any assignments/tasks alone or in a group setting.

Parental Involvement: The extent where parents are actively engaged in the afterschool program. Did parents attend fieldtrips? Are parents involved in any aspect of the afterschool program? Did they speak to the program facilitators about concerns about their child(ren).

Student Attendance: The extent to which students miss fewer than 5 days per month and are happy to be in the afterschool program.

Student Involvement/Socialization: The extent to which students are engaged in all of the activities and are able to socialize with other students in the afterschool program.

Climate of the Program: The extent to which students are happy to be in the program. Is the atmosphere of the program warm and inviting? Is the staff friendly and helpful to all students in the program?

Student Expectations: The extent to which student enjoys being part of the afterschool program, Do students think attending the afterschool program will increase to their success in regular school setting?

Dependent Variable

Effectiveness of two school-based afterschool programs in metro Atlanta on improving academic performance: The extent which most students who attend either afterschool program in metro Atlanta see gains in academic performance.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in this study. Results cannot be generalized to all afterschool programs. The number of students participating in both afterschool programs was limited due to the number of students returning the required parental signed permission forms. This study did not gather any parental input. School B had an inadequate sample of four students' CRCT test data. This might have had a negative impact on the research findings. No student attendance information was obtained from either participating school. Student attendance was a research variable. Research did not include input from afterschool program directors. This study was limited to only student achievement as an outcome attributed to the success of the afterschool program.

Summary

This chapter provided the conceptual and theoretical framework for which this study centers. All of the aforementioned theories provide clear comprehension of the possible effectiveness of improving student achievement in an afterschool program. "The

success of supplemental program is predicted on several factors, such as strong parent, tutor, and teacher connection; experienced providers and developers; proven methods of instruction; customized instruction; measurable results based on time on task; and positive learning environments” (Chatterji, Kwon, & Sng, 2006, p. 5).

In order to adequately comprehend the task, the researcher reviewed the previous goals of the former No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Two of the goals were directly linked to student achievement: (a) all students will achieve high academic standards by attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics by the 2013-2014 school year; and (b) all students will graduate from high school. These are great goals but somewhat unrealistic when students enter schools ill-prepared and leave the same. Although every child enters school with different tools in his/her toolkit, it is the school’s job to prepare students for school and standardized tests. “A key to successful implementation of quality after-school programs is to plan the program in a way to overcome anticipated problems” (Zhang & Byrd, 2005, p. 7). “The provision of caring adult leaders and purposely planned enrichment activities are critical program elements” (Witt, 2004, p. 109). What happens when the school is not able to reach each student? Classroom teachers are not always able to help students who really need one-on-one attention. Often times, those students go without additional help and are often lost in the crowd. This is where the former NCLB came into action. “NCLB defined supplemental educational services as tutoring and ‘research-based’ academic enrichment programs that supplement, but do not replace, instruction provided by schools during the school day” (Chatterji,

Kwon, & Sng, 2006, p. 4). In order to capture and assist struggling students reach their potential, adequate afterschool programs should be established.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study was designed to examine the effectiveness afterschool programs have in improving student achievement among fifth grade students. Students across the nation attend afterschool programs, yet many of those programs do not help students reach gains in their classrooms. A qualitative case study method was used to find solutions to this study. Afterschool programs have the ability to operate in ways to help schools and students achieve success. Results from this study will assist other afterschool programs nationwide operate more effectively so that participants' can experience gains in student academic performance while at their home school.

Design of the Study

This study was concerned with the effectiveness of improving student achievement among fifth graders at two metro Atlanta afterschool programs. Many students are in afterschool programs to improve on skills and strategies where they may have deficiencies. Concern arises when the students do not receive adequate assistance to be successful in the regular school day. If students cannot be successful in their regular schools, additional problems will occur later during their educational journey. Afterschool programs have the ability to help students socially, emotionally, culturally, behaviorally and academically. The variables addressed in the study are (a) program

effectiveness, (b) student motivation, (c) parental involvement, (d) successful program structure, (e) student attendance, (f) student involvement/socialization, (g) climate of the program, and (h) student expectations. According to Creswell (2007), case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case-based themes. Data were gathered using observations, face-to-face teacher interviews, document analysis, teacher questionnaires, and student questionnaires.

Description of the Setting

The researcher investigated one grade level (fifth) in two select afterschool programs in metro Atlanta to determine the effectiveness on student academic performance by focusing on the following: (a) student motivation, (b) parental involvement, (c) successful program structure, (d) student attendance, (e) student involvement/socialization, (f) climate of the program, and (g) student expectations. The two afterschool programs are located at two different elementary schools in the same suburban school district near metro Atlanta. School A is a public elementary school and has 375 students, while school B is a public charter school and has 704 students. School A reported that 0% of its students are on free or reduced lunch. School B reported that 0% of its students are on free or reduced lunch. School A has 68 fifth graders. School B has 89 fifth graders. School A is comprised of 99 black students, 148 white students, and 66 students with disabilities. School B is comprised of 673 black students, 2 white students, and 3 students with disabilities. School A reported 97% of students meet or

exceeded on the 2013 CRCT in reading and 84% of students meet or exceeded on the 2013 CRCT in math. School B reported 98% of students meet or exceeded on the 2013 CRCT in reading and 90% on the 2013 in math.

School A has close to 25% of its student population meeting the gifted criteria. School A has close to 15% of its student population receiving English Language Learners (ELL) instruction. Additionally, 15% of school A's student population is served in a school-wide, co-taught setting. School A has reported in school year 2012-2013, only 10 students were retained out of the 65 students in the fifth grade. School A has a new principal, vice-principal, and school counselor this year. School A has a foundation to help offset costs incurred by the school such as iPads. School B is a public charter school that was started in 2005. Charter schools are not held to the same requirements as other public schools in terms of testing data. They do not have benchmark testing, but they use the state standardized test, CRCT to show academic gains. Additionally, there are no additional funds from the county or the state. The school receives grants to assist with funding shortages. There are 20% gifted students at school B. School B has .004% students with disabilities. School B reported that during school year 2012-2013, all students in the fifth grade were successfully promoted. This is a constant trend with school B. School B has a majority population of African-American students. Students at school B are not on the free or reduced lunch program although close to 250 students would qualify for free or reduced lunch due to their economic status. All students purchase or bring their lunch. The current principal of school B has been in the position since 2006. The principal has raised test scores and has obtained three successful charter

school renewals. The school uses more technology based methods instead of the traditional paper and pencil methods. Students have access to iPads and IMac computers.

Sampling Procedures

The sample was 24 fifth grade students in a select afterschool programs. The comparison group was 18 fifth grade students from school A, 15 fifth grade students from school B, and from both programs students not enrolled in the afterschool programs. The initial goal was to have 30 fifth grade students in both afterschool programs included in the research study, but all parents did not allow their child to participate in the study. The researcher, with the help of school administrators, selected 18 fifth graders from school A and 6 fifth graders from school B. The comparison students were nonstudy participants. CRCT test data showed the researcher how well students perform on standardized tests even if they do not attend the afterschool program. Although CRCT test data were used to help determine the effectiveness of the afterschool program in improving academic achievement in fifth grade students, there may be other factors that contribute to student success. The number of participants was close to 60 students since afterschool programs do not always have consistent attendance. The fifth grade students were selected because they are mandated to take Georgia's standardized Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT). According to the Georgia Department of Education's website (2013), the CRCT is designed to measure how well students acquire skills and knowledge described in the state mandated content standards in reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. In most Georgia counties, if students do not pass all parts of the CRCT, they will not be able to move on to the next grade level.

Data collection was conducted over the course of 2 weeks utilizing observations, document analysis, team teacher interviews, teacher questionnaires, and student questionnaires. A comparison group of fifth grade students was used to check their progress on the CRCT. The researcher compared CRCT test scores of those attending afterschool programs with those who do not attend. School A had all the students' CRCT data for school year 2013. However, school B only had data on four students for school year 2013. The missing data garners a limitation in responding to all of the research questions. After obtaining permission from parents, school district, elementary school principals, and Clark Atlanta University IRB process, the researcher interviewed students' regular school day teachers.

The teacher interviews allowed the researcher to gather data regarding parental involvement, program structure, student motivation, student socialization/involvement, improvement of student grades, improvements of attendance, improvements of test scores, and the welcome of extended time to complete assignments of students attending the afterschool programs. The researcher was an observer/participant in the happenings of the afterschool program in order to see how the program operated and how beneficial the program was to those who attended. Protocol consisted of contacting the school district, building principals, and Clark Atlanta University to obtain permission to start the research process. Students in the study at both schools took the parental consent form home for parent permission. The nonstudy participants did not have to obtain parent permission. The researcher did not know those students names as principals selected those students, but used their data to compare it to the other students in the study. Prior to conducting the teacher interviews, the researcher obtained a signed waiver from each

teacher before audio recording occurred. The instruments used were observations, document analysis, interviews with teachers, teacher questionnaires, and student questionnaires.

Working with Human Subjects

The researcher obtained school board, parental, Clark Atlanta University IRB, and building principals' permissions before working with the students. Although students were not interviewed, they were observed in their afterschool setting by the researcher utilizing a participant open-ended observation. Additionally, none of the students' names were used in the research. Students' names were not used in the transcriptions of interviews, all teacher names were assigned aliases, and numbers and alphabets were assigned to all students in the study. The researcher emailed the two principals a letter of intent after attaining school district approval about conducting research at their schools. The researcher obtained permission to speak to the fifth grade teachers from each principal and no harm came to students during the investigation. Also, all information collected was used for this dissertation and future studies. All subjects' information was anonymous and confidential. During the research, no names were used and all documentation used to gather evidence will be housed on Clark Atlanta University's campus for three years. After 3 years, the information will be destroyed.

Instrumentation

Observations, teacher questionnaires, student questionnaires, student's prior testing data and teacher interviews were used in this study. All instruments were developed with the support of the Clark Atlanta University Dissertation Committee.

Questionnaires and teacher interview questions were created by the researcher. The researcher required the use of fourth grade CRCT test results of all students in the study. The teacher interview questions helped the researcher understand how the students operate in their normal school setting to determine if attending afterschool program helped students in terms of attendance, behavior, and testing. The researcher created an observation tool to collect data at each afterschool locations, and to guide the researcher in crafting questions that stem from the study's variables. Students' names, teachers, and school names were held in strict confidence and anonymity. All teachers' names were assigned aliases. Numbers and alphabets were assigned to all students in the study. During the research, no names were used and all documentation used to gather evidence will be housed on Clark Atlanta University's campus for 3 years. After 3 years, the information will be destroyed. The information is needed to further this research but will not be public knowledge. The teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, teacher interview questions, emails to principals, and observation tool appear in the appendices along with other supporting documents for this research (charts or graphs).

Data Collection Procedures

First, the researcher began completing observations while working with each group of fifth graders at one of the two school locations and then moved to complete observations at the other participating school. Once observations were completed, the researcher determined the emergent themes of each school. Second, the researcher disseminated questionnaires to fifth grade teachers whose students participated in the afterschool programs. This instrument consisted of eight items on a questionnaire that

could be completed in less than 5 minutes. Next, the researcher administered the questionnaire to students in the sampling group. Students completed the seven questionnaires about their experience in the afterschool program. After students and teachers completed their questionnaires, the researcher conducted teacher interviews with students' school teachers. The teacher interviews were audio recorded. After the interviews were conducted, coded, and categorized, the researcher examined CRCT test results from fourth grade. CRCT results from fourth grade were used because spring administration of the CRCT occurred after the study was conducted.

Description of Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis determines what the data tells the researcher. The researcher utilized a qualitative research design. The data were collected, analyzed and coded to determine emergent themes in this study. According to Creswell (2009), "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to in a social or human problem" (p. 4). This section presents an analysis of the data obtained from observing students in the afterschool program, viewing students' test data, interviewing teachers, and teacher and student questionnaires. The interviews, document analysis, observations, and questionnaires were organized into phases:

Phase 1: Observations of both programs.

Phase 2: Teacher questionnaires completed, coded, and categorized to determine emergent themes.

Phase 3: Student questionnaires completed, coded, and categorized to determine emergent themes.

Phase 4: Teachers interviewed and data transcribed from the interviews.

Phase 5: Data from teacher interviews were coded and categorized to determine emergent themes.

Phase 6: Study participants CRCT data reviewed.

Phase 7: Nonstudy participants CRCT data reviewed.

Phase 8: All testing data analyzed, coded and categorized to determine emergent themes.

Phase 9: Data from all instruments typed and charts created.

The purpose of this study, as stated in Chapter I, was to investigate the effectiveness of improving student achievement in fifth graders in two select afterschool programs in metro Atlanta. This study incorporated the use of student questionnaires, teacher interviews, document analysis, and observations. Typically, qualitative studies utilize multiple methods of data collection so the researcher can paint a vivid picture of what is being studied. Data were analyzed based on the research questions, teacher interviews, document analysis, student questionnaires, and observations.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in this study. Results cannot be generalized to all afterschool programs. The number of students participating in both afterschool programs was limited due to the number of students returning the required parental signed permission forms. This study did not gather any parental input. School B had an inadequate sample of 4 students' CRCT test data. This might have had a negative impact on the research findings. No student attendance information was obtained from either

participating school. Student attendance was a research variable. Research did not include input from afterschool program directors. This study was limited to only student achievement as an outcome attributed to the success of the afterschool program.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research method and procedures that were used for examining the effectiveness of afterschool programs on improving student achievement. The design for this study was a qualitative, single instrumental case study. Teacher interviews, document analysis, student questionnaires, teacher questionnaires and observations were used in this study. The teacher interviews, questionnaires and observations were constructed with the goal of ascertaining whether or not academic performance improved after attending afterschool programs. The researcher analyzed students' testing data to determine if academic achievement can be improved if students attend afterschool programs. The researcher analyzed the data and created a comprehensive analysis that included tables and charts.

CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify a link between student achievement and fifth grade students who attend afterschool programs. The data were collected at two public elementary schools located in the same suburban school district near metro Atlanta. Afterschool programs have been found to significantly improve student academic outcomes. Studies show that students need additional learning time, homework help, challenging activities, and time to socialize with friends. Data analysis was conducted based on the research questions in determining the relationship of the following independent variables: (a) student motivation, (b) parental involvement, (c) successful program structure, (d) student attendance, (e) student involvement/socialization, (f) climate of the program, and (g) student expectations, and the dependent variable—program effectiveness of two school-based afterschool programs on improving fifth grade academic performance. Both programs were different yet they shared some of the same program qualities such as designated homework time, snack time, and an organized enrichment activity each day. Themes present in this research include,

1. Additional Teacher Support
 - a. Improvement of Grades
 - b. Additional Learning Time

- c. Homework Completion
2. Student Motivation
3. Socialization of Peers
 - a. Peer Collaboration
 - b. Interact with other students
 - c. Assist each other with homework
4. Enrichment Activities
 - a. Program Structure
 - b. Fun
5. Student Confidence

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher obtained CRCT test scores from both schools' principals of the students in the study and the randomly selected students. The researcher gave both principals a blank excel worksheet to enter the data. School A's principal entered all of the data. Out of the 18 students in the study, CRCT data were available for 16 students. The other 2 students were not at the school last year. In school B, the principal did not enter the information on the excel data sheet. Instead, he gave the researcher a copy of the class score reports with the students' names highlighted with parent permission and with the randomly selected students also listed. The researcher reviewed all test data and created charts to show how well students were able to perform on the CRCT with and without afterschool help.

Data analysis was conducted to answer research questions that investigated the relationship between the independent variables: student motivation, parental involvement, program structure, student attendance, student involvement/socialization, climate of the program, student expectations, and the dependent variable—program effectiveness of two school-based afterschool programs on improving fifth grade academic performance.

RQ1: What is the level of attendance of students in the afterschool program?

According to the data analysis, CRCT test data did not prove helpful in determining the academic success of the afterschool programs. Students get to reinforce skills and concepts with teachers in the afterschool program. Other methods to determine afterschool program effectiveness were not included. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show whether students met or exceeded the standards in ELA.

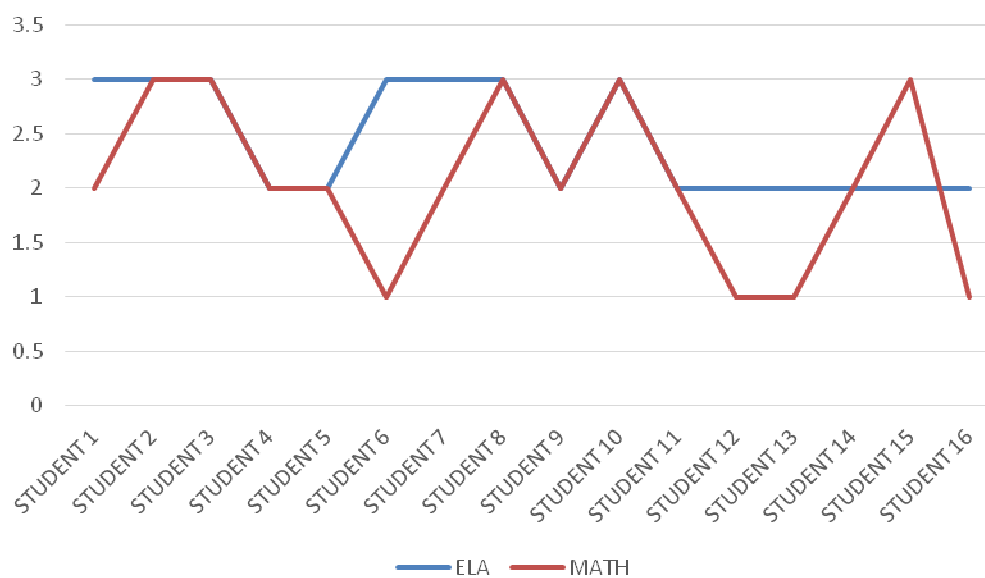


Figure 2. Study Students - School A

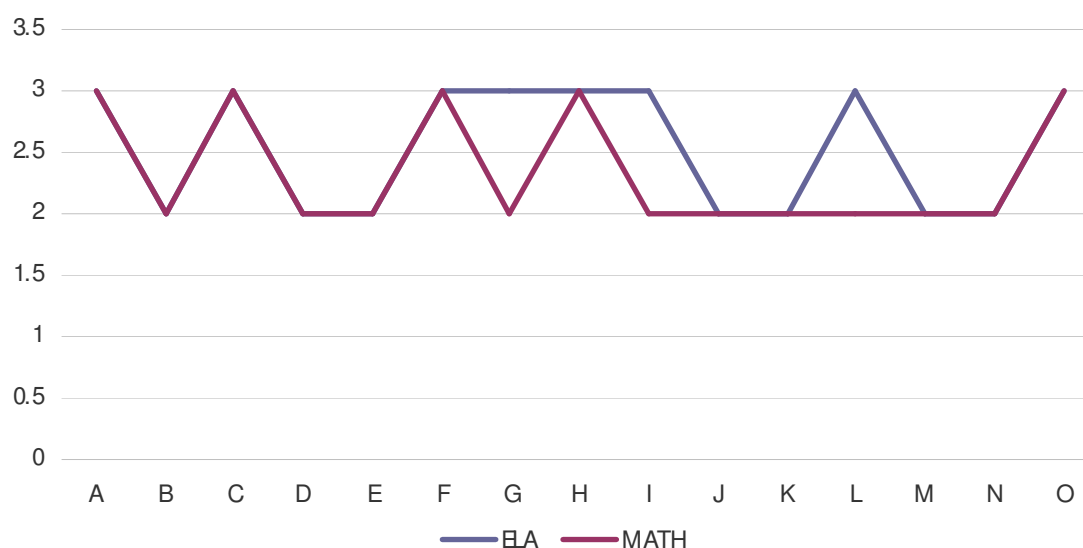


Figure 3. School A - Nonstudy Students

There was no CRCT data for student 17 and student 18 in school A. Figures 1 and 2 clearly show that students in this study performed on or above grade level on the CRCT in ELA and math. In school B, the results are similar. Figures 4 and 5 show that the majority of students met or exceeded the standards when performing on the CRCT in ELA and math.

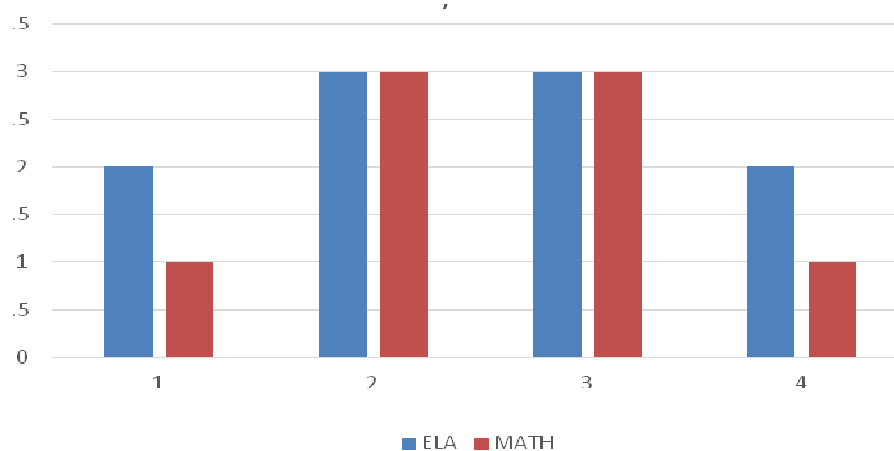


Figure 4. Study Students - School B

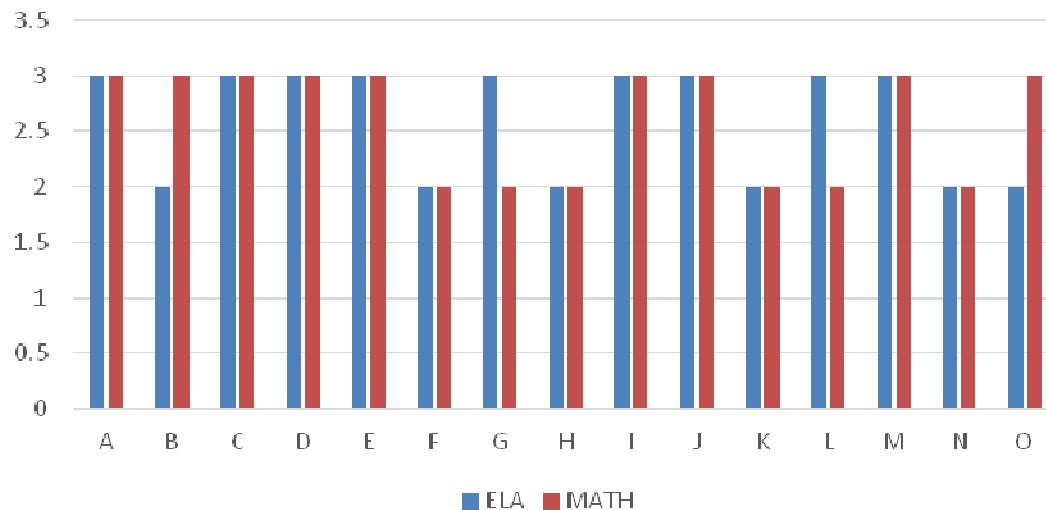


Figure 5. Nonstudy Students - School B

In the study group there were two students, student 1 and student 4, who performed below grade level in math. There were a total of six students in the study; however the data for CRCT was not available for two of the students to be included in the research. Based on this information, there may be other factors such as school culture to determine the cause of the students' stellar performance on the CRCT.

The researcher also conducted team teacher interviews and teacher questionnaires to answer RQ1. Face-to-face interviews were held with all teachers at their home school during their planning period.

Team teacher interview question 2: Have you seen any improvements in the student's attendance, grades and test scores? What kind of improvements?

Teacher questionnaire question 3: What academic gains have you seen in your students who attend the afterschool program?

The interviews were conducted in a team format with each teacher responding after the question was asked of the researcher. The interview consisted of seven questions asked by the researcher to address the research questions examining the effectiveness of afterschool programs in helping to improve student achievement. The interview questions were as follows:

- Did you know the students were involved in the afterschool program? How did you know?
- Have you seen any improvements in the student's attendance, grades, and test scores? What kind of improvements?
- Do students talk about the program structure (staff, activities, etc) of the afterschool program? Please explain.
- Do students seem motivated in class while working on assignments and/or projects? Do you believe the motivation may come from attending the afterschool program? Please explain.
- Do you think the socialization/student involvement in the afterschool program help students socially, emotionally, and academically? Why or why not?
- How important do you think parent involvement is in relation to student attendance in the afterschool program?
- Of the students you know in the afterschool program, how do you know they welcome the extended time to complete assignments?

In the teacher questionnaire, question 3 asked teachers about being able to see academic gains in any of the students in the afterschool program. School A teachers all

responded differently. Teacher 1 noticed some academic improvement but failed to elaborate. Teacher 2 said more students in the afterschool program completed their homework. Teacher 3 stated there were some academic improvements, but it was student specific. Teacher 4 stated that students develop more confidence due to the direct instruction in the afterschool program and the reinforcement in the afterschool program. Students are then more willing to participate in class and ask for assistance when needed. Teacher 5 stated afterschool students tend to do better on classroom assignments. Teacher 5 also stated there was a huge improvement in students who were struggling in class. Finally, teacher 5 indicated some students CRCT scores rose 5 to 10 points from the previous school year. Teachers at school B said they did not see academic gains. They said they saw more students helping each other with homework.

In the team teacher interview, teachers in school A reported that students are more motivated in asking questions in class and are active members in the classroom if the students attend the afterschool program. Teachers from school A also said students are getting more homework done. Teachers from school B said students are able to work together to complete homework.

Teachers at both schools did not mention much about the improvement of test scores of students who attend the afterschool program. One common theme in both schools was homework completion. Teachers at both schools did not allude to the afterschool program helping students in any type of academic success. There have to be other factors at both schools that aid in the success of students' performance on the CRCT.

