

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: No Child Left Behind's Supplemental Educational Services: A Case Study of Participant Experiences in an Urban Afterschool Program in the District of Columbia

Nichole Helene Stewart, Doctor of Philosophy,
2007

Dissertation directed by: Professor Marvin Lynn
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Maryland at College Park

Professor Carol S. Parham
Department of Education Policy and Leadership
University of Maryland at College Park

The enactment of No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) Supplemental Educational Services (SES) provision shifted new attention to the ability of afterschool programs to increase students' achievement levels and help close the pervasive achievement gap between Students of Color and their white counterparts. Though studies of supplemental education programs in general have shown their potential to successfully augment traditional classroom instruction, reports thus far on indicate that states, districts, providers, and families have faced numerous challenges in the execution of the SES model. The scant research that exists on SES primarily has focused on national, state, and district-level investigations of implementation. With the upcoming reauthorization of NCLB, information is needed on the ground-level implementation of SES, and the lived experiences of participants within SES Provider organizations, particularly those in urban areas that face significant social and economic challenges. This purpose of this study was to include the voices of SES program participants in the dialogue surrounding the

provision's redesign and to understand their individual perceptions of the opportunities and challenges of involvement within one SES Provider program in the District of Columbia. Participant stories revealed that, despite some challenges, the program of study was beneficial and fostered the academic, social, and personal development of student participants, including increases in grades, test scores, and attendance, as well as in self-esteem and confidence. Tutors and staff reported experiencing personal growth and development. Participant narratives also uncovered a number of challenges that exist in the implementation of SES policy within the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS), including issues with timing, communication, and district expectations. Participant experiences within the DCPS and subsequent policy recommendations may help to inform SES policy moving forward to aid in the development of policy that truly works to the benefit of the individuals it was intended to serve.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND'S SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:
A CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES IN AN URBAN
AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

By

Nichole Helene Stewart

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland at College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2007

Advisory Committee:

Professor Marvin Lynn, Co-Chair
Professor Carol S. Parham, Co-Chair
Professor Tara M. Brown
Professor Lory Janelle Dance
Professor Jennifer K. Rice

© **Copyright**
Nichole Helene Stewart

2007

Dedication

To Mom for being my sounding board, to Kenny for being my shoulder, to Edna for being a shelter from the beginning, and to everyone else who offered their love, encouragement, and support over the past four years.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my committee at the University of Maryland at College Park for their individual and collective contributions to helping me reach this place in my academic career and for their support, expertise, and guidance: Professor Marvin Lynn, who has provided direction and tutelage through this research process; Professor Carol S. Parham, who has proved a valued supervisor, mentor, and chair throughout my academic experience; Professor Jennifer K. Rice, who has been a wonderful Academic Advisor for the past four years; Professor Lory J. Dance, who inspires through both her teaching and individual work with youth; and Professor Tara M. Brown, who has guided me through the more technical aspects of this process. I am grateful to you all!

I would also like to thank the EDPL staff, Jeanie Yerby, Clarissa Coughlin, Stephanie Goodwin, and Lattisha Hall, for their continued support and aid over the past four years. None of us could do this without you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Persistent Inequality: Urban Schooling by the Numbers.....	4
D.C. Public Schools.....	6
The Current Face of School Reform: The No Child Left Behind Act.....	6
Rationale for Study.....	8
Research Questions.....	9
Chapter 2: Review of Literature.....	11
Critical Race Theory.....	11
Deficit Perspectives: Blaming the Victim.....	17
Leaving No Child Behind?	23
A Closer Look at NCLB.....	25
Supplemental Educational Services.....	29
Early Analysis of SES Programs.....	32
The Promise and Potential of Supplemental Education Programs.....	36
Afterschool Programs: Past and Present.....	37
Potential Academic, Cultural, and Social Benefits of ASP's.....	41
Quality Programs.....	45
Potential Pitfalls of Practice: The Challenges of Filling the Void.....	52
Separate Worlds: A Snapshot of Urban Schools in America.....	54
A History of Inequality.....	56
The Current Crisis.....	58
A District in Crisis	59
D.C. Public Schools.....	61
What It All Means.....	65
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	68
Statement of Research Questions.....	68
A Case for Case Study.....	69
Through a Critical Lens.....	71

Program Site Selection.....	71
Informational Interviews.....	72
The TAC Program.....	75
Sample Selection.....	81
Methods.....	87
Data Collection.....	87
Data Analysis.....	91
Benefits and Limitations.....	94
Chapter 4: Findings – The TAC Program.....	96
Program Context.....	98
An Evening at Ward 4.....	98
Emerging Themes.....	109
TAC Staff and Tutors.....	119
Staff.....	120
Tutors.....	143
In Their Own Words: Student Experiences in the TAC Program.....	168
Summary of Participant Experiences.....	227
Chapter 5: Perception vs. Participation.....	232
Effect of Perception and Values on Participation.....	232
Turning Points: A Change in Perspective.....	239
Chapter 6: Defining Quality Programming: Participant Experience vs. Literature.....	249
Chapter 7: Exploring SES in DCPS.....	276
Chapter 8: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions	291
Discussion	292
Implications for Afterschool Program Policy and Practice.....	308
Implications for SES Policy.....	315
Opportunities for Future Research.....	319
Conclusions.....	320
Glossary	321
Appendices.....	323
Bibliography.....	351

List of Tables

Table 1: Student Grade Levels.....	81
Table 2: Student Ages.....	81
Table 3: Student Home Schools.....	82
Table 4: Student Grades.....	267

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For decades, efforts to improve the academic experiences and outcomes for economically disadvantaged and historically *minoritized* students have proven a significant challenge for school leaders and policymakers (Valencia, 1999, Duncan-Andrade, 2005). In the dissertation, minoritized peoples are economically and socially isolated and made to feel as outsiders because of racial and/or ethnic characteristics that differ from that of mainstream society. See Chanter, 2005 and Werbner, 2002. Efforts to alleviate persistent inequities have resulted in education reforms that have had minimal effects on the ever-present gap in grades, test scores, and overall academic achievement between students of color and their white counterparts (Bell, 2004; Oakes, 1985, Garcia et al., 2004). Despite the role social systems play in maintaining this educational status quo, most reform initiatives have focused primarily on “fixing” the disadvantaged student so that he or she can blend more effectively into the culture of public schools (Garcia et al., 2004). This deficit perspective often has resulted in school policy that has the potential to do more harm to disadvantaged students than good (Valencia, 1999).

The picture of educational inequity is even more troubling when one examines the educational disparities between students in urban schools and those in wealthier suburban areas. Schools in urban areas commonly face problems of teacher shortages, scarce resources, and dilapidated facilities, and their student populations consistently battle with low academic performance and despondency about the schooling experience (Katz, 2000; Argon, 1998; Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Norman et al., 2001).

In response to the inability of traditional schooling to adequately address the unique needs of urban youth, parents, educators, and community leaders often have

looked beyond the classroom for alternative methods of improving student performance. Supplemental education programs have long attempted to serve as a bridge between the disparate worlds within which urban youth must operate (Halpern, 2002). The term “supplemental education” is used interchangeably with the terms “after school” and “out-of-school time” programs. Many of these programs work to provide social, cultural, and academic enrichment activities while teaching students to navigate the world inside the classroom (Posner and Vandell, 1994, 1999).

With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its Supplemental Educational Services (SES) provision, policymakers are counting on the ability of supplemental education programs to increase the achievement levels of students in poor-performing schools (No Child Left Behind, 2002; Sunderman and Kim, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). Despite this overwhelming confidence, as yet there is little evidence that NCLB’s SES policy model will be effective in achieving their primary goals (Sunderman and Kim, 2004). Though research indicates a potential benefits associated with participation in supplemental education programs in general, NCLB’s SES provision is the first model of its kind, and as yet, there is sparse research to support its implementation (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 10).

As districts across the country struggle to implement SES requirements, it becomes increasingly important to examine how urban youth are served by SES program providers. Are these programs working to alleviate academic and social inequities? Are they providing quality learning environments for urban students? In addition, it is important to examine how program providers are being served by the SES system in its

current incarnation. Ensuring that SES attracts and retains quality providers is essential in ensuring that students receive the services they need. Are academically-sound, community-based programs finding enough incentive and benefit to participate in SES? Are they well-served by the SES system in its current form? Is SES's current structure serving the best interest of those involved?

In the next few chapters I will show that despite NCLB's potential for good, its stated goals are not always congruent with the reality of practice on the state and school level. It then becomes important to determine whether the operation of NCLB's SES provision is in line with the policy's stated aims. The sparse research on NCLB's SES model speaks to a tremendous need for research that explores the implementation of SES on the ground level, to determine whether the intended goals of the policy are being met.

This study proposes to address this dearth of information by exploring the experiences of participants within a state-approved SES program in the District of Columbia. Participants include students as well as tutors and staff of the SES Provider program. By understanding their individual and program-wide experiences, we can develop a clearer picture of SES in practice.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) will significantly inform this study by providing a lens through which to challenge mainstream ideologies about education policy by stressing the importance of including the experiential knowledge of program participants in the dialogue about SES policy and practice (Taylor, 1998; Yosso, 2005; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). CRT will also aid in the examination of the SES program environment and the interplay of race and power within the organizational setting. Lastly, CRT helps to question whose ways of knowing count within the learning environment

and challenges the acceptance of white values and mores as the norm (Taylor, 1998). It is my hope that this lens will add to the general understanding of the implementation of SES policy on the programmatic level and of the ability of such programs to serve youth in urban areas.

Persistent Inequality: Urban Schooling by the Numbers

Urban areas commonly face a number of economic and social challenges. Impoverished urban areas suffer from both extreme racial/ethnic segregation and deep-seeded isolation from the economic, cultural, and ecological wealth and prosperity of the wider metropolitan area (Dance, 2002, p.26; Zhou, 2003; Snipes, 2007). This widespread poverty and isolation often is reflected in local schools and results in institutions that are poorly financed, understaffed, and unable to provide students with the quality education offered in schools in more affluent areas (Franklin, 2002; Argon, 1998; Norman, 2001). As Cave et al (2002) state, “because schools are administered locally and most education funds are raised through local taxation, areas with strong tax bases and predominantly well-off families have measurably better outcomes than do hard-pressed urban areas” (9).

According to a study by The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), over 76 % of the students currently enrolled in urban schools are African-American or Latino (Casserly, 2004; Snipes et al., 2007). African-American and Latino students, consequently, are more likely than their white counterparts to be concentrated in high-poverty schools (Condition of Education, 2004; Snipes et al., 2007). Research from the CGCS confirms this pattern, indicating that almost 83 % of urban schools systems have poverty rates above that of their statewide averages, and over 60 % of urban students qualify for free or reduced lunch (Casserly, 2004; Snipes et al., 2007). The economic

downturn of urban neighborhoods has translated to an overwhelmingly underserved student population in most urban schools.

As a rule, urban schools receive significantly less funding than their suburban counterparts, and rarely have sufficient resources to provide adequate instruction to their students (Winter, 2004; Franklin, 2002). In addition to a lack of resources, urban students must endure a disproportionate number of inexperienced school staff, many of whom have low expectations of their charges and deliver instruction that consists of “cognitively low-level, unchallenging, rote material” (Anyon, 1997, p. 7; Valencia, 1999; Oakes, 1985). Urban schools also face the challenge of shortages in teaching staff, and the teachers that are available often lack confidence in their ability to instruct urban students effectively (Anyon, 1997; Franklin, 2002).

As a number of studies indicate, dropout rates for urban schools have risen to new heights; truancy is a widespread phenomenon; teachers are routinely uninspired; students struggle just to acquire basic literacy skills; and the physical condition of many school buildings is often appalling (Anyon, 1997; Agron, 1998; Franklin, 2002; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Dejong, 2005; Snipes et al, 2007). One might wonder how urban students are expected to compete academically in such challenging environments.

It is hardly surprising then, that many students who graduate from these institutions are ill-prepared for prosperous lives after high school. Whether they are pursuing post-secondary education or moving directly into the work force, graduates from poor urban schools often lack the basic academic skills and social networks essential to find academic and professional success in today’s standards (Bolick, 2003).

Many find themselves trapped in the continuous cycle experienced by their parents, and are unable to break through to better options for their families.

D.C. Public Schools

The District of Columbia's Public Schools (DCPS) is an urban system known to be a district in crisis. Despite being the nation's political hub and one of the fastest growing regions, D.C., like most urban areas, is a city in which extreme wealth and prosperity exist alongside alarming poverty and need. The economic and social conditions of the city are mirrored within the District's school system, as an overwhelming majority of students attend failing schools in dilapidated buildings (Restoring Excellence, 2004; Davis, 2005; Cave. 2002).

These disparate conditions between the wealthy and poor, whites and individuals of color are common in urban areas, and D.C. is no exception (Franklin, 2002; Argon, 1998; Norman, 2001). Despite its proximity to some of the nation's higher performing school districts in Fairfax County, Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland, DCPS struggles to meet basic academic benchmarks ((Davis, 2005). D.C. is also the only school district in the nation that serves as both the Local Education Agency (LEA) and State Education Agency (SEA). DC also serves as the location where the policy was initially incepted, so I thought it important to see how the provision was being implemented in the nation's capital. As such, D.C. serves as quite an intriguing location to conduct a study of the experiences of urban students in SES programs.

The Current Face of School Reform: The No Child Left Behind Act

Since the enactment of NCLB, federal policymakers have promoted the law as the consummate solution for ultimately eliminating the achievement gap ("Serving Those

Most in Need or Not,” 2003). The law proposes to accomplish this goal through increased accountability and standardization, greater flexibility for states and districts, the use of scientifically proven instructional methods, and increased choice for parents and families. In theory, NCLB promises to promote radical change in the landscape of education to better serve all children. In practice, however, the law has met with significant controversy and opposition as many districts and schools struggle to implement NCLB requirements.

Early studies have indicated that poor, urban schools are struggling most with NCLB mandates (Fusarelli, 2004; Katz, 2004; Kafer, 2004; Howard, 2003; Sunderman et al., 2005). The heavy reliance upon standardized tests and sanctions has placed urban schools already struggling to find adequate resources on the list of schools that are failing and “need improvement” (McNeil, 2000). As a result of their inability to meet state imposed benchmarks, urban schools often face federal sanctions that often translate into a loss of funding and resources (Sunderman et al., 2005). Though some schools have seen increases in student performance since NCLB’s inception, in the following sections, I will explore how this policy handicaps many urban schools, exacerbates existing inequities, and results in a number of children being “left behind” in failing schools.

To counter the negative effects of poor-performing schools, NCLB offers to students and families the options of School Transfer and SES. The School Transfer option offers students in habitually failing institutions the choice of relocating to a higher performing school. SES, alternatively, lets students remain in their home school with additional instruction outside of the regular school day. Specifically, NCLB defines SES

as “tutoring and research-based academic enrichment programs that supplement – but do not replace – instruction provided during the school day” (Cohen, 2003, 36).