According to the theoretical framework, two of the theories can be applied to further respond to RQ1. First, Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation is motivation that comes from within without the thought of external reward and can be applied to RQ1. Beginning with school B, the teachers did not see any academic gains, but they noticed students helped each other more on their homework. Students in the afterschool program at school B are taking ownership of their education by assisting a fellow classmate that will help them to continue to understand the concepts taught in the classroom. Next, Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy, in which a person has to believe in their ability to reach a goal, can also be applied to RQ1. Teachers at school A reported different answers to the question, yet all of them made reference to student academic improvement in some way. If a student is now completing homework, he/she is now participating in the practice of the concept taught in class which could lead to better success on future class and state assessments. If a student has gained self-confidence which now allows that student to ask questions in class for clarity that will turn into better self-confidence on future assessments and more ownership of his/her educational process. Although the CRCT results did not yield any significance with student success, if students attend the afterschool program or not, there are other possible factors that may contribute to those students' scores.

RQ2: What is the extent of student involvement/socialization in the afterschool program?

In the data analysis process for RQ2, observations and the team teacher interviews were used to respond to this question. The researcher's definition of student involvement/socialization is the extent to which students are engaged in all of the

activities and are able to socialize with other students in the afterschool program.

Observations were conducted after school during the afterschool session and took place over the course of a two week period. The researcher used an observation tool to determine various aspects of the afterschool programs: (a) climate of the program, (b) student motivation, (c) student involvement/socialization, (d) student expectation, (e) program structure, (f) parental involvement, and (g) student attendance. All interviews and observation notes were transcribed and typed.

Team teacher interview question 5: Do you think the socialization/student involvement in afterschool programs help students socially, emotionally, and academically? Why or why not?

All interviews and observations were analyzed for emergent themes among the data.

Team teacher interviews were audio recorded. The interviews revealed some key components to student's socialization/involvement as it relates to encouraging academic achievement. Teachers in school A shared the smaller setting helps some students. Additionally, they believed the students in the afterschool program would be able to interact and relate to other students they would not normally interact and relate. Finally, teachers at school A commented that students receive a boost in confidence while those students are improving skills. The result, the teachers felt, would be a more confident student then the more willing that student is to participate in class activities and discussions.

Teachers at school B stated friendships are built and students can talk about things that happen in their lives in afterschool whereas they cannot talk about those things in the classroom. Also, teachers at school B said aftercare allows students to work together and

in the classroom the teachers create an environment where students are allowed to work together. Teachers at school B really emphasized how much they admired the social aspect of the afterschool program.

One common theme with both sets of teachers was students mingling or working with other students or peer collaboration. It was made clear during the interviews that the extra socialization is not welcome in the classroom and the social aspect of the afterschool program helped students particularly when students helped one another out with homework. Teachers preferred that another student helped them as opposed to a student trying to struggle to complete the homework by themselves.

The researcher observed both schools during the afterschool time. In school A, the researcher observed students engaged in all activities. Students were laughing. The researcher also noticed students working with teachers while they conducted mini lessons. Students were participating in the mini lessons and asking questions. The researcher saw all aspects of the afterschool program of school A. The program director took the researcher outside to see some students learning to play golf. The researcher saw students working together, laughing, and asking the facilitator questions. The researcher noted that the afterschool atmosphere seemed relaxed. The students were enjoying their time with their teachers and with their enrichment facilitators. The researcher did not see any student vying for attention. In school B, the researcher noted similar activities happening. Students were laughing and having tremendous conversations with each other. On the day of observation, all students were going to learn some tennis skills. On one day out of the week, all students learn tennis instruction. On this particular day, the students were excited to go outside as it had rained earlier in

the week. The researcher saw the students' excitement about being able to go outside. Once students were outside, the researcher saw students in small groups. Some more advanced students were helping some of the novice students. Students continued to appear happy. The researcher did not notice anyone complain about any aspect of the tennis instruction.

According to the theoretical framework used in this study, two theories can be used to further expound upon the findings: Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs and Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs begins with having the most basic needs met: food, water, shelter, and clothing. The next level is safety. The third level is a feeling of belonging to a group or family. The fourth level is in regard to a person's esteem. The final level is self-actualization. In the afterschool programs in this study, the student's most basic needs were met. Students were given snacks, shelter, and already had clothing. Students did not have to focus on their next meal or think about where they had to sleep later on in the evening. At that moment in time, those students were doing well on the first level of Maslow's Hierarchy. Students in the afterschool program then moved to the second level on Maslow's Hierarchy, safety. Students in the afterschool programs in this study appeared to be safe in the surroundings of the afterschool program. The researcher noted how the students interacted with the adults in the program. The researcher also saw how the students' demeanors were while they were walking in the hall, speaking with teachers, and interacting with other students. Students in this study comfortably reached Maslow's level three—the feeling of belonging to a group. The researcher noted that the students seemed familiar with the adults and other students in the afterschool programs. Both

programs were inviting even towards the researcher who was only there a short time. Based on teacher interviews and observations, students in the afterschool programs could move to the fourth level of the hierarchy. Students in the afterschool programs may not start with a high esteem of themselves. However, once students gain a few new friendships, obtain some additional help on homework, or even teach something to another student, they increase in self-confidence. If students in the afterschool programs in this study are able to move to four levels on Maslow's Hierarchy, the final level can be attained as well. Many students will move to the final level and that may be seen in their class work and possibly on future assessments.

Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation helps the researcher respond to RQ2. Students in this study complied with every program including homework completion, tennis Thursday, golf lessons and mini teacher-led lessons. The students did not have to have a pleasant demeanor about any of the activities at either program. The researcher did not notice any student complaining about having to attend the afterschool program. Students in this study were happy. The student responses also show that they wanted to have the additional time with a teacher and they enjoyed having their homework completed. Students in the study overwhelmingly enjoyed the enrichment activities at both programs. Students in the study enjoyed their afterschool program and there was no possibility of a reward. The students wanted to be in their afterschool program. Although there was no reward students could see or touch, students gained far more than they expected. One of those gains was the positive result of student involvement/ socialization.

RQ3: Does an afterschool program enhance student motivation in promoting academic achievement?

Data analysis revealed the teacher interview and observations would be utilized to answer RQ3. The researcher's definition of student motivation is the extent to which students have an internal desire to motivate themselves to come to the afterschool program and to participate and complete any assignments/tasks alone or in a group setting.

Team teacher interview question 4 was used to help answer this research question.

Team teacher interview question 4: Do students seem motivated in class while working on assignments and/or projects? Do you believe the motivation may come from attending the afterschool program?

Two teachers had the following comments:

It's a hard question. I have seen improvements in a (male) student's motivation and his work ethic which may come from having more attention in the afterschool program and having teachers available to help with homework and projects.

(Teacher A, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Students are more motivated in class and are more willing to request help. I do think its because of the program. We took a quiz that covered a lot of material and we had a short time to teach and the students who didn't do ok, we told them to come back with their lunch and we would go over the material. I believe every single student who came during lunch is in the CRCT tutorial afterschool tutorial program. (Teacher D, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

I haven't seen anything specific. I haven't seen the direct relationship from things from aftercare. Students are not saying this helped them in aftercare. (Teacher A, School B, personal communication, March 28, 2014)

Me either. (Teacher B, School B, personal communication, March 28, 2014)

Teacher C nods head in agreement with the other teachers. All teachers in school B said they did not notice anything specific in regards to motivation. There could be other factors such as school climate that may affect the student's success in academic improvement. As noted earlier, all the fifth grade students in school B are promoted at the end of the school year. Promotion factors are more than the CRCT results.

Observations also shed some insight on student motivation in academic achievement. In school A, the researcher noticed students completed all activities including mini lessons and homework because they wanted to complete them. As in Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation, students were not getting a reward. Students commented on all student questionnaires that they enjoyed having their homework completed so they could easily partake in the enrichment activities. While at school B, the researcher noticed students had a sense of pride about their educational process and progress. The researcher believed this was due to the school atmosphere—CRCT scores were blown up and posted around the school, current pictures of students were displayed all over the school, students were smiling and in various poses with friends and working on projects with their class. School B was very organized. Students walked in lines, wore uniforms, and the school was very clean. Students appeared to be respected by adults and they respected the adults in the building. Students appeared to be motivated by

operant conditioning (Skinner, 1953). Students commented in the student questionnaire about the rewards of future college plans and having the homework completed so they could participate in other activities. Students who have the goal of attending college understand what must happen in the school setting as far as grades and grade point averages (GPAs) are direct links to college acceptance.

RQ4: How well is the afterschool program structured and organized to enhance academic achievement?

Data analysis revealed the one question from the teacher questionnaire, two questions from the student questionnaire, and one question from the team teacher interview would assist the researcher in responding to RQ4. According to the researcher, program structure is the extent to how the program operates. Are students in age-appropriate/grade level groups? Is information readily available and organized to show what occurs each time a student is in the afterschool program? Does the program operate safely and effectively?

Teacher questionnaire question 7: Do you believe the afterschool operates safely and effectively?

According to the researcher, question 7 of the teacher questionnaires produced the following comments:

Yes, I have been a leader and know the training is involved. (Teacher A, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

From my experience—yes. (Teacher B, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Yes. (Teacher C, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Yes, students are dismissed in an orderly fashion. Ratios are kept to 15 students to 1 adult/teacher. Teachers communicate via walkie talkie or phone. (Teacher D, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

I've actually worked in the afterschool program and it's very structured.

Homework is the number one priority. Safety is the number one concern for our students. (Teacher E, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Yes, all children are in a designed area and are paged by radio. (Teacher A, School B, personal communication, March 28, 2014)

Yes, manly because the parents and staff care so much for the students. (Teacher B, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Yes, the program is very organized. (Teacher C, School A, personal communication, March 24, 2014)

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 3: What do you enjoy most about the way the afterschool arranges your activities?

In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 8 students said they enjoyed recess, snacks or soccer;
- 6 students said they enjoyed being able to complete their homework;
- 3 students responded yes or no. It is not known the researcher if those students understood the question;
- 2 students like the program just the way it was.

In school B, 6 students responded:

- 2 students said they enjoyed fitness activities or going outside;
- 2 students said they enjoyed doing different things every day;
- 1 student felt happy. This response can be interpreted as the student enjoyed all of the activities in the afterschool program;
- 1 student enjoyed the cultural exchange program in the afterschool program.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think so?

In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;
- 1 student said her grades improved but she didn't think it was because of the afterschool program. The student did not share what she believed the cause of the improvement of grades;
- 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 3 students said yes, their grades improved;
- 2 students said their grades have not improved;
- 1 student said he did well and was studying. It is unclear to the researcher if the student who was doing well attributes any of his academic achievement to the afterschool program.

Responses during the teacher team interview question 2 also assisted the researcher in completing RQ4.

RQ4: Have you seen any improvements in the students' attendance, grades, and test scores? What kind of improvements?

In the team teacher interview, teachers in school A reported that students are more motivated in asking questions in class and are active members in the classroom if the students attend the afterschool program. Teachers from school A also said students who attend the afterschool program are getting more homework done than those students who do not attend. One teacher said she saw an improvement of grades from third, fourth, and fifth grades. Another teacher from school A said some of the test scores improved for some of the afterschool students. Teachers from school B said students are able to work together to complete homework. Teachers at school B did not mention much about the improvement of test scores of students who attend the afterschool program. One common theme in both schools was homework completion. Teachers at both schools did not allude to the afterschool program helping students in any type of academic success. Teachers at both schools also did not mention anything about their students' attendance. The information omitted about students' attendance may have a significant impact on some of the research questions. There have to be other factors at both schools that aid in the success of students' performance on the CRCT.

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs would further assist the researcher in answering RQ4 in regards to the program structure. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs begins with having the most basic needs met: food, water, shelter, and clothing. The next level is safety. The third level is a feeling of belonging to a group or family. The fourth level

is in regard to a person's esteem. The final level is self-actualization. In the afterschool programs in this study, the student's most basic needs were met. Students were given snacks, shelter, and they already had clothing. Students did not have to focus on their next meal or think about where they had to sleep later on in the evening. At that moment in time, those students were doing well on the first level of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy. Then students in the afterschool program then moved to the second level on Maslow's Hierarchy, safety. Students in the afterschool programs in this study appeared to be safe in their surroundings. The researcher noted that students interacted with the adults in the program. The researcher also saw how the students' demeanors were while they were walking in the hall, speaking with teachers, and interacting with other students. The students in this study comfortably reached Maslow's level three—the feeling of belonging to a group. The researcher noted that the students seemed familiar with the adults and other students in the afterschool programs. Both programs were inviting even towards the researcher who was only there a short time. Based on teacher interviews and observations, students in the afterschool programs could move to the fourth level of the hierarchy. Students in the afterschool programs may not start with a high esteem of themselves. However, once students gain a few new friendships, obtain some additional help on homework, or even teach something to another student, they increase in self-confidence. If students in the afterschool programs in this study are able to move to four levels on Maslow's Hierarchy, the final level can be attained as well. Many students will move to the final level and that may be seen in their class work and possibly on future assessments.

RQ5: How satisfied are students with the structure and activities outlined in the afterschool program?

Data analysis revealed from the four questions from the student questionnaire: 1, 3, 4, 5 would assist the researcher in responding to RQ5. According to the researcher, program structure is the extent to how the program operates. Are students in age-appropriate/grade level groups? Is information readily available and organized to show what occurs each time a student is in the afterschool program? Does the program operate safely and effectively?