Though the option of supplemental education seems to be a good way to improve the academic performance of urban youth, data on the effectiveness of the NCLB’s SES model is limited. While supplemental education, in the form of before-school, afterschool and summer programs, has long been considered a useful tool for enhancing the social, emotional and academic lives of urban youth, evidence that this particular model operates in the best interest of the children it is meant to serve is sparse. As policymakers continue to look to SES programs to supplement classroom instruction and boost academic achievement among historically underserved students, empirical evidence on the personal and educational experiences of participants within these programs is needed to determine whether these programs are indeed working to the benefit of their students.

Rationale for Study

This study proposes to conduct such an investigation to add to the current knowledge base on NCLB’s SES provision. At present, research reveals few studies that investigate the implementation of NCLB’s SES, and most of these studies examine the SES requirements on a macro level and focus on national, state, and district implementation efforts. While macro-level work provides a systemic examination of SES policy implementation, we also need more in-depth, micro-level explorations into the experiences of participants within a state-selected SES Provider program. A 2003 study by Zovsky is one of few that present such an in-depth assessment of an individual SES program and its impact on low-income urban students. Zovsky’s (2003) is a quantitative

study that focuses primarily on the examination of student grades subsequent to the SES intervention. The lack of qualitative examination into the experiences of students and service providers within SES programs speaks to a significant void in research data.

It is my hope that this study will begin to add to existing data by providing a detailed illustration of the implementation of SES policy by an afterschool provider in the District of Columbia. An in-depth investigation of student, tutor, and staff perceptions of their experiences in the program ideally will provide a unique picture of SES policy in practice. According to the literature on afterschool/supplemental education programs, quality programs have specific components that consistently work to the benefit historically underserved children, including: a) adequate facilities and resources, b) supportive relationships with well-trained staff, c) customized and measurable goals for each student, d) integration of academics and enrichment, e) culturally and socially relevant programming, and f) a safe, nurturing environment where students feel accepted; have opportunities to explore ideas and identities; and find avenues for empowerment, autonomy, responsibility, and self-expression (Halpern, 1999, Fletcher & Padover, 2003, Beck, 1999, Cohen, 2003, Piha & Miller, 2003, Cosden et al., 2004, Fusco, 2001). Keeping these indicators in mind, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do participants (students, staff, and tutors) describe, understand and explain their experiences within the program?
- 2) What is the relationship between (student, staff, and tutor) participation in the program and individual values and beliefs?
- 3) In what ways do participants (students, staff, and tutors) experiences and perceptions align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs?

Answering these questions hopefully will help us to understand how students, tutors, and staff experience and conceptualize their participation in a state-selected SES provider program, whether they perceive their participation to be beneficial, and whether their experiences indicate that the program helps students to meet the intended goals of SES.

In addition to shedding light on the experiences of urban students within a state-approved SES provider program, this study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of both the challenges and opportunities that SES providers face in offering quality programming to urban students within the constructs of the current SES provision. An increased understanding can help to inform current conversations about SES, particularly with the upcoming reauthorization of NCLB in 2008. It is important that policymakers come to the table informed about which practices help and which hinder the process of enhancing the academic experiences of children in urban areas. Ideally, that this exploration will add to current data to provide insight into the areas of the provision that are working well for students, providers, districts, and states, as well as any aspects that are still in need of improvement.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Before I begin this investigation, I will position my topic within the broader knowledge base in the field of education policy studies. It is important to understand both the research that has already been contributed to the field and the gaps in information that have yet to be filled. In the following sections, I will explore the current literature on Critical Race Theory, the No Child Left Behind Act and its SES provision, supplemental education programs, and urban education. I will conclude the chapter with an examination of the literature on the District of Columbia and its public school system.

Critical Race Theory

Throughout this study, my exploration of participant experiences with SES in DCPS will be informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT stresses the importance of giving value and credence to the voices and experiences of oppressed people, and encourages the opposition of mainstream ideologies about education policy by stressing the importance of these lived experiences. CRT challenges the idea that the experiences of whites are the normative standard, and bases its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color (Taylor, 1998). CRT will also provide a lens through which to view the programmatic environment of the SES Provider and examine the interplay of race, culture, and power within the relational and programmatic aspects of the organizational setting. Lastly, CRT will aid in efforts to question whose knowledge really counts within the learning environment and to examine the importance placed upon student values and mores (cultural capital) in the various components of the program (Yosso, 2002).

CRT emerged in the late 1970's, in response to a decline in the continued effectiveness of the Civil Rights Movement. The movement had lost momentum and seemed to be losing much of the ground it had gained (Taylor, 1998; Matsuda et al., 1993; Parker and Lynn, 2002). Several legal scholars involved in the movement saw existing civil rights laws and initiatives as ineffective and questioned the alleged neutrality of the legal system and its processes (Lynn and Parker, 2005). They recognized that the law operated primarily to benefit the wealthy elite and to reinforce systems that oppressed marginalized people.² They saw the need for new conceptions of race and racism that diverged from dominant racial discourse (Lynn and Parker, 2005, Matsuda et al., 1993, 3).

These legal scholars, comprised of students and professors, formed a community to discuss, write about, and engage in political efforts to subvert institutional structures of oppression that had worked for decades to perpetuate racist systems under the guise of social justice efforts (Matsuda et al., 1993). They felt stifled by the separation of Critical Theory from discussions of race and racism and sought to establish new discourse that gave voice to the oppression experienced by communities of color (Crenshaw, 2002, Yosso, 2005).

Working cooperatively, the group “identified majoritarian self-interest as the critical factor in the ebb and flow of civil rights doctrine and demonstrated how areas of law, ostensibly designed to advance the cause of racial equality often benefit powerful whites more than those who are racially oppressed” (Matsuda et al., 1993, 5). They developed new understandings of the pervasiveness of racism and the depths to which it

² Marginalized peoples by definition are systemically consigned to an inferior or powerless status within a society or group. See Lynn and Parker, 2005, Matsuda et al., 1993, or Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995.

was embedded in social, psychological, cultural, legal, and political aspects of American society. Racism was not an isolated issue concerning a few prejudiced individuals, as many had come to believe, and critical race theorists sought to reveal the extent to which racism served as a central component of the larger societal structure (Parker and Lynn, 2002; Matsuda et al., 1993).

Throughout its evolution over the past several decades, six central themes have remained steadfast components of the CRT paradigm. These themes assert that Critical Race Theorists: 1) refute commonly held beliefs by much of white America, to reveal that acts of racism are not isolated, anomalous incidents, but are a normal aspect of life in America, 2) challenge dominant conceptions of colorblindness, meritocracy and neutrality within the social, legal, and political sectors of society, 3) draw from the fields of law, sociology, history, women's studies, etc. to better understand the effects of racism on marginalized communities, 4) acknowledge the intersection of race with other forms of oppression, 5) stress the importance of experiential knowledge in challenging dominant beliefs about the role of race and racism in society, 6) espouse a commitment to social justice efforts (Taylor, 1998; Yosso, 2005; Solorzano and Yosso, 2002; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; DeCuir and Dixson, 2004).

Taylor (1998) describes CRT as a form of “oppositional scholarship” that challenges the common acceptance of white values and mores (cultural capital) as the norm, and instead “grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color” (122). CRT is subjective, normative, and political in nature, as it is in large part shaped by individual and historic experiences of personal “communities of origin” (Matsuda et al., 1993, 3). It is multidisciplinary and utilizes “personal histories,

parables, chronicles, dreams, stories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories to convey its message” (Matsuda et al., 1993, 5). Like Critical Theory, CRT gives value and credence to the voices of the oppressed. The individual stories of those who have experienced structural racism serve as effective tools in uprooting commonly held beliefs and perceptions of both the benign role of race in America and the newly popular notions of a utopian colorblind society (Taylor, 2003).

By giving voice and value to individual and collective experience, critical race theorists evoke empowerment and inspire action. The objective is to encourage marginalized members of racially oppressed groups to perceive their situations, not as an unchangeable result of the status quo, but as a product of a corrupt system against which they can take action (Freire, 1993). As Matsuda et al. (1993) explain, CRT “involves both action and reflection, is informed by active struggle and in turn informs that struggle” (3). It shares with the paradigm of Critical Theory the goals of linking current oppressive practices with the historical institutions of subjugation. By making these connections visible, critical race theorists effectively shed the spotlight on hegemonic structures and provide opportunities for the transformation of such systems.

Despite ever-growing support for CRT among social scholars, Parker and Stovall (2004) note that a frequent critique of CRT is that it “reinforces a racialized politics of identity and representation while ignoring the negative influences of class and capitalism on marginalized communities” (168).³ This is a common argument of colorblind proponents who fail to see that race is intricately linked to both of these issues.

³ Racialization is the ways in which meanings of European/non-European social existences are marked and assigned to different groups and the process through which individuals or groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics and pushed into segregated living conditions. See Hess, 2007; and Kobayashi and Peake, 2007; Goldberg, 2002.

Discussions of race and racism are commonly correlated with economic and classist inequities. The pressing concerns of race and racism rarely enter into the equation in recent literature. As Parker and Stovall (2004) admit, there is a need for critical theoretical examinations of the endemic nature of race and racism in American society, as these discussions have been largely absent from critical pedagogy to this point.

Regardless of this opposition, CRT is gaining recognition and credence in many circles. Over the past several decades, it has expanded its primary focus on the Black-White binary to include the experiences of women, Latino/as, and Native and Asian Americans (Yosso, 2005). While CRT began as a form of legal scholarship, this growing movement has expanded into many other disciplines, including, sociology, women's studies, and education (Taylor, 1998). In the following section, I will examine educational institutions through a critical race lens, exploring how current schooling practices and policy initiatives serve to perpetuate systems of oppression and domination. I will begin with a general consideration of race in education, and will follow by turning a critical eye to contemporary education policy, specifically focusing on the No Child Left Behind Act and the effects of its various components on the educational experiences of students from historically underserved communities.

Critical Race Theory in Education

“The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other people.”

Carter G. Woodson – The Miseducation of the Negro, xiii

“We conclude unanimously that in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.” – Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Brown v. Board Decision

As I mentioned earlier, CRT emerged in the 1970’s in response to the waning productivity of social justice efforts, and evidence that the alleged fruits of the Civil Rights Movement were not eradicating inequality and racism. Within the nation’s public schools, this failure had become particularly apparent. For over 50 years the nation has celebrated the landmark success of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* verdict, which purposed to strike down federally and state supported school segregation. This legal victory was meant to incrementally pave the way toward new advances for marginalized peoples. Over the past several decades, however, we have seen a reversal of much of the progress made in America’s public schools.

Derrick Bell (2005), an active participant in the original *Brown* case, now admits to the fallacy in believing that forcibly desegregating schools would effectively eliminate racial inequality. Like most of his critical race counterparts, Bell (2005) now recognizes how deeply embedded racism is within social and educational structures and the lengths to which those in power will go to protect their interests. He contends that instead of integration, the focus of our efforts should have been, and should now be, improving the overall quality of education for all children rather than, as Bell (2005) quotes, “treating them as pigmented pawns to be shuffled about and counted solely to achieve an abstraction called ‘racial mix’”, because even within schools that were desegregated,

practices of tracking and placement policies have ensured that systems of segregation still exist within classroom walls (116; Oakes, 1985).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) note that despite pervasive inequities in schools, race is still under-theorized in the field of education. Parker and Lynn (2002) concur and state that historically, educational research has failed to address the concerns of marginalized communities. Instead, research has downplayed the role of race by relying upon deficit theories to explain inequities in educational outcomes (Parker and Lynn, 2002, 13). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) call for the use of a critical race paradigm to examine the often-disregarded issues of race and inequality and to refute deficit perspectives within educational institutions.

Deficit Perspectives: Blaming the Victim

Blaming oppressed individuals for social ills is a common practice of those who subscribe to deficit thinking. Deficit thinking refers to the process of assigning culpability to an individual or group for a particular issue or problem, while ignoring the social structures that perpetuate the oppression of “the victim” and create breeding grounds for social, economic and educational inequality (Valencia, 1999). Deficit thinking usually translates into action through the following steps: 1) a social problem is identified, 2) research determines how the advantaged and disadvantaged differ, 3) these differences are defined as the source of the problem, and 4) governmental action is implemented to correct the purported differences/deficiencies in the disadvantaged (Valencia, 1999, 3)

In the educational arena, deficit thinking is exemplified by the practice of holding students and families solely responsible for the academic challenges they experience. Because academic failure historically has been attributed to deficiencies in the child and

his or her home environment, many educational reform efforts often failed to look for external contributors to low academic achievement. Instead, they focused on addressing the alleged shortcomings in the child and his or her community (Valencia, 1999; Gillborn, 2005).

These deficit approaches to education reform “become a filter that blocks educators’ ability to examine their assumptions and look beyond traditional solutions for real and meaningful change” (Garcia et al., 2004, p.151). As a result, minoritized students fall victim to discriminatory education policies that purport to serve all children equally, but disregard the influence of racialized social systems on academic performance. These policies serve only to perpetuate the reliance upon deficit theories to explain the consistent inability of marginalized students to meet the goals and standards mandated by the state (Garcia, 2004).

Deficit Thinking in the Educational Arena

From its inception, the institution of schooling has played a distinct role in the establishment and maintenance of the racial status quo. Educational organizations exist as microcosms that reflect the social structures, attitudes and ideals of society at large (Goldberg, 2002; Mohanty, 2003). As the role of the nation state has morphed and transformed in response to ongoing economic, social and political changes, schools have reflected these changes as they continuously redefine their role within the national (and global) racial order (Goldberg, 2002; Mohanty, 2003).

As demographic shifts and political realities prompt the “redefinition” of outward attitudes toward race within larger nation states, schools also adjust to maintain alignment with the larger social and political structures –to ensure that the messages and ideals

reproduced within the educational environment mirror that of larger systems (Goldberg, 2002; Mohanty, 2003). These continual shifts have exhibited themselves in the various rationales that educational leaders have utilized to justify the continuously disparate treatment of black students within our nation's schools (Goldberg, 2002).

Historically, the curriculum and culture of the public school classroom has overwhelmingly reflected the norms and values of the white middle class, with little regard for those who do not fall into that racial/economic category (Eddine and Sanchez, 2006; Finkelstein, 1984). From the blatant omission of any substantial history of African peoples in textbooks and curricula, to the employment of cultural deficit models to justify the tracking and labeling of students of color into lower curricular tracks, educational institutions work to 1) impose the myth of European dominance, 2) control and limit the access of minoritized students to resources and knowledge, and 3) effectively reproduce current social, economic and political structures (Goldberg, 2002; Finkelstein, 1984).

By denying the rich history of African, Native, and Latino American peoples and focusing primarily on European conquests, schools minimize the place of non-white peoples in the development of modern society and promote what Goldberg (2002) terms the "homogeneous ideal" of the nation state (Finkelstein, 1984). This ideal is also reinforced through the physical segregation of students of color by district, school, classroom, and curricular track, which reinforces existing myths of the intellectual superiority of whites and the necessity of their distancing themselves from the menacing and inferior "other" (Goldberg, 2002; Oakes, 1985). This practice of othering reinforces deficit thought regarding minoritized children, and perpetuates the achievement gap between affluent whites and historically marginalized students (Valencia, 1999).