Student responses on student questionnaire for question 1: Which activities do you enjoy in the afterschool program? In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 1 student said math;
- 17 said recess, or playing a sport activity.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 1 student said the cultural exchange;
- 5 said playing a sport activity or free time.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 3: What do you enjoy most about the way the afterschool arranges your activities? In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 8 students said they enjoyed recess, snacks or soccer;
- 6 students said they enjoyed being able to complete their homework;

- 3 students responded yes or no. It is not known the researcher if those students understood the question;
- 2 students like the program just the way it was.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 2 students said they enjoyed fitness activities or going outside;
- 2 students said they enjoyed doing different things every day;
- 1 student felt happy. This response can be interpreted that the student enjoyed all of the activities in the afterschool program;
- 1 student enjoyed the cultural exchange program in the afterschool program.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think so? In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;
- 1 student said her grades improved but she didn't think it was because of the afterschool program. The student did not share what she believed the cause of the improvement of grades;
- 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 3 students said yes, their grades improved;
- 2 students said their grades have not improved;

- 1 student said he did well and was studying. It is unclear to the researcher if the student who was doing well attributes any of his academic achievement to the afterschool program.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 5: Explain what you get out of attending the afterschool program. In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 3 students had more than one response and their responses were tabulated with the other students; the total count may be more than 18 students;
- 2 students did not respond to the question;
- 8 students said they got good grades, homework done and more learning time;
- 4 students said they got to have fun;
- 3 students said they get to exercise, kick the ball or make new friends;
- 1 student reported that she did not really get anything out of afterschool;
- 1 student reported that he learned to never give up in afterschool.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 5 students said homework help and homework completion and then have fun afterwards;
- 2 students said they are able to exercise and learn to stay healthy and fit;
- 1 student had at least three responses and the responses were counted accordingly.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs would further assist the researcher in answering RQ4 in regard to the program structure. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs begins

with having the most basic needs met: food, water, shelter, and clothing. The next level is safety. The third level is a feeling of belonging to a group or family. The fourth level is in regard to a person's esteem. The final level is self-actualization. In the afterschool programs in this study, the student's most basic needs were met. Students were given snacks, shelter, and already had clothing. Students did not have to focus on their next meal or think about where they had to sleep later on in the evening. At that moment in time, those students were doing well on the first level of Maslow's Hierarchy. Students in the afterschool program then moved to the second level on Maslow's Hierarchy, safety. Students in the afterschool programs in this study appeared to be safe in their surroundings. The researcher noted how the students interacted with the adults in the program. The researcher also saw how the students' demeanors were while they were walking in the hall, speaking with teachers and interacting with other students. The students in this study comfortably reached Maslow's level three—the feeling of belonging to a group. The researcher noted that the students seemed familiar with the adults and other students in the afterschool programs. Both programs were inviting even towards the researcher who was only there a short time. Based on teacher interviews and observations, students in the afterschool programs could move to the fourth level of the hierarchy. Students in the afterschool programs may not start with a high esteem of themselves. However, once students gain a few new friendships, obtain some additional help on homework, or even teach something to another student, they increase in self-confidence. If students in the afterschool programs in this study are able to move to four levels on Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy, the final level can be attained as well. Many

students will move to the final level and that may be seen in their class work and possibly on future assessments.

RQ6: How does the climate of the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the school-based afterschool program?

Data analysis revealed student questionnaire questions 4 and 7 would assist the researcher in answering this research question. According to the researcher, climate of the program is the extent to which students are happy to be in the program. Is the atmosphere of the program warm and inviting? Is the staff friendly and helpful to all students in the program? CRCT data for both schools are listed in Figures 1 through 4.

The research conducted did not yield significant data to suggest that the time spent in the afterschool program has an impact on student achievement on the CRCT. Data from School A show students in the study group maintained mostly meets or exceeds on the CRCT. There were a few students who scored below levels. School A is an inclusion school and part of their student population are students serviced in Special Education. Further research would be required to determine the other factors that lead to students scored on or above grade levels. Additionally, further research would be needed to discover the issue of the students not scoring on grade level. School B is a public charter school and a small percentage of their students are serviced in Special Education. At least 20% of the population is gifted. It can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4 that most students scored at or above their grade level on the CRCT. Similar to school A, school B had most of their students do well on the CRCT with the exception of 2 students who scored below grade level in math. Further research would need to be conducted to determine some of the factors that may lead to students scoring below grade level. In

both school settings, all of the students had the same teachers. It seemed as if both schools had high regard for student achievement. The researcher determined this concept by the fact that both sets of students had the majority of students perform at or above grade level on the CRCT in reading and in math. The other valid point was most of students not enrolled in afterschool program excelled on the CRCT.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think so? In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;
- 1 student said her grades improved but she didn't think it was because of the afterschool program. The student did not share what she believed the cause of the improvement of grades;
- 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 3 students said yes, their grades improved;
- 2 students said their grades have not improved;
- 1 student said he did well and was studying. It is unclear to the researcher if the student who was doing well attributes any of his academic achievement to the afterschool program.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 7: Do you like the staff, activities, and homework support the afterschool offers? School A had 18 students

respond. Of the 18 students questioned, all of the students said they enjoyed the staff, activities and homework support of the afterschool program. One student said the staff did a magnificent job. Another student also added that he needed the extra time for homework. School B had 6 students to respond. Of the 6 students questioned, all of the students answered in the affirmative. One student added, they [teachers in afterschool] support him. Two students responded sometimes. It was not made clear to the researcher of why the two students responded with sometimes since the students did not elaborate on their response.

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs would further assist the researcher in answering RQ4 in regard to the climate of the afterschool program. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs begins with having the most basic needs met: food, water, shelter, and clothing. The next level is safety. The third level is a feeling of belonging to a group or family. In afterschool programs, students should feel as if they belong. That belonging helps students to continue to come to the afterschool program. The fourth level is in regard to a person's esteem. The final level is self-actualization. In the afterschool programs in this study, the student's most basic needs are met. Students were given snacks, shelter, and they already had clothing. Students did not have to focus on their next meal or think about where they had to sleep later on in the evening. At that moment in time, those students were doing well on the first level of Maslow's Hierarchy. Students in the afterschool program then moved to the second level on Maslow's Hierarchy, safety. The students in the afterschool programs in this study appeared to be safe in their surroundings. The researcher noted how the students interacted with the adults in the program. The researcher also saw how the students' demeanors were while they were

walking in the hall, speaking with teachers and interacting with other students. The students in this study comfortably reached Maslow's level three—the feeling of belonging to a group. The researcher noted that the students seemed familiar with the adults and other students in the afterschool programs. Both programs were inviting even towards the researcher who was only there a short time. Based on teacher interviews and observations, students in the afterschool programs could move to the fourth level of the hierarchy. Students in the afterschool programs may not start with a high esteem of themselves. However, once students gain a few new friendships, obtain some additional help on homework, or even teach something to another student, they increase in self-confidence. If students in the afterschool programs in this study are able to move to four levels on Maslow's Hierarchy, the final level can be attained as well. Many students will move to the final level and that may be seen in their class work and possibly on future assessments.

RQ7: How can student expectations of obtaining more learning time encourage academic achievement at the school-based afterschool program?

Data analysis for RQ7 revealed questions 4 and 5 from the student questionnaire and the observation tool would assist the researcher in responding. According to the researcher, student expectations are the extent to which student enjoys being part of the afterschool program. Do students think attending the afterschool program will increase to their success in the regular school setting?

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think so? In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;
- 1 student said her grades improved but she didn't think it was because of the afterschool program. The student did not share what she believed the cause of the improvement of grades;
- 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 3 students said yes, their grades improved;
- 2 students said their grades have not improved;
- 1 student said he did well and was studying. It is unclear to the researcher if the student who was doing well attributes any of his academic achievement to the afterschool program.

Student responses on the student questionnaire for question 5: Explain what you get out of attending the afterschool program. In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 3 students had more than one response and their responses were tabulated with the other students and the total count may be more than 18 students;
- 2 students did not respond to the question.
- 8 students said they got good grades, homework done and more learning time;
- 4 students said they got to have fun;
- 3 students said they get to exercise, kick the ball or make new friends;
- 1 student reported that she did not really get anything out of afterschool;

- 1 student reported that he learned to never give up in afterschool.

In school B, 6 students responded. Of the 6 students,

- 5 students said homework help and homework completion and then have fun afterwards;
- 2 students said they are able to exercise and learn to stay healthy and fit;
- 1 student had at least three responses and the responses were counted accordingly.

Data analysis from the observation tool created by the researcher yielded the following results. In school A, students were expected to try and ask questions during all aspects of the afterschool program. The researcher noted the following interchange: Two teachers in different classroom settings asked students to use their thinking skills. The students in either classroom did not give up or become combative. The students thought for a moment and then came up with a response. Students in school A were expected to trust their teachers. This trust may come from seeing the teachers during the school day. Students were also expected to remain in assigned classrooms and actively participate in mini lessons or classroom activities. Students in school B appeared to have had more school educational concern based on observations from the researcher. The school appeared to help students feel a sense of academic success.

Around the school, CRCT scores are posted in large frames. Students see what their grade level has done on the CRCT the previous year. All score ranges were 85% or higher. Students are expected to be respected by the adults in the building and the adults respect the students. Students are spoken to in calm yet firm tones. The researcher noted

this exchange between a student and a teacher in the afterschool program: A student had a question for the adult. The adult asked the student calmly but firmly if he was “dressed for success.” The student looked down and noticed his shirt was out. He put his shirt in his pants and proceeded to ask the question again. This time the adult responded after thanking him for fixing his shirt. The climate of the school fosters a level of family and participation. The researcher was able to see how students and faculty and staff operate during the lunch sessions about two hours before the afterschool program occurs. On the day the researcher visited, students were engaged in a taste contest about root vegetables. The students brought in carrots, parsnips, beets, and radishes. Students were allowed to sample all of the root vegetables. After sampling, students had to vote using color coded stickers on a bulletin board in the cafeteria. The researcher also noted parents assisting during the lunch hour. In fact, after meeting with the dean of students, the researcher learned that parents must volunteer at least 20 hours per month to help foster better relationships in the community and parental involvement. Additionally, the researcher learned from the dean of students that the school has a tasting, similar to the root vegetables, once per month. All students participate and are happy to take part in this school wide activity. The students unanimously voted for carrots as their favorite root vegetable. School B appeared to show students many ways to incorporate learning in every aspect of their school experience.

The researcher utilized three theories from this research to further explain students' expectations of obtaining more learning time in order to increase academic achievement: Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation, Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy, and Skinner's (1953) Operant Conditioning. Intrinsic motivation deals with having the

motivation to complete tasks without the thought of an external reward. Students in both programs liked being able to obtain extra homework support in addition to having their homework completed. The researcher did not notice rewards that propelled the students to complete their homework or ask for assistance from teachers during the designated homework hour. Also, students in both programs noted that they enjoyed the enrichment activities after completing their homework. Self-efficacy relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal. Students in both programs believed they could complete their homework. Some students in both programs did not notice any improvements in their grades but still reported positive results for getting additional teacher support during the homework hour. The majority of students in both programs said the afterschool program and additional learning time assisted them with improving their grades. Operant conditioning comes from the joy of accomplishing a task in addition to being rewarded at the end of completion of the task. Students in both programs expressed excitement of having their homework completed. Students' excitement varied from the idea of having the homework complete to being able to thorough enjoying the afterschool enrichment activities.

RQ8: How does parental involvement of students in the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?

Data analysis for RQ8 from teacher questionnaire questions 2, 3 and the student questionnaire questions 2, 4.

Teacher questionnaire question 2: Have you witnessed any parental involvement in the afterschool program? Explain.

Teacher questionnaire question 3: What academic gains have you seen in your students who attended the afterschool program?

Student questionnaire question 2: Are your parents involved in the afterschool program? If so, how are they involved?

Student questionnaire question 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think you are doing better?

According to the researcher, parental involvement is the extent where parents are actively engaged in the afterschool program. Did parents attend fieldtrips? Are parents involved in any aspect of the afterschool program? Did they speak to the program facilitators about concerns about their child(ren)? Teacher questionnaire from teachers at school A question 2 yielded the following results. Of the 5 teachers questioned,

- 1 teacher said she has heard parents speak about the afterschool program;
- 4 teachers have not witnessed any parental involvement in the afterschool program.

Teacher questionnaire from teachers at school A question 3 yielded the following results.

Of the 5 teachers,

- 2 teachers said they have noticed some academic improvements in some afterschool program students;
- 1 teacher said she saw improvements in the CRCT at least 5 to 10 points in some students;
- 1 teacher said she noticed more students completed homework;

- 1 teacher said students have displayed more confidence due to the direct instruction and reinforcement in the student's abilities and skills.

Teacher questionnaire from teachers at school B question 2 yielded the following results.

Of the 3 teachers questioned,

- 1 teacher said no;
- 2 teachers said parents volunteer in the afterschool program and share their talents with the students.

Teacher questionnaire from teachers at school B question 3 yielded the following results.

Of the 3 teachers surveyed, 2 teachers said peer collaboration. Peer collaboration was not a measureable academic gain for the researcher. Of the 3 teachers surveyed, 1 teacher said she was not aware of any academic gains.