Deficit Thinking in Education Policy

Despite significant efforts by school and community leaders, decades of attempts at school reform have failed to result in a significant reduction of the achievement gap between minoritized students and their white counterparts (Bell, 2004; Oakes, 1985; Garcia et al., 2004; Valencia, 1999). School leaders, teachers, and academics have offered numerous explanations for this perpetual disparity in achievement levels. While some recognize the role that dominant social structures play in the perpetuation of the achievement gap, a common stance tends to be a deficit perspective, holding students and families primarily at fault for academic difficulties (Gillborn, 2005, Garcia et al., 2004).

Of all the theories utilized to explain the persistent academic difficulties of marginalized students, deficit theory has been around the longest (Valencia, 1999). Scientific “evidence” over the years allegedly has “revealed” genetic, cultural, and social deficiencies within economically disadvantaged and minoritized groups that have prompted the assignment of blame for low achievement largely to students and their families (Valencia, 1999; Noguera and Akom, 2000). Others point to social structures of racism as the cause for this academic disparity (Pearl, 1999; Manchaca, 1999, Foley, 1999). The lack of consensus on the source of persistent inequities within educational institutions has lead to a series of unsuccessful and often misplaced ideas about viable policy solutions to the achievement gap (Garcia et al., 2004). Kozol (1991) contends that most policies aimed at urban educational reform have achieved no more than:

“...moving around the same old furniture within the house of poverty...the perceived objective [being] a more ‘efficient’ ghetto school or one with greater ‘input’ from the ghetto parents or more ‘choices’ for the ghetto children. The fact of ghetto education as a permanent American reality appeared to be accepted” (4).

Standardized Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum Differentiation

During the height of the genetic pathology era of deficit thinking, intelligence testing became a popular method of reinforcing ideas about intellectual disparities between whites and people of color. In the U.S., intelligence testing initially was utilized during a military effort to sort enlistees into various duties according to their levels of skill and knowledge (Valencia, 1999). In 1919, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded a grant for the development of a standardized intelligence test for school children, the National Intelligence Test (NIT), which thereafter served the primary measure of students' intelligence quotient (IQ). Schools used the results of these tests to separate students into classes of varying skill levels to relieve the "burden" placed upon teachers and high achieving students who were grouped with lower performers (Pearl, 1999). By the 1920's, U.S. public schools had instituted a highly differentiated curriculum, largely based on the results of these intelligence (and achievement) tests (Valencia, 1999, 57).

As schools integrated racially and socioeconomically, intelligence and achievement tests continued to serve as mechanisms for sorting and tracking students into stratified curricular tracks (Oakes, 1985, 1992; Venezia and Kirst, 2005; Gamoran, 1986). Oakes (1985) argues that in addition to achievement and intelligence tests, teachers and school staff also look to cultural and social capital to determine how to track students academically. Poor, minoritized students who do not exemplify the values, norms and behaviors (cultural capital) or the social networks (social capital) of the white middle class culture are often seen as deficient and relegated to lower academic tracks (Oakes, 1985). Once they have been consigned to these less challenging classes, they are commonly provided with only limited access to resources and information and are

prevented from taking advantage of many opportunities offered to higher performing white students (Oakes, 1985; Venezia and Kirst, 2005; Gamoran, 1986)

These tracking practices serve as another source for the validation of deficit thought and contribute to the cycle of inequity within schools. Students underexposed to the cultural capital valued by the schools are corralled into classrooms where they often are taught only the basic skills necessary to be productive citizens. Rarely are they exposed to the skills and knowledge that could aid them in moving beyond the lower academic tracks (Oakes, 1985; Venezia and Kirst, 2005). Much of the curricula targeted towards minoritized youth in lower tracks are comprised of simplistic, rote material that focus primarily on aiding students in barely passing the very standardized tests that tracked them into the lower classes in the first place (Valencia, 1999; Oakes, 1985).

Over the years, intelligence and achievement tests have served as powerful tools of legitimization, reinforcing existing ideas about the intellectual inferiority of minoritized students (Cohen, 2002; Blanton, 2000; Monagu, 1975). Cohen (2002) argues that the use of these tests to measure the innate ability or intelligence of individuals of various races, social classes, and ethnic groups rests on several improbable and illegitimate assumptions about the tests' unbiased ability to accurately differing types of knowledge and skill in a variety of different individuals (220). The continued use of these tests serves to legitimate current deficit assumptions regarding the intelligence of marginalized groups who do not actively participate in the mainstream culture upon which these tests are largely based (Cohen, 2002; Blanton, 2000).

With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, standardized achievement tests have become a central component of the new accountability movement

in education. With this increased reliance upon standardization and high stakes testing, however, has come a new wave of controversy over whether these new policies will further marginalize minoritized students who have been historically underserved by public education.

Leaving No Child Behind?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the reincarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act of 1965. The original ESEA was enacted as a part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. With its ratification, the nation acknowledged that simply providing "equal" access to education was insufficient, and that additional measures were necessary to ensure that, for historically underserved students, access to schooling translated into success at school (Meier et al., 2004). Through ESEA of 1965, schools in communities with the greatest need received additional dollars to help educators more adequately serve students. The Act forwarded the premise that with the right support and intervention, the achievement gap between rich and poor students, and black and white, could be closed (Meier et al., 2004). The ESEA has seen a number of reincarnations since 1965, and typically has been reauthorized every few years - in 1988 under the Reagan administration and in 1994 as Clinton's Improving America's School Act (IASA) (Sunderman et al., 2005).

NCLB is the first reauthorization of ESEA since 1994, and has been touted by pundits and policymakers alike as the nation's boldest and most sweeping education reform policy in decades and the federal government's largest investment in K-12 education (Cicchinelli et al., 2003; Casserly; 2006; The Education Trust, n.d.). Since its inception, proponents have endorsed the controversial law as an effective mechanism for

boosting the achievement of traditionally underserved students and ultimately eliminating the achievement gap (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003; Bloomfield, 2003; Casserly, 2006; Noguera, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2007). The law promises to implement “increased accountability for districts and states, increased options for parents, more flexibility and local control, and an emphasis on research-based teaching methodologies” (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003, 6; The Education Trust, n.d.; Casserly, 2006). Methodologies for achieving these goals include setting annual test-score objectives for student subgroups, requiring schools to hire “highly qualified teachers”, offering parents school transfer and choice options, and enforcing sanctions for schools whose students fail to make adequate yearly progress (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Underlying the basic principles of NCLB is a reliance upon standardization and high stakes testing. According to the Act, schools are required to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of student achievement in order to receive federal funding (primarily from Title I) and to avoid state imposed interventions (Easley, 2005; “Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003). AYP indicates that a school is making sufficient strides towards meeting state and district goals for high levels of academic achievement for all students. AYP is measured by student performance on annual standardized tests in grades 3-8 for reading and math. Test results and state progress objectives are then made available for public view via state and school district report cards, which must be broken down by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency “to ensure that no group is left behind” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Schools with students who consistently fail to meet state standards on tests and considered “needs improvement” schools are subject to state and federal sanctions.

One of these sanctions includes offering “increased options” for children attending habitually failing Title I schools (NCLB Executive Summary, n.d.). Students enrolled in consistently failing schools slated for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring may choose to transfer to a higher-performing public or charter school within their district, or they may opt to take advantage of Supplemental Educational Services. Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are “extra academic services during off-school hours offered to low-income students that are attending schools that have failed to make AYP” for at least three years (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003). These services include tutoring, remediation, academic intervention, or other enrichment services free of cost to eligible students and are intended to increase the reading, language arts, and math skills of students in failing schools (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003).