Student questionnaire analyzed results yielded the following results in student questionnaires question 2. In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students,

- 3 students reported yes, their parent was involved. The researcher was not certain those students understood the question;
- 13 students said their parents are not involved in the afterschool program;
- 2 students said their parents know about the afterschool program. The researcher was not certain those students understood the question.

In school A, 18 students responded for question 4. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;

- 1 student said her grades improved but she did not think it was due to her involvement in the afterschool program;
- 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased.

In school B, 6 students responded to question 2. Of the 6 students,

- 5 students said their parents were not involved in the afterschool program;
- 1 student said his parents were involved with the afterschool program. The researcher was not sure the student who said his parents were involved in the afterschool program understood the question.

In school B, 6 students responded to question 4. Of the 6 students,

- 3 students said their grades improved;
- 2 students said their grades did not improve;
- 1 student said he did well and was studying. The researcher was not sure the student who gave a response about studying understood the question.

The theory that assisted the researcher in answering RQ7 is Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs begins with having the most basic needs met: food, water, shelter, and clothing. The next level is safety. The third level is a feeling of belonging to a group or family. In afterschool programs, students should feel as if they belong. That belonging helps students to continue to come to the afterschool program. The fourth level is in regard to a person's esteem. The final level is self-actualization. In the afterschool programs in this study, the student's most basic needs were met. Students were given snacks, shelter, and they already had clothing. Students did not have to focus on their next meal or think about where they had to sleep later on in

the evening. At that moment in time, those students were doing well on the first level of Maslow's Hierarchy. Students in the afterschool program then moved to the second level on Maslow's Hierarchy, safety. Students in the afterschool programs in this study appeared to be safe in their surroundings. The researcher noted how the students interacted with the adults in the program. The researcher also saw how the students' demeanors were while they were walking in the hall, speaking with teachers, and interacting with other students. The students in this study comfortably reached Maslow's level three and level four. The researcher noted how the students seemed appeared to have self-confidence in the activities they completed in homework or learning a new skill. Many students in both afterschool programs appeared to appreciate the additional learning time and teacher support while they were completing homework. Although parent involvement is very low to nonexistent, students in both programs were able to excel in homework completion and were able to meet or exceed expectations on the CRCT. Parental involvement would be a great addition to both programs. Utilizing Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy, students were able to successfully move up the levels toward the highest level, self-actualization. Students in both programs placed a strong level of concern for homework completion. Some students did not recognize the benefits of additional practice time, while other students understood the importance of the additional practice time and what it meant for their future in education. Many students will move to the final level and that may be seen in their class work and possibly on future assessments.

RQ9: How effective is the afterschool program?

Data analysis exposed the answer to the dependent variable utilizing teacher questionnaire questions 3 and 5, student questionnaire question 4 and 5, and Team Teacher Interview questions 2, 4, and 5.

Teacher questionnaire question 3: What academic gains have you seen in your students who attend the afterschool program?

Teacher questionnaire question 5: How can you tell students are more motivated in your class after attending the afterschool program?

Student questionnaire 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program?

Student questionnaire 5: Explain what you get out of attending the afterschool program?

Team teacher interview question 2: Have you seen any improvements in the students' attendance, grades, and test scores? What kind of improvements?

Team teacher interview question 4: Do students seem motivated in class while working on assignments and/or projects? Do you believe the motivation may come from attending the afterschool program? Please explain.

Team teacher interview question 5: Do you think the socialization/student involvement in the afterschool program helps students socially, emotionally, and academically? Why or why not?

In school A, teacher question 3 yielded positive results from teachers about students' academic gains. Of the 5 teachers,

- 1 teacher noticed an improvement in CRCT scores;

- 1 teacher noticed more students completed their homework;
- 1 teacher noticed more confidence due to the direct instruction and reinforcement of students' skills and abilities;
- 2 said they have seen some academic improvements.

In question 5, teachers in school A reported the following. Of the 5 teachers,

- 2 teachers said students were more motivated in topics the students were interested in and during classroom discussion;
- 1 teacher said students were more willing to tell her when they did not understand concepts;
- 1 teacher said more students completed their homework;
- 1 teacher said students are more confidence in learning and it appeared to be better than those students who did not attend the afterschool program.

In school B, teacher question 3 yielded different results than school A. Of the 3 teachers,

- none of them made mention of the afterschool program assisting their students in academic gains;
- 2 teachers said peer collaboration could be seen in their classrooms;
- 1 teacher could not see any academic gains in any student in the afterschool program.

In question 5, teachers in school B reported the following. Of the 3 teachers,

- 1 teacher was not able to answer the question about student motivation;
- 1 teacher said some of the students expressed enjoyment about the opportunities they participate in;

- 1 teacher said class activities are aligned with afterschool and excitement is incorporated on both ends [afterschool and the regular school day]. The teacher who responded about class activities did not provide the researcher with an adequate response about student motivation in class.

Students in school A responded in the following manner for question 4; 18 students were surveyed. Of the 18 students,

- 5 students said their grades have not changed;
- 11 students said their grades have improved;
- 1 student said his grades have not been lowered or increased;
- 1 student said her grades improved but she did not think it was due to her attendance in the afterschool program.

In response to question 5, students in school A reported the following. Of the 18 students,

- 3 students had more than one response and their responses are tabulated with the other students and the total count may appear more than 18 students;
- 2 students did not respond to the question;
- 8 students said they got good grades, homework done and more learning time;
- 4 students said they got to have fun;
- 3 students said they get to exercise, kick the ball or make new friends;
- 1 student reported that she did not really get anything out of afterschool;
- 1 student reported that he learned to never give up in afterschool.

In school B, students responded to question 4. Of the 6 students who reported,

- 3 students said their grades have improved;
- 2 students said their grades have not improved;
- 1 student said he did well and was studying.

In regards to question 5 about what students like about the afterschool program, students in school B responded to the survey questions in the following manner. Of the 6 students,

- 5 students said homework help, homework completion and/or have fun;
- 2 students gave a response about learning to be healthy and exercising in;
- One student had three responses and all responses were included in the tabulation of data.

The team teacher interview provided insight about what the teachers believed may come from students who attend the afterschool program. Teachers at school A reported the following about improvements in grades, attendance, and test scores. Students are getting their homework done. Improvements can be seen from third to fourth grade and from fourth to fifth grade. Students in afterschool programs tend to have their homework completed much more than other students. One teacher reported an increase of CRCT test scores between 5 and 10 points. Teachers did not mention any improvement in attendance. Additionally, students are motivated in class to answer questions if they attend the afterschool program. Students ask more questions and are more willing to be open about what they do not know. Student motivation can also be seen in school A. Teachers reported one student has improved in motivation and work ethic and she

believes it may come from having more attention in afterschool and teachers available to help with homework and projects. Students are more motivated in class and the teacher thinks it's due to the program. Students begin to take ownership of their learning.

Students come back to teachers during lunch to learn which mistakes cost them a passing score. All of the students who reported during lunch were in the afterschool program.

Finally, teachers in school A shared which aspects of socialization/student involvement help students socially, academically, and emotionally. Teachers in school A said smaller settings can help students who have difficulty relating to peers. Also, students can relate to other students of other ages or their peers. Academically, some students may understand the assignment and may be able to help other students in different grades with their work and emotionally, by boosting their confidence when they improve their skills during the afterschool program. Students who boost their confidence are likely to be more willing to participate in class more. Teachers at school B reported the following about improvements in grades, attendance, and test scores. School B teachers did not mention any improvements in test scores or attendance. Teachers at school B also did not share any academic improvements of any student in the afterschool program. Teachers at school B did mention that their students build relationships with other students in the afterschool program. Additionally, students have the opportunity to work among themselves with homework instead of working alone at home. The teachers of school B did not see any signs of motivation from the students who attended the afterschool program. Teachers in school B noticed mostly social aspects of the afterschool program. Teachers elaborated when they shared with the researcher about the classroom

environment and afterschool environment allowing students the freedom and flexibility to work together.

A qualitative case study was used to study two select elementary afterschool programs in metro Atlanta, Georgia. The theoretical framework for this study focused on the following theories: (a) Carl Rogers' (1951) Intrinsic Motivation, (b) Albert Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy, (c) B. F. Skinner's (1953) Operant Conditioning, and (d) Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Each theory assisted the researcher with explaining how and why an afterschool program is beneficial to students. The study investigated the effects of the following independent variables on improving student performance in afterschool programs: program structure, student motivation, parental involvement, student attendance, student involvement/socialization, climate of the program, and student expectations. It was expected that program structure, student attendance, student motivation, climate of the program, and student involvement/socialization would prove to be primary influences leading to improved academic performance, and that other variables would have minimal significance in improving academic performance.

First, Roger's (1951) Intrinsic Motivation states that motivation comes from within the individual without any thought of the external reward. There are no outside sources that will determine if a student will achieve a goal. In afterschool programs, students are motivated by the success they feel for completing tasks and socializing with friends. According to this theory, students who are not successful the first time are able to move past their failure in order to achieve success. Secondly, Bandura's (1963) Self-Efficacy theory relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal. If a person thinks he or she is capable of obtaining success, he or she will. In afterschool programs,

students have to believe they can finish the task, improve scores, and learn to read better and/or faster. Third, B. F. Skinner's (1953) Operant Conditioning is a method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behavior. Students will rise to various challenges in educational settings; thus, for some students, operant conditioning may be the only method to entice students to attend afterschool programs regularly. Finally, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs states that basic needs must be met before a person can advance to other levels the most basic level of needs include having water, shelter, food and clothing. The next level is safety; individuals feel secure in their body, resources, and family. After feeling safe and secure, individuals desire to belong or feel loved in terms of family relationships and friendships. The fourth level in the hierarchy focuses on esteem. Once individuals move to this level, they are confident, have good self-esteem, have respect, and respect others. The final and most difficult level to reach is self-actualization. Here individuals are able to be creative, solve problems, and are accepting of facts. Students who attend afterschool programs should have their basic needs met first. In an afterschool setting, students have to feel safe and secure; they have to feel that their opinions matter, and that they are an active part of the organization. According to the hierarchy, once their needs are met, the student can proceed up the hierarchy. Summarily, the goal of many afterschool programs is to help develop the whole child and to help him or her be successful, responsible, productive citizens in a global economy and society.

Data Analysis and Central Themes

The data analysis led to five central themes that relate to the effectiveness of afterschool programs improving student achievements which are explored below:

1. Additional Teacher Support
 - a. Improvement of Grades
 - b. Additional Learning Time
 - c. Homework Completion
2. Student Motivation
3. Socialization of Peers
 - a. Peer Collaboration
 - b. Interact with other students
 - c. Assist each other with homework
4. Enrichment Activities
 - a. Program Structure
 - b. Fun
5. Student Self-Confidence

Figure 6 shows the frequency the themes appeared in this research study. This figure was developed from data collected from teachers and students in the teacher interviews, student questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and researcher observations. Students enjoy the additional teacher support the most. The next items that students enjoy in the afterschool program are the enrichment activities.

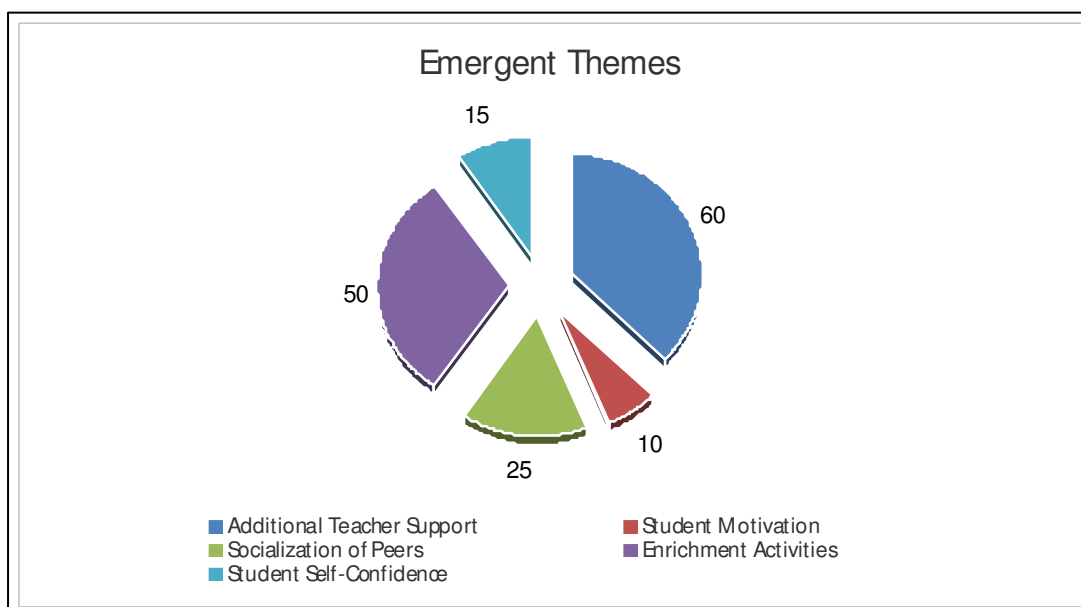


Figure 6. Frequency of Appearance of Themes in this Research Study

Following enrichment activities is the socialization of peers. Student motivation and student self-confidence were themes that derived from the teachers' responses in this study although students may have exhibited motivation and self-confidence from the additional support of the afterschool program.

Table 1 shows teacher perception of the outcomes for students in the afterschool programs at both schools. This table represents what teachers believe students are gaining from the afterschool experience. Many of the main areas represented are what the teacher may witness in the classroom when dealing with students who also attend the afterschool program.

Table 1

*Teacher Perception of the Outcomes for the Students Attending the Afterschool Programs**(N = 8)*

	<i>Teachers</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	<i>Race/Gender</i>	WF	WF	WF	BF	BF	BM	BM	BF
	<i>Years Teaching</i>	6+	1+	1+	1+	1+	6+	1+	6+
Academic Gains		x		x		x			
Confidence in Class		x			x	x			
Lacking Parental Support		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parental Support			x		x	x	x	x	
Student Motivation in Class					x		x	x	
ASP operates safe and effective		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Student more social after attending the ASP					x	x		x	
Additional Teacher Support		x	x	x	x				
More time for students to complete Work		x		x	x		x		
Students can work together to Complete homework					x		x	x	
Student Enjoyment of attending the ASP		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
School A: Numbers 1-5									
School B: Numbers 6-8									
Years Teaching: 1-5 years and 6-10 years									

ASP = Afterschool Programs

WF = white female; BF = black female; BM = black male; BF = black female

Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the data collected in this research study. The analysis of data investigated the independent variables: student attendance, student involvement/socialization, student motivation, program structure, climate of the program, student expectations, parental involvement, and the dependent variable—program effectiveness of afterschool programs in improving student academic improvement. This chapter also outlined how the qualitative data related to the research questions. Additionally, the theoretical framework was woven through each research question. This data were transcribed, analyzed, and connected to related research questions developed by the researcher. A single case study approach was applied to the data to allow the researcher to see links between all instruments utilized to answer the research questions that provided guidance to this study.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research investigated the effectiveness of two afterschool programs with helping to improve fifth grade academic performance. The CRCT was used to view student test results of students in the two afterschool programs and two comparison groups of students who were not enrolled in either afterschool program. The researcher examined the dependent variable of program effectiveness while exploring the independent variables of the effectiveness of afterschool programs: student attendance, student involvement/socialization, student motivation, program structure, climate of the program, student expectations, and parental involvement. This chapter highlights the findings of the study and the researcher states the conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study.

Findings

The researcher reviewed the findings of this study to determine how effective afterschool programs can improve academic achievement in fifth grade students. Through a qualitative method, utilizing a teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, observations, team teacher interviews, and CRCT test results the researcher examined the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. The teacher questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended questions and was given to eight teachers at the two research locations. There were two distinct ethnicities in the teacher sample:

Caucasian and African American. Three of the teachers were Caucasian females. Three of the teachers were African-American females. Two of the teachers were African-American males. The teaching experiences of the teachers ranged between 1-10 years. The student questionnaire consisted of seven open-ended questions. The observations took place at both afterschool programs afterschool. One observation started at school B near the end of lunch.

The researcher investigated the impact student attendance had on the effectiveness of improving student achievement in afterschool programs. Data analysis revealed that student attendance did not have true significance in improving student achievement on the CRCT. Students not enrolled in either afterschool program attained the same or better results on the CRCT scores in reading and math than the students enrolled in the afterschool program. However, of the students who attend the afterschool program, teachers at school A did notice academic improvements in the classroom and on some student's CRCT results. Teachers at school A shared most students in the afterschool program had their homework completed before other students who do not attend the afterschool program. Additionally, a teacher from school A reported that she has seen improvements in some of the student's grades as they have moved from third to fourth grade and fourth grade to fifth grade. Another teacher from school A shared that students in the afterschool program are more willing to participate in class because they are getting extra support in reinforcing their skills in afterschool. Some students in the afterschool program are more willing to be open about what they do not know and will ask for clarity about what they need. The teachers at school B did not notice any

academic gains, but they shared the students have increased in their social environment. Additionally, students have increased peer collaboration in completing their homework during the homework time in afterschool. Teachers at school B declared that students have an opportunity to work amongst themselves instead of taking it [homework] and doing it by themselves. The research shows that attendance in the afterschool program is not significant for students meeting or exceeding on the CRCT. However, students who attend the afterschool program are able to show academic gains in their classrooms with their teachers.

This research probed student involvement/socialization as a key component in the effectiveness of improving student achievement in afterschool programs. Data analysis exposed that student involvement/socialization was significant in improving student achievement in afterschool programs. Teachers at school A commented that students in the afterschool program encounter social, emotional and academic improvements. One teacher shared students involved in the afterschool program benefit from the smaller setting if those students have difficulty relating to peers. Students at school A have an opportunity to interact with students they do not normally interact with—students in lower grade levels. Yet another teacher said students excel academically when students in the afterschool program understand the assignment and are able to help one of their classmates who may struggle with the assignment. One teacher at school A noted students in the afterschool program appear to have a boost in confidence from their skills being reinforced while at the afterschool program. That same teacher claimed if the student was more confident in class, the student is more willing to participate in class.

Similarly, teachers at school B shared the same comments about the social aspect of the afterschool program. One teacher stated that friendships are built and students can talk about things they may not be able to talk about in the classroom. Yet, another teacher from school B declared afterschool allows students to work together and they [teachers] create an environment where students are allowed to work together. The researcher observed both programs. Students in both programs appeared to enjoy the activities. School B was involved in tennis instruction. Every student was engaged in the lesson. The researcher saw students laughing and socializing. School A had students involved in a myriad of activities. Some students were engaged in a golf lesson. Other students were involved in a mini lesson with a certified teacher. Regardless of the activity, the students were paying attention and were involved. The research shows that student involvement/socialization is a significant factor in improving student achievement.

This research examined how student motivation encouraged academic achievement at the afterschool program. Data analysis revealed a significant correlation to student motivation encouraging academic achievement. Teachers at school A gave two examples of an improvement of student motivation from students who attend the afterschool program. One teacher shared one student's motivation has improved in class and she believed it came from the extra attention in the afterschool program. Yet, another teacher from school A shared students seem more motivated in class and were more willing to request help. She also believed it was due to the student's attendance in the afterschool program. However, teachers at school B did not seem to see any type of motivation from the students enrolled in the afterschool program. Based on the

researcher's observation of school B, the school climate fostered academic excellence. Students in school B had constant reminders of doing well on the CRCT. Students saw large posters of the previous CRCT scores adorning the halls of the school, all of which had scores of meeting or exceeding the standard. It appeared that the students in school B were motivated to complete tasks due to operant conditioning. Students mentioned having homework completed and the rewards of attending college. There may be other motivational factors for the students at school B. Students in both programs expressed that they enjoyed having their homework completed.

This research also explored how the program structure of the afterschool program encouraged academic achievement. Data analysis revealed a significant correlation to program structure of the afterschool program to encourage academic achievement. Students in both programs are in age-appropriate groups. In each program, students were aware of the schedule. In one program, all students took tennis lesson. In the other program, students took ballet or gardening on different days. The schedule varied each day at each school. Both programs had the following structure: snack, designated homework hour with teachers, and an enrichment activity. Both programs operated safely and efficiently. Both programs maintained locked doors and outside adults had to be let in by an employee of the school. Student responses from school A expressed that most students liked the sports or enrichment activities the best. Students at school A enjoyed having their homework completed. Student responses from school B were similar to that of school A—students really liked the sports or enrichment activities. Although none of the students in school B responded about homework, on the student

questionnaire 5 out of 6 students at school B reported that they enjoyed having their homework completed. In regards to their grades, 11 out of 18 students at school A reported that their grades have improved; 3 out of 6 students at school B reported that their grades also improved. Teachers at both schools gave no information about student attendance improving since attending the afterschool program. Both groups of teachers claim students have their homework completed. Two teachers from school A saw improvements in academics in their students who attend the afterschool program. One teacher at school A claimed she saw improvements in students from grades 3-4 and 4-5. Teachers at school B did not give any information about students' test scores improving due to afterschool attendance. On the teacher questionnaire, one teacher from school A claimed some students CRCT scores improved by 5 or 10 points.

This research examined how the climate of the afterschool program encouraged academic achievement at the afterschool program. Data analysis revealed significant correlation to climate of the afterschool program to encourage academic achievement although not in performing well on the CRCT. Students appeared to perform well on the CRCT whether in the afterschool program or not in the afterschool program. The atmospheres of both programs were warm and inviting. It appeared to the researcher that the students were respected by the adults in both afterschool programs. The staff at both programs was friendly and helpful to all students based on the observations of the researcher. Students responded to two questions about their grades and whether or not they liked the activities, staff and homework support of the afterschool program. In regards to improvements in grades, out of 18 students in school A, 11 students said their

grades improved since attending the afterschool program. Additionally, out of 6 students in school B, 3 students reported that their grades have improved since attending the afterschool program. Students in both programs positively responded that they enjoyed the staff, activities and homework support of their afterschool program. One student at school A said the staff did a magnificent job. Another student at school B said they [teachers] support him. Climate of the afterschool program is essential in other factors of student achievement. Success on the CRCT is not necessarily determined by the climate of the afterschool program.

This research studied how student expectations of obtaining more learning time encouraged academic achievement at the afterschool program. Data analysis revealed a significant correlation to student's expectation of obtaining more learning time to encourage academic improvement. At both schools, students' previous CRCT score results showed students excelled in reading and math whether in the afterschool program or not. Students enjoy attending the afterschool programs at both locations. On most of the student questionnaires, students shared the best part of attending the afterschool program was having fun, learning new things, getting homework completed, and getting additional support from teachers. Another question to consider was whether or not students thought attending the afterschool program would increase their success in the regular school setting. Due to the students' current level of maturity, the researcher could not determine if students were able to make the connection of the afterschool attendance with improving academic performance in the regular school day. Students in both schools did report an improvement of grades since attending the afterschool program.

Out of 18 students, 11 students said their grades have improved at school A. Out of 6 students, 3 students said their grades have improved at school B. Students also shared what they developed from attending the afterschool program. Eight students from school A stated they earn more learning time, get their homework done, and get good grades. One student at school A reported that he learned to never give up in afterschool. Students at school B reported similarly. Out of the 6 students at school B in the study, 5 students said they achieved homework help, homework completion and they liked to have fun afterwards. During the observation, the researcher noticed zeal of learning from both sets of students in the study. The researcher noticed students at school A were expected to try and ask questions in all aspects of the afterschool program. The researcher saw an exchange between two teachers and two students at different times. At both times, the teacher asked the students to utilize their “thinking skills.” Students in both situations did not get loud or combative instead they thought for a moment and came up with the answer. The climate in school B appeared to show students that academics in any form are essential. Students were reminded of how they scored on the CRCT. Since the CRCT scores lined the hallways in various locations, students could possibly be reminded of their goal of attaining educational success. It appeared to the researcher that the school climate fostered academic success. As reported earlier, all students were promoted to the next grade level at school B. Since school B encourages school-wide participation in learning activities, students in the afterschool program may continue that zeal for the additional learning time.

During the lunch observation, the researcher noticed students participating in a taste testing contest about root vegetables. Students brought in carrots, parsnips, radishes, and beets. Parent volunteers cut the vegetables up in bite-sized portions. Students sampled the vegetables. After sampling the vegetables, students voted using colorful stickers to determine which root vegetable students liked best. Students picked carrots unanimously. The school culture implied, to the researcher, that learning was ongoing and students were expected to take part in any learning no matter the location or time.

This research also investigated the effect parental involvement has on encouraging student achievement in the afterschool program. Parental involvement was lacking in most areas in the study. It is important to note that although parental involvement was lacking to show any significant correlation to student achievement in both afterschool programs, students did well on the CRCT. The majority of the students in both groups appreciated the additional homework support and the ability to have their homework completed before they arrived at home for the day. Teacher questionnaires from teachers at school A, question 2, yielded the following results: of the 5 teachers questioned, 1 teacher said she has heard parents speak positively about the afterschool program and 4 teachers have not witnessed any parental involvement in the afterschool program. Teacher questionnaires from teachers at school A, question 3, yielded the following results: of the 5 teachers, 2 teachers said they have noticed some academic improvements in some students of the afterschool program; 1 teacher said she saw improvements in the CRCT at least 5 to 10 points in some students; 1 teacher said she

noticed more students completed homework; and 1 teacher said students have displayed more confidence due to the direct instruction and reinforcement in the student's abilities and skills. Teacher questionnaire from teachers at school B, question 2, about witnessing parental involvement yielded the following results: of the 3 teachers questioned, 1 teacher said no parental involvement and 2 teachers said parents volunteer in the afterschool program and share their talents with the students. Parents volunteer in some areas but not all in school B. Teacher questionnaires from teachers at school B, question 3, yielded the following results: of the 3 teachers surveyed, 2 teachers said peer collaboration. Peer collaboration was not a measureable academic gain for the researcher. Of the 3 teachers surveyed, 1 teacher said she was not aware of any academic gains.