A Closer Look at NCLB

Despite its potential to promote positive changes in the nation’s schools, No Child Left Behind has met with a tremendous amount of controversy since its inception. In theory, the stated goals of NCLB could help schools to meet the needs of children who have been historically underserved by the public educational system. While recent reports indicate that test scores have increased in some states, in many cases, the intended goals and the actual outcomes have proven incongruent (Paley, 2007; Hoff, 2007; Noguera, 2007). As the House and Senate consider the direction the reauthorization of the law should take, many former proponents of the law are recognizing that there is definite room for improvement (Casserly, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Despite some increases in achievement score in several states and the unequivocal need for higher standards and accountability in schools, critics still maintain that NCLB is proving to be yet another mechanism for the perpetuation of racial inequality within the nation's educational institutions (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Fusarelli, 2004; Sunderman and Kim, 2004; Hoff, 2007; Paley, 2007; Noguera, 2007). The components of NCLB have been shown to benefit high-achieving, affluent suburban schools in many cases and to work to the detriment of minoritized students in high-poverty schools (Darling-Hammond, 2007). While an increasing number of parents, teachers, and school administrators have shown opposition to NCLB, federal support is still strong, and state and district leaders are being forced to comply with its tenets if they wish to receive federal funding (Sunderman and Kim, 2004).

Inadequate funding has been a tremendous issue in the implementation of No Child Left Behind (Fusarelli, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2007). Under NCLB, the state and federal government rewards schools that reach certain benchmarks, indicated by standardized tests, with additional funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Unfortunately, schools that do not meet these benchmarks are threatened with the withdrawal of federal funds, the pressure of privatization, loss of students to choice, and closure (Fusarelli, 2004).

Schools that lose financial support are most often those in poor urban neighborhoods that were already underfunded before NCLB (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The heavy reliance on standardized testing to gauge student performance puts students in poor urban school at a significant disadvantage. Because schools in affluent neighborhoods are able to provide their students with access to better resources and an

overall higher quality of education, studies show that children in these schools attain higher levels of academic achievement and score well on standardized tests (Katz, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2007). As a result, schools in low-poverty neighborhoods are more likely to meet the benchmarks necessary to receive additional federal funding from NCLB, further surpassing the resources available to their poorer counterparts.

Schools in high-poverty neighborhoods with larger populations of disadvantaged and minoritized students commonly struggle to meet NCLB benchmarks on standardized tests and often are unable to receive the extra funding (Fusarelli, 2004). Hendrie (2004) reports that the 2003 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in fourth-grade reading and eight-grade math, 61% of African-Americans scored below basic proficiency levels in reading and math – compared to 26% and 21% of whites, respectively. The Act, however, requires that 90% of the children of all racial groups either reach or surpass high achievement levels (well above proficiency) within the next 12 years (Brignall, 2006). These expectations are likely to result in continued financial sanctions for urban schools and fewer resources for the children they serve.

Sanctioned schools must contribute money from the funds they do have to provide SES and transportation for the School Transfer option of NCLB. The subsequent dearth in financial resources often leaves urban schools and their students in worse shape than before NCLB was implemented. According to Sunderman et al (2005), NCLB imposes unprecedented responsibilities and accountability for test-score gains on urban schools, and asks for much less academic progress from affluent suburban schools that begin much closer to established benchmarks (7).

Another “hot button” issue in the implementation of NCLB involves the School Transfer provision. Districts across the nation face a lack of available transfer options for students attending failing schools in poor urban areas (Kafer, 2004; Casserly, 2006). Due to the finite capacity of suburban and higher-performing schools, it is inevitable that some children will in fact be left behind in less desirable institutions. Despite the NCLB mandate, a significant number of students are denied transfers to better performing schools because of insufficient capacity (Kafer, 2004). During the 2003-2004 school year, only 1% of eligible students took advantage of the choice option, while thousands were unable to transfer due to a lack of space (Hendrie, 2005).

One of the big selling points for choice, and NCLB in general, is that the competition it creates with the option of school transfer, and the threat of restructuring or closure will motivate failing schools to develop new instructional strategies. Studies show, however, that the added pressure of competition does little to spur failing schools to improve their performance (Howard, 2003). Any gains noted from competition prove to be modest in scope with respect to realistic changes in achievement levels (Belfield & Levin, 2002).

The primary goal of No Child Left Behind is an admirable one, and few critics would argue the necessity for higher academic standards, accountability, and the implementation of policy that will help to “equip every child with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in future schooling and in life (Cicchinelli, 2003, 7; Noguera, 2007). The key, however, is to ensure that the methods of implementation are sound and that the stated aims of the policy actually align with practice on the ground level. This examination is particularly necessary for NCLB’s choice options, School Transfer and

SES, which have resulted in a number of challenges during state and district implementation efforts.

Supplemental Educational Service Programs

Both the School Transfer and SES options exemplify the core principles upon which the No Child Left Behind Act was established (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 6). The provisions speak to the belief that improved academic instruction, competition, and accountability will work to enhance educational opportunities for children in habitually failing schools. Federal policymakers assert that the School Transfer and SES requirements of No Child Left Behind were established to “not only help to enhance students achievement but also provide an incentive for low-performing schools to improve” (No Child Left Behind, 2002, 11).

The SES provision of No Child Left Behind mandates that districts provide low – income students, in schools that “need improvement”, with the opportunity to receive additional academic services outside of the traditional school day. Federal policymakers have defined NCLB’s SES as “additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in low-performing schools” through instruction that is “high-quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase student achievement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b, P.L. 107-110, Sec. 1116(e) (12) (c)).

All students from low-income families who attend Title I schools that are in their second year of school improvement, in corrective action, or in restructuring are eligible for SES. If district funds are insufficient to provide SES to all eligible students requesting services, the district must give priority to the lowest-achieving eligible students and must use objective criteria to select these students.

NCLB dictates that each state must also establish and publish guidelines for the approval of SES providers. The state must ensure that each provider it approves:

1. Has a demonstrated record of effectiveness in increasing student academic achievement [*Section 1116(e)(12)(B)(i)*];
2. Will use instructional strategies that are high quality, based upon research, and designed to increase student academic achievement (see C-17 for additional information) [*Section 1116(e)(12)(C)*];
3. Provides services that are consistent with the instructional program of the district and with State academic content and achievement standards (see C-18 for additional information) [*Sections 1116(e)(5)(B) and 1116(e)(12)(B)(ii)*];
4. Is financially sound (see C-19 for additional information) [*Section 1116(e)(12)(B)(iii)*]; and
5. Will provide supplemental educational services consistent with applicable Federal, State, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws (see C-3 for additional information) [*Section 1116(e)(5)(C)*]. (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Selection criteria for each district ideally are established with the help of local districts, parents, teachers, and community leaders to promote participation by numerous providers and to give parents a variety of choices (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, Section 1116(e) (4) (A)).

Once providers have been approved, the state must distribute to districts a list of endorsed organizations (Anderson and Laguarda, 2005). Districts are then required to provide parents with notification of their child's eligibility for services and a listing of pre-approved SES providers in their area. SES providers can include non-profit, for-profit, and faith based-organizations, public, charter or private schools, and public and private colleges or universities (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2003). Schools deemed "in need of improvement", however, are prohibited from offering SES services themselves. Districts must provide parents with ample providers to ensure that they have a variety of

choice options. DCPS, for instance, provided parents with a choice of thirty-seven SES providers for the 2005-2006 school years.

Once they have been notified, parents may decide if they want their child to take advantage of the SES option (Sunderman and Kim, 2004). Once a parent has decided upon an SES program, district leaders must then, in partnership with parents and service providers, develop specific educational goals for each student. The SES provider must then measure and report the student's progress in meeting the pre-established goals. NCLB mandates that all supplemental instruction must align with both the state and district academic standards and instruction (Anderson and Laguarda, 2005, 1).