Student questionnaire results yielded the following for question 2 about parental involvement: In school A, 18 students responded. Of the 18 students, 3 students reported yes, their parent was involved. The researcher was not certain those students understood the question; 13 students said their parents are not involved in the afterschool program; and 2 students said their parents know about the afterschool program. The researcher was not certain those students understood the question. In school A, 18 students responded for question 4. Of the 18 students, 5 students said their grades have not changed; 11 students said their grades had improved; 1 student said her grades improved but she did not think it was due to her involvement in the afterschool program; and 1 student said his grades were not lowered or increased. In school B, 6 students responded to question 2. Of the 6 students, 5 students said their parents were not involved in the

afterschool program and 1 student said his parents were involved with the afterschool program. The researcher was not sure the student who said his parents were involved in the afterschool program understood the question. In school B, 6 students responded to question 4. Of the 6 students, 3 students said their grades improved, 2 students said their grades did not improve, and 1 student said he did well and was studying. The researcher was not sure the student who gave a response about studying understood the question. Although parental involvement is low to nonexistent, the students in the afterschool program are still able to meet or exceed the standards on the CRCT and are actively seeking assistance in homework support and homework completion.

This research also determined the program effectiveness of both afterschool programs. Data gathered on both afterschool programs show the program's effectiveness. In order to gather the data, the researcher had to view two questions from the teacher questionnaire, three questions from the teacher interview and two questions from the student questionnaire. *Teacher questionnaire question 3: What academic gains have you seen in your students who attend the afterschool program? Teacher questionnaire question 5: How can you tell students are more motivated in your class after attending the afterschool program?* Both programs offer students a nutritional snack. Both programs offer an hour of homework assistance with teachers. Both programs offer interesting enrichment activities that the students enjoy. In relation to academic gains, teachers at school A saw improvements on the CRCT [in some students], more students have completed homework, and students have more confidence in class due to reinforcement of skills. In relation to student motivation, teachers in school A saw

students more motivated in topics that interested them [students], students took ownership of their learning by asking for clarity when they did not understand, confidence in learning and it appeared to be better than those students who did not attend the afterschool program. In relation to academic gains in school B, teachers made no mention of academic gains from the afterschool program. Two teachers in school B mentioned they saw more peer collaboration as a result of the afterschool program. The responses of the two teachers did not adequately assist the researcher in obtaining information about academic gains for students in school B. In relation to student motivation, teachers at school B did not give adequate responses for the researcher to determine if student motivation was a factor of students who attended the afterschool program. One teacher said students have expressed enjoyment about the activities they participate in. One teacher could not respond. The last teacher said class activities are aligned with afterschool and excitement is incorporated on both ends. None of the teacher responses from school B assisted the research in gathering data about student motivation of students in the afterschool program.

Student questionnaire 4: Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? *Student questionnaire 5:* Explain what you get out of attending the afterschool program? Students in school A responded in the following manner for question 4: 18 students were surveyed; of the 18 students, 5 students said their grades had not changed; 11 students said their grades had improved; 1 student said his grades had not been lowered or increased; and 1 student said her grades improved but she did not think it was due to her attendance in the afterschool program. In response to question 5,

students in school A reported the following: of the 18 students, 3 students had more than one response and their responses were tabulated with the other students and the total count may appear more than 18 students; 2 students did not respond to the question; 8 students said they got good grades, homework done and more learning time; 4 students said they got to have fun; 3 students said they get to exercise, kick the ball or make new friends; 1 student reported that she did not really get anything out of afterschool; and 1 student reported that he learned to never give up in afterschool. In school B, students responded to question 4. Of the 6 students who reported, 3 students said their grades had improved; 2 students said their grades had not improved, and 1 student said he did well and was studying. In regards to question 5 about what students like about the afterschool program, students in school B responded to the survey questions in the following manner: of the 6 students, 5 students said homework help, homework completion and/or have fun; 2 students gave a response about learning to be healthy and exercising in; 1 student had three responses and all responses were included in the tabulation of data. *Team teacher interview question 2: Have you seen any improvements in the students' attendance, grades, and test scores? What kind of improvements?* *Team teacher interview question 4: Do students seem motivated in class while working on assignments and/or projects? Do you believe the motivation may come from attending the afterschool program? Please explain.* *Team teacher interview question 5: Do you think the socialization/student involvement in the afterschool program helps students socially, emotionally, and academically? Why or why not?* The team teacher interview provided insight about what the teachers believed may come from students who attend the

afterschool program. Teachers at school A reported the following about improvements in grades, attendance, and test scores. Students are getting their homework done.

Improvements can be seen from third to fourth grade and from fourth to fifth grade.

Students in afterschool programs tend to have their homework completed much more than other students. One teacher reported an increase of CRCT test scores between 5 and 10 points. Teachers did not mention any improvement in attendance. Additionally, students were motivated in class to answer questions if they attended the afterschool program. Students asked more questions and were more willing to be open about what they do not know. Student motivation can also be seen in school A. Teachers reported one student has improved in motivation and work ethic and she believes it may come from having more attention in afterschool and teachers available to help with homework and projects. Students were more motivated in class and the teacher thinks it's due to the program. Students began to take ownership of their learning. Students came back to teachers during lunch to learn which mistakes cost them a passing score. All of the students who reported during lunch were in the afterschool program. Finally, teachers in school A shared which aspects of socialization/student involvement helped students socially, academically, and emotionally. Teachers in school A said smaller settings can help a student who may have difficulty relating to peers. Also, students can relate to other students of other ages or their peers. Academically, some students may understand the assignment and may be able to help other students in different grades with their work and emotionally by boosting their confidence when they improve their skills during the afterschool program. Students who boost their confidence are likely to be more willing to

participate in class more. Teachers at school B reported the following about improvements in grades, attendance, and test scores. School B teachers did not mention any improvements in test scores or attendance. Teachers at school B also did not share any academic improvements of any student in the afterschool program. Teachers at school B did mention that their students build relationships with other students in the afterschool program. Additionally, students had the opportunity to work among themselves with homework instead of working alone at home. The teachers at school B did not see any signs of motivation from the students who attended the afterschool program. Teachers in school B noticed mostly social aspects of the afterschool program. Teachers elaborated when they shared with the researcher about the classroom environment and afterschool environment allowing students the freedom and flexibility to work together.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to determine effectiveness of afterschool programs in improving fifth grade academic performance. The researcher attempted to investigate how student attendance, student involvement/socialization, student motivation, program structure, climate of the program, student expectations, and parental involvement has an impact on improving student achievement on fifth grade students that attend afterschool programs.

The researcher attempted to answer:

RQ1: What is the level of attendance of students in the afterschool program?

Afterschool programs work for students who need additional help and additional learning time. Standardized test scores may improve of students who attend the afterschool program. In this study, CRCT test data did not prove helpful in determining the academic success of the afterschool program. Other methods to determine afterschool program effectiveness were not included in this study. Teachers in afterschool programs are able to go over concepts and reinforce skills students may lack. Teachers reported an improvement in grades when students attend the afterschool program.

RQ2: What is the extent of student involvement/socialization in the afterschool program?

Afterschool programs would not appeal to students without socialization strategies incorporated in the day to day events. Students received peer to peer connection and improved relationships with adults. The smaller setting of the afterschool program helps some students who may struggle with core subject's content. Friendships are formed while participating in the afterschool program. Students are engaged with every activity, mini lesson, and enrichment activity. Enrichment activities were the third highest ranking activity enjoyed by students in the afterschool program.

RQ3: Does an afterschool program enhance student motivation in order to promote academic achievement?

The afterschool program enhanced student motivation. Students in the afterschool program appeared to be self-motivated during their study time (operant conditioning). The practice helped student gain confidence: students were motivate to

ask questions in class and participated in class discussions. Students in the afterschool program took ownership of their learning completing homework assignments, reviewing for quizzes, and working on enrichment activities.

RQ4: How well is the afterschool program structured and organized to enhance academic achievement?

Students enjoyed the structure. Students demonstrated their understanding of the afterschool program structure by entering the learning environment in an orderly manner and begin their expected task (snacks, homework assignments, or enrichment activities). Due to low student/teacher ratios in the afterschool program, students and teachers worked in small learning communities where students received more individualized support.

RQ5: How satisfied are students with the structure and activities outlined in the afterschool program?

Student satisfaction of the afterschool program was positive. Students reported they enjoyed homework completion support and additional support on school assignments and projects. This type of instructional assistance could positively impact student grades. Students reported better grades after attending the afterschool program. Students surveyed said they enjoyed the additional learning time (of new concepts or clarity of homework), homework completion and teacher support. Students reported positive feedback on homework completion. Some students in the study reported the following about their experience with their afterschool teachers: “They support me;” “I learn more,” and “They help me.”

RQ6: How does the climate of the afterschool program encourage academic achievement?

Students felt respected and cared for by the staff of the afterschool program. Some students in the study indicated they like the encouragement of teachers to do better: “I learned to never give up.” The afterschool program was fun and engaging. Students appear relaxed in the afterschool program. Program directors knew all of the students by first name.

RQ7: How can student expectations of obtaining more learning time encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?

Students demonstrated an understanding of the use of additional learning time. Students recorded the following on their student questionnaires of the reasons they enjoyed additional learning time (a) improve grades, (b) help on homework from teachers or peers, (c) teacher encouragement, (d) have more study time, (e) after homework is completed to be able to do enrichment activities, and (f) the opportunity to learn more. Additional learning time provided students more practice time of skill development while promoting self-confidence in the student’s ability to master difficult content.

RQ8: How does parental involvement of students in the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?

This study revealed that parental involvement was not significant. Students continued to excel with/or without parental involvement on the CRCT and daily academic studies while attending the afterschool program. Some parents worked or a few others viewed the afterschool as a babysitting service.

RQ9: How effective is the afterschool program?

Afterschool staffs at both sites were caring and engaging. Homework support was viewed as a positive experience by the students. The small learning setting was a successful strategy to provide individualized learning support to students. “It is important to develop programs that enrich the after-school hours and are more than just recreation or efforts to keep young people safe and off the streets” (Witt, 2004, p. 103). Teachers reported gains in student academics, a motivated student with self-confidence to complete assignments. Students reported the following activities as favorites: homework time, socialization with friends, and enrichment activities at the top of the list.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

- The afterschool program and the regular classroom instructional program should be aligned to include similar instructional strategies, common learning objectives, and discipline procedures.
- Teachers in the afterschool program and students’ daily classroom teachers should communicate on a predetermined schedule in order to better support the academic needs of the students.
- Homework assignments should target skills where student data indicate poor performance. Teachers should provide support in reinforcing those skills in small learning communities.
- Parents should become more involved in the afterschool program to support their children extended learning time.

- The afterschool program should include more cultural exposure activities for students.
- The afterschool program should consider ways to extend the fitness program to include more outdoor activities.
- The afterschool program should maintain a structured daily routine to support the needs of the attending students.

Recommendations for Policy/Procedures

- In order to provide continuous improvement to the afterschool Program, annual evaluations should be conducted.
- School boards and local districts should provide additional funding to support the successful implementation of afterschool programs.
- Local school leaders should develop procedures to closely monitor the student achievement of students attending afterschool programs.
- Local school districts should partner with other community agencies to support the expansion of services for afterschool Program.
- Georgia afterschool programs should use Georgia afterschool Quality Standards (GAQS) to ensure that all programs are operating effectively.

Recommendations for Future Research

- A one year longitudinal study should be conducted on the effectiveness of afterschool programs in Georgia.

- Additional research should be conducted to determine the perception of afterschool Program staff on student achievement.
- Conduct an examination of parental involvement and the effects on student achievement of students participating in afterschool Programs.
- Conduct an evaluation of afterschool Programs using the GAQS and academic outcomes.
- Conduct an extended research of students who have attended afterschool program in both elementary and middle schools and the impact on high school graduation.
- Conduct a research study to determine parents' perception of afterschool Program in order to dispel the belief in the myth of babysitting service.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in this study. Results cannot be generalized to all afterschool programs. The number of students participating in both afterschool programs was limited due to the number of students returning the required parental signed permission forms. This study did not gather any parental input. School B had an inadequate sample of four students' CRCT test data. This might have had a negative impact on the research findings. No student attendance information was obtained from either participating school. Student attendance was a research variable. Research did not include input from afterschool program directors. This study was limited to only student achievement as an outcome attributed to the success of the afterschool program.

Summary

This study provides significant findings as it relates to the effectiveness of afterschool programs in improving fifth grade academic performance. From a qualitative approach, the researcher found that student involvement/socialization, student motivation, program structure, climate of the program, and student expectations had a significant relationship with helping to improve fifth grade academic performance. The researcher did not find a significant relationship between student attendance and parental involvement in helping to improve fifth grade academic performance. The researcher utilized the CRCT test data. Analysis of the CRCT test data proved that most students exceeded or met the grade level standard regardless of student attendance in the afterschool program or not in the afterschool program. From findings and conclusions, the researcher has developed implications and recommendations to address to educational leaders and community stakeholders at the local, state and national level in efforts to improve student academic performance of students who attend afterschool programs.

APPENDIX A

Teacher Questionnaire

Please take a moment to respond to each questionnaire items. These items will provide information on factors leading to student achievement in afterschool programs. Your name is NOT required. All responses are confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation☺

Section 1 - Please circle your responses to the following:

My Gender: Male Female

Number of Years Teaching: 1-5 6-10 11-15 16 and up

Section 2 - Please respond to the following questions:

No.	Questions	Responses (use the back as needed)
1	Do you believe parents understand the importance of their children attending the afterschool program? Explain.	
2	Have you witnessed any parental involvement in the afterschool program? Explain.	
3	What academic gains have you seen in your students who attended the afterschool program? Explain.	
4	Have parents expressed to you any emotions about their child attending the afterschool program? Explain.	
5	How can you tell students are more motivated in your class after attending the afterschool program? Explain.	

Appendix A (continued)

No.	Questions	Responses (use the back as needed)
6	To your knowledge, how many of your students actively participate in the afterschool program? Explain.	
7	Do you believe the afterschool program operates safely and effectively? Explain.	
8	To your knowledge, do your students enjoy attending the afterschool program? How do you know?	

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

The Effectiveness of Afterschool Programs in Improving Fifth Grade Academic Performance: A Case Study on Two Select Metro Afterschool Programs Consent Form

Your child is invited to be in a research study to determine the effectiveness of afterschool programs in elementary schools. Your child was selected as a possible participant **because he or she will take the CRCT and is in the fifth grade**. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by a graduate student attending: **Clark Atlanta University**

Background Information

The purpose of this study is: **To determine if students are able to show academic improvement in their classrooms and on the CRCT due to attending an afterschool program.**

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following. Allow the researcher:

- (a) to speak to your child's teachers
- (b) to administer a brief survey to your child
- (c) to view your child's test records

Risks and Benefits of the Study

The study has no risks factors to students. The benefits to participation are to help future afterschool programs by gathering research to determine what makes an effective afterschool program and to determine if students are academically successful due to attendance of afterschool programs.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any report that might be published, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records. The study requires the names of the students' teachers and schools they attend. Parents who agree to partake in the study will have the opportunity to share information with the researcher. The names of students, teachers, and school names will not be used in this research for any reason. All teachers' names will be assigned aliases. Numbers will be assigned to identify all students in the study. During the research, no names will be used and all documentation used to gather evidence will be housed on Clark Atlanta University's campus for three years. After three years, the information will be destroyed.

Appendix B (continued)

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher, or Clark Atlanta University. Research participation is voluntary, and participants have the freedom to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships previously identified. Participants may withdraw from the study, if participants withdraw after 2 weeks, the data collected will remain part of the study.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is: Robyn Medlock, M.Ed.

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact the researcher(s) at: Phone: (770-330-3934) [Dr. Barbara Hill, Committee Chair 404-880-6126]

If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404 880-6979) or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829 at Clark Atlanta University.

* * * * *

Yes, my child can participate

No, my child cannot participate

Parent Signature _____

APPENDIX C

Student Questionnaire

Please take a moment to respond to the following questionnaire items below. These items will provide information on factors leading to student achievement in afterschool programs. Your name is NOT required. All responses are confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation☺

Section 1 - Please circle your responses to the following:

My Gender: Male Female

Section 2 - Please respond to the following questions

No.	Questions	Responses
1	Which activities do you enjoy in the afterschool program?	
2	Are your parents are involved in the afterschool program? If so, how are they involved?	
3	What do you enjoy most about the way of the afterschool program arranges your activities?	
4	Have your grades improved since the beginning of the afterschool program? If so, why do you think you are doing better?	
5	Explain what you get out of attending the afterschool program?	
6	What 3 things motivate you to finish your homework or projects at the afterschool program?	
7	Do you like the staff, activities and homework support the afterschool program offers?	

APPENDIX D

Team Teacher Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to assist in this research project. The interview will contain only seven questions, your time is precious. Thanks again for providing feedback on the effectiveness of afterschool programs in helping to improve student achievement.

1. Did you know the students were involved in the afterschool program? How did you know?
2. Have you seen any improvements in the students' attendance, grades, and test scores? What kind of improvements?
3. Do students talk about the program structure (staff, activities, etc.) of the afterschool program? Please explain.
4. Do students seem motivated in class while working on assignments and/or projects? Do you believe the motivation may come from attending the afterschool program? Please explain.
5. Do you think the socialization/student involvement in afterschool program help students socially, emotionally and academically? Why or why not?
6. How important do you think parent involvement is in relation to student attendance in the afterschool program?
7. Of the students you know in the afterschool program, how do you know they welcome the extended time to complete assignments

APPENDIX E

Observation Tool

(1) Climate of the Program			
a. Is the environment clean?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Is the staff welcoming?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Is the teacher intentionally caring towards students?	Y	N	Comments:
(2) Student Motivation			
a. Are students motivated to complete tasks?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are students motivated because of any rewards?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Are there any other motivating factors?	Y	N	Comments:
(3) Student Involvement/Socialization			
a. Are students engaged in the lesson/activity?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are students working together?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Are students happy during the majority of activities?	Y	N	Comments:
(4) Student Expectations			
a. Are students expecting to do well?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are students expecting to be treated fairly by adults?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Are there other expectations that can be viewed?	Y	N	Comments:
(5) Program Structure			
a. Does the program have a particular structure?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are students aware of the structure?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Are students organized into age/grade level groups?	Y	N	Comments:
(6) Parental Involvement			
a. Is there evidence of parental involvement in the program?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are parents welcome in the program?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Do parents appear to be interested about their children in the program?	Y	N	Comments:
(7) Student Attendance			
a. Is it important for the student to consistently attend the program?	Y	N	Comments:
b. Are students concerned or sad when they need to miss a session?	Y	N	Comments:
c. Are students enthusiastic about attending the program?	Y	N	Comments:

APPENDIX F

Letter to Principals

XXXXXX

Dear _____:

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Robyn Medlock. Currently, I am a school counselor at Luella High School. I am also a Doctoral Student at Clark Atlanta University. I am nearing the end of my degree by the completion of my dissertation. My dissertation is titled: *The Effectiveness of Afterschool Programs in Improving Fifth Grade Academic Performance: A Case Study on Two Select Metro Atlanta Afterschool Programs*.

I would like to work in your school to conduct my study pending Clark Atlanta IRB approval and XXXX County Schools' approval. I would like to work with thirty (30) fifth graders and their teachers. I am aware that I have to obtain parental consent before working with the students. All students and teachers in the study will be given aliases to protect confidentiality and anonymity. I will need to review students' CRCT data to help determine academic achievement. Additionally, I will need to observe the students who are involved in the afterschool program. I will also need to gather information from the teachers to help make my study cohesive.

I am interested in learning if afterschool programs have any effects on improving academic achievement. I look forward to speaking to you further about my project. My goal is not to be intrusive, but to gather evidence on the many academic benefits of students attending afterschool programs.

Thank you for your consideration to work in your school.

Robyn Medlock
Counselor, LHS
Doctoral Student, Clark Atlanta University

*sent via email

APPENDIX G

Variables and the Instruments Used to Provide Data for the Study

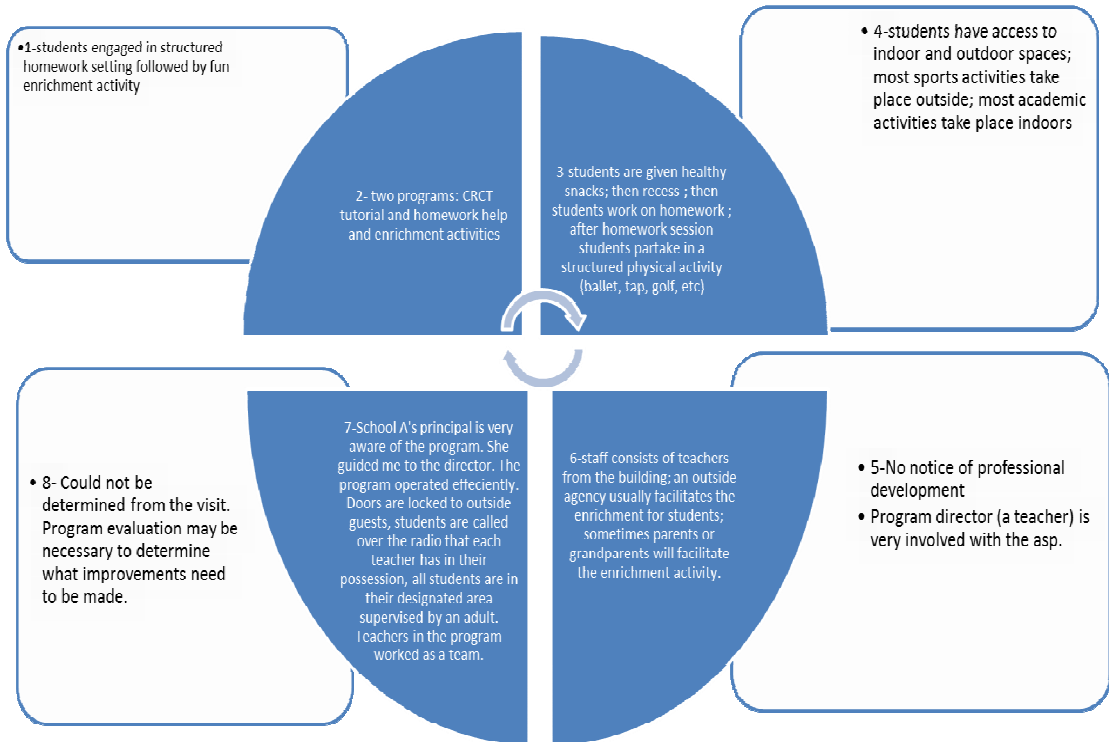
Table H-1

Alignment of the Research Questions and Questions from the Instruments Used in this Study

Research Questions		TQN =	SQN =	TIN =	OBN =	Variables
		8	24	8	45	
RQ1	What is the level of attendance of students in the afterschool program?	3		2		Student Attendance
RQ2	What is the extent of student involvement/socialization in the afterschool program?			5	3	Student Involvement/Socialization
RQ3	Does an afterschool program enhance student motivation in order to promote academic achievement?			4	2	Student Motivation
RQ4	How well is the afterschool program structured and organized to enhance academic achievement?	7	3,4	2		Program Structure
RQ5	How satisfied are students with the structure and activities outlined in the afterschool program?		1,3,4,5			Satisfaction/Program Structure
RQ6	How does the climate of the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?		4,7			Climate of the Program
RQ7	How can student expectations of obtaining more learning time encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?		4,5		4	Student Expectations
RQ8	How does parental involvement of students in the afterschool program encourage academic achievement at the afterschool program?	2,3	2,4			Parental Involvement
RQ9	How effective is the afterschool program?	3,5	4,5	2,4,5		Program Effectiveness

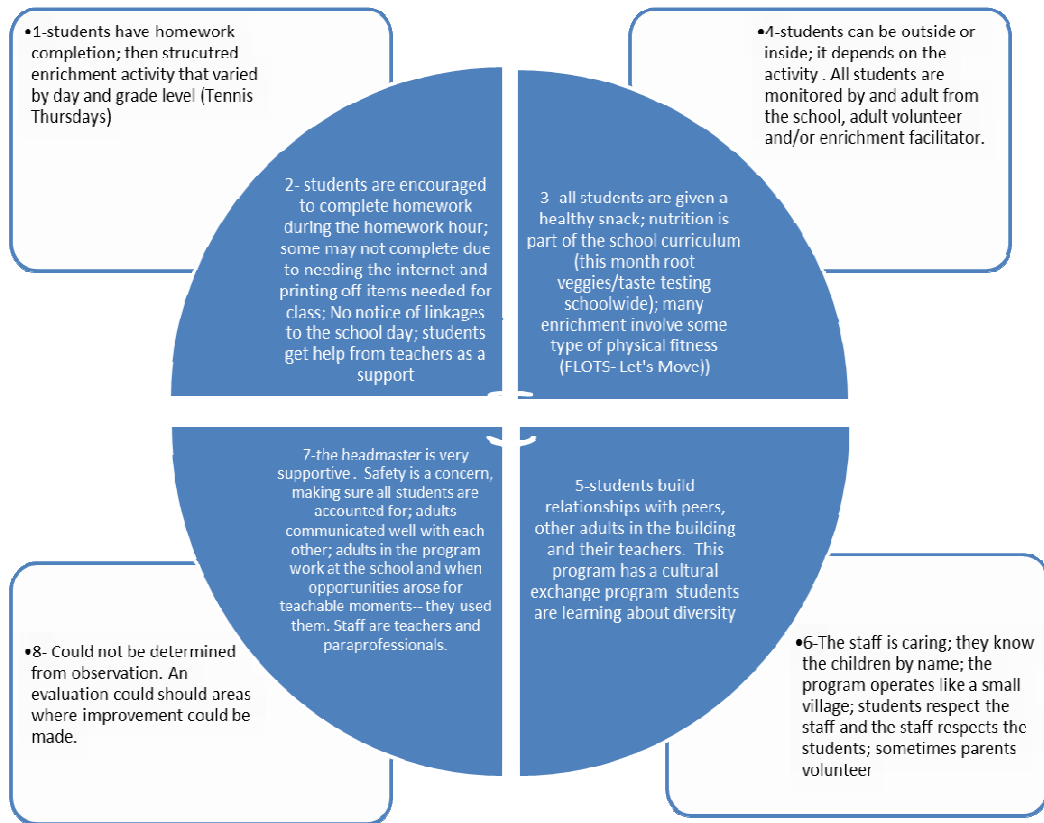
APPENDIX H

School A- Alignment to GAQS



APPENDIX I

School B - Alignment to GAQS



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