The state and district must provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation of each SES provider. Though NCLB encourages each state to establish its own criteria, it does offer a few suggestions for assessment, including the evaluation of:

- Academic gains made by students who participated in and completed a provider's program
- The fidelity with which a provider's program, as enacted, reflects its program design, as proposed in its application to the SEA
- Student enrollment (including enrollment of students with disabilities and English language learners) and daily attendance in a provider's program
- Parents' and students' satisfaction with a provider
- How often a provider reports students' progress to teachers and parents. (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, Section D-2).

While the state may request the aid of the local district in the evaluation of SES providers, it is ultimately the state's responsibility to ensure that each program is meeting expectations (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

SES are provided to families free of charge, and are funded through Title I allocations provided by the federal government. Districts must reserve 20% of their

annual Title I funding for both choice-related transportation and Supplemental Education Services. Five percent of that total allotment must go to SES unless districts experience a decrease in demand (Sunderman and Kim, 2004).

SES, like most provisions of No Child Left Behind, provide, in theory, an opportunity to greatly enhance the schooling experiences of children in low-income urban schools. Increased accountability, enhanced quality of instruction, and SES all appear to be effective mechanisms for boosting achievement levels for historically underserved students. The reality of the implementation of the Act and its provisions, however, reveals quite a different picture of the highly lauded law.

Early Analysis of SES Programs

SES was established with the hope that competition would improve educational equity by increasing educational opportunities for students and inspiring poor-performing schools to enhance their methods of instruction (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 6). The SES provision in particular is derived from the additional expectation that the academic instruction provided beyond the regular school day by outside organizations will be more effective in raising student achievement than traditional school instruction (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 6). Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research data to support this supposition. On the contrary, Belfield and d'Entremont (2005) contend that many eligible students are not being served effectively by the provision. Olson (2005) reports that only a few states, nationwide, provided services to more than 10% of students eligible for SES, and 18 states served fewer than 10%. In 21 states and D.C., the figure dropped to 1%, the national average, or less. Only Utah served almost half of its eligible students (Olson, 2005, 20).

The SES provision, in its current state, has not served a large number of eligible students. But, what about the students who are taking advantage of the option? Because the NCLB SES model is the first of its kind, research exploring the services offered by SES providers is limited. Sunderman and Kim (2004) find that “there is no body of research that provides clear and consistent evidence documenting the effect of SES on learning outcomes for low-income or minority students. This is ironic given the emphasis in the law on ‘scientifically-based research’” (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 32). Available data tends to take a macro-level view of the implementation of SES requirements. For example, five studies explore the policy’s execution from a district or statewide perspective. Much of the data revealed that at this level, issues of insufficient funding, poor communication, and inconsistent evaluation practices are prevalent. These conditions often prohibit SES from serving students as effectively as they could under more favorable circumstances.

Funding

Probably the most significant obstacle faced by districts attempting to execute SES requirements is a lack of adequate funding. Sunderman and Kim (2004) assert that districts need additional federal resources to manage the financial burdens of implementing the SES provision. Since schools are required to pay for SES from their Title I allocations, they must then contend with the reduction in the resources available for students on site. Without these resources, SES have the potential to weaken the ability of already poorly-funded Title I schools to provide quality instruction by channeling funds and personnel away from schools. School, district, and state organizations have had to establish staff positions to manage SES; however, money set aside for SES services is

not to be utilized to fund administrative costs of implementing the program (Sunderman and Kim, 2004, 26). Schools already experiencing a paucity of resources now find themselves unable to shoulder the financial burden that SES requirements create.

Communication

Communication has proven to be a significant issue in SES implementation, as well. In a study sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation in 2003, findings indicated that a significant number of Title I eligible parents never received vital information regarding available SES or they received the information in an ill-timed manner (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003). As a result, many eligible students were unable to take advantage of SES.

In 2004, 20% of all students nationwide were eligible for SES; however 91 districts in 30 states spent between \$200 and \$300 million in federal money to serve a mere 205,000 students (Belfield, 2005, 28). In Illinois alone, more than 325,000 students were eligible to receive supplemental tutoring, but only 5.5% of these students actually received services (Belfield, 2005). Far too many students across the nation have missed out on the additional services mandated by SES requirements.

Communication also has been an issue between districts and SES providers. Many organizations showed dissatisfaction with the information, assistance, and funding procedures employed by state and city overseers (“Serving Those Most in Need or Not,” 2003). Poor communication also has an impact on districts ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs that SES providers offer.

SES Providers

SES providers offer a wide variety of services, ranging from site-based or at-home tutoring to distance- or cyber-learning. Belfield and d'Entremont (2005) find that few of these services consistently align with state standards, and they question whether most providers are equipped to accommodate the needs of the students they are asked to serve. State and districts organizations often are challenged to provide the proper evaluation of these programs to ensure that they maintain instructional alignment. Insufficient staffing and resources make it difficult to guarantee the personnel necessary to adequately manage the implementation of services. Poor communication, mentioned above, also works against instructional coordination efforts between schools and outside organizations.

Anderson and Laguarda (2005) found that providers commonly deliver services within the same school building where the student(s) attend school and often hire teachers from those schools to provide tutorial services. These practices obviously have the potential to aid in the coordination of SES instruction with school curriculum and standards, but raise the danger that students will encounter the same instructional practices that have proven ineffective in increasing their achievement thus far. It is essential that each service provider be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that they provide quality and effective programming to all students. Unfortunately, the speed of the implementation of SES requirements has proved a significant challenge for schools and districts, and they often struggle to implement proper systems to evaluate SES providers (Belfield and d'Entremont, 2005).

With the dearth of SES research, it is difficult to answer the question of quality raised earlier. As yet, there is little certainty about whether SES providers are working to alleviate or perpetuate the systems of inequality that make learning so challenging for historically underserved urban students. In order to better gauge the effectiveness of SES programming, two systems must be put into place: proper evaluation of SES providers and identification of best practices that can positively influence system-wide policy on SES. As both districts and providers continue to struggle with the implementation of SES requirements, it is important that we begin to identify practices that have proven effective in SES programming, in order to ensure that students are receiving the full benefit of this educational model. Through continued investigation into the methods of instruction that serve to both improve both the students' academic and social skills and reduce persistent educational inequities, we can begin to fulfill the promise that supplemental education programs hold for children in urban schools.

The Promise and Potential of Supplemental Education Programs

As we investigate these best practices in NCLB's SES programming, it may also be useful to examine policies and practices that have proven effective in supplemental education programs as a whole. Despite the lack of data on NCLB's SES program model, research has indicated that, historically, supplemental education programs in general have the potential both to increase achievement levels and nurture social development and cultural literacy among low-income and minoritized students. It is important then, that we understand the aspects of these programs that are beneficial to historically underserved students so that we can grasp the ways that quality programs work to alleviate, not perpetuate academic and social inequalities.

Supplemental education programs have been labeled by a variety of different terms, including out-of-school time programs, supplementary education, and afterschool programs (ASPs). For the purposes of this study, I will be utilizing these four terms interchangeably, but primarily will refer to them as “afterschool programs” (ASPs). In the subsequent sections I will provide a brief history of ASPs in the U.S. and will detail their evolution from small community efforts to a nationwide movement. I will follow with a discussion of current research addressing both the potential benefits of ASPs and the challenges that many organizations face in practice.

Afterschool Programs: Past and Present

Halpern (2002) explains that as early as 1894, philanthropic organizations in the US began offering afterschool programs in an effort 1) to provide care for children from disadvantaged homes and 2) to aid immigrant children in their assimilation to and acceptance of American culture (Halpern, 2002; Seligson et al., 1983). With the decline in child labor, the increase in schooling and the establishment of compulsory education laws, a need developed to ensure that children were making safe, productive use of their time after school (Halpern, 2002). ASPs sought to fill this need by offering educational and recreational services for low-income, immigrant children. Progressive reformers saw this afterschool time as an opportunity to “improve” the children (Halpern, 2002, 181). At the same time, the notion emerged that play was critical to healthy child development and positively affected children’s ability to learn and make sense of the world around them. Organized, supervised play represented a means to “free” low-income children from the harsh and often oppressive realities of their circumstance (Halpern, 2002, 181).

The first afterschool programs were meant to “rescue” children from the “physical and moral hazards” of growing up in poor, urban, immigrant neighborhoods (Halpern, 2002, 182). Deficit views of poor immigrant families led many to believe that their parents were ill-equipped to provide sufficient care for their children and that they were unable to prepare their children for life in an industrial society. Their culture and mores were seen as “irrelevant, even harmful, to their children” (Halpern, 2002, 188).

The turn of the century brought the establishment of numerous ASPs across the country that were sponsored by a variety of different organizations, including private philanthropic associations, religious institutions and organizations that targeted specific ethnic groups (Halpern, 2002). Over the next several decades, the afterschool movement grew tremendously, though never developed into a formal system of services. ASPs were, and still are, sponsored by a variety of different agencies, each with its own priorities, policies and practices.

Despite these differences, for most ASPs, a primary goal of operation remained one of prevention. Though creating opportunities for play was also a high priority, they primarily worked to offset crime and delinquency (Halpern, 2002). A second, less espoused goal was the assimilation and Americanization of poor immigrant children through cultural transmission, the teaching of middle-class values and practices, and the process of deracination (Halpern, 2002, citing WWB, 1912, 90). Webster’s dictionary (2003) defines deracination as 1) the removal or separation of an individual from a native environment or culture and 2) the removal of racial or ethnic characteristics or influences. These programs sought to inculcate into these children the behaviors and mores of the mainstream American culture, and to teach them to abandon their native heritage. One

writer at the time commented that a Boy's Club program was "a crucible in which various races are melted down into Americans" (Halpern, 2002 – citing WWB, 1912, 90).

Even though many immigrant children benefited from the services provided by ASPs, many children were encouraged to relinquish a part of their identity in the process. Efforts to create welcoming and accepting environments failed in the sense that children were only welcome if they were willing to accept acculturation into the mainstream culture. Most African-American children were denied access to ASPs up until the mid 1900's. Though a few urban areas showed a begrudging willingness to integrate their programs, most remained reluctant to serve children of color (Halpern, 2002).

The climate of ASPs began to change mid-century, in response to changing social conditions (Gayl, 2004). In the 1940's and 1950's, amidst a growing awareness that low-income children lacked a sense of belonging in their social world, and in school, these children were treated as failures. They began to lose interest in positive ambitions (Franklin and Benedict, 1943, 16). At home and in their neighborhoods, children were harassed by police and treated like criminals. They understandably perceived ASPs as products of the very society that rejected and maligned them on a daily basis (Halpern, 2002, 1954). Children became alienated and resistant and began to "reject opportunities before opportunities rejected them" (Halpern, 2002, 199).

ASPs took up the mantle of trying to counter these societal effects. They worked to provide programming that made children feel valued and accepted, and through various activities, sought to "rekindle their interests, motivation, curiosity, and sense of efficacy" (Halpern, 2002, 199-200). Street-corner workers sought to meet children on their own terms and in a familiar environment, to gain their trust and seek the children's

views on the services and activities they needed and desired (Halpern, 2002, citing UNH, Box 24, Folder 277).

In the 1990's the after school movement gained new momentum in response to the ever-growing needs of urban children (Gayl, 2004). The number of youth development organizations operating in the US grew to a record 17,000 (Bridglall, 2005). New public funding, provided by the Federal Child Care and Development Program, marginally eased the dearth of resources that plagued ASPs for decades (Halpern, 2002, 201). Since then, programming for students in out-of-school time has remained high on the public agenda. Between 1998 and 2001, federal commitments to fund the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) increased from \$1 million to \$1 billion per year (Chung and Hillsman, 2005).

The common opinion today is that students are not getting what they need from the primary institutions in their lives (i.e., school and family) (Halpern, 2002). Many working parents are unable to devote sufficient time to child development activities; children can no longer play safely outdoors; and schools, which have historically underserved poor and minority children, have become even less of a positive resource (Gayl, 2004; Halpern, 2002). Urban classrooms have transformed into "test-preparation centers, undermining the richness and pleasures of the teaching-learning experience and forcing teachers into adversarial roles with their students" (Halpern, 2002, 202). Urban children are in crisis and desperately in need of the aid that ASPs can potentially provide.

As parents and policymakers look for solutions to this every-growing problem, ASPs have reemerged as a viable option for countering the negative aspects of urban children's lives. As Miller et al. (1996) note, "when low-income children attend

disorganized schools, out-of-school time offers the best hope for overcoming the negative effects of poverty” (4). Today, over 20% of low to moderate income urban children aged 6-14 participate at least 3-5 days per week in an ASP (Halpern, 2002, 179). Bridglall (2005) finds that ASPs are the most widely utilized form of supplementary education, and are viewed by many as an effective method for reducing the pervasive achievement gap between students from affluent and disadvantaged homes.

Despite this growing support for and attention to ASPs, the literature paints a frustratingly unclear picture of the actual impact that participation in ASPs has on children in poor urban neighborhoods (Bridglall, 2005, Riggs and Greenberg, 2004, Halpern, 2002). Until recently, there has been a marked lack of research on and evaluation of ASPs, which has resulted in an inadequate understanding of the true effects of participation (Riggs and Greenberg, 2004). Research has increased as of late, due in part to the growth in fiscal support. Contributing organizations want proof that their support is resulting in positive outcomes for children.

Riggs and Greenberg (2004) argue, however, that evidence that ASPs are correlated directly to positive outcomes is inconsistent and inconclusive. While some evidence demonstrates their potential to enhance the social, emotional and academic lives of urban youth, other research questions whether any benefit accrues. In the next sections, I will examine literature on both the potential benefits and pitfalls of practice in afterschool programs.

Potential Academic, Cultural, Social Benefits of Afterschool Programs

As Halpern (2002) states, ASPs offer a unique opportunity to provide for urban youth what other child development institutions have not – a safe environment for

children and youth to explore interests, develop talents, and gain exposure to one's own culture as well as to that of mainstream society; and to receive extra adult attention and support, help with school work, and a chance to "observe different standards of behavior, try on different selves without risk of ridicule, and experience success" (203). A study conducted by Posner and Vandell (1994) found significant correlation between after school participation and positive academic, behavioral and social development. In fact, Halpern (2002) adds, "after-school programs are coming to be a third critical developmental setting for low and moderate income children", surpassed only by home and school (179).

Fletcher and Padover (2003) find that when afterschool programming is aligned with school instruction and presented through fun and engaging activities, student achievement can increase 2-3 times more than statewide estimates indicate. Piha and Miller (2003) add that ASPs help to engage urban youth in learning through activities that link to school goals and promote a broad range of skills that students need to be successful. ASPs can support school curriculum by providing opportunities for students to apply skills they learn in the classroom to real-life situations and by making lessons relevant to students' everyday lives (Piha and Miller, 2003).

Halpern (2002) also notes that afterschool programs historically have had a unique opportunity to deliver programming that avoids pathologizing low-income children. Though this point seems at odds with his previous report of early efforts to deracinate immigrant children, he writes that in later years ASPs have claimed to take pains to reduce their former reliance on deficit approaches. Unfortunately, as Halpern (2002) later notes, many afterschool programs are often unable to resist overwhelming

pressures to subscribe to what Kozol (2000) terms the harsh societal agenda for children from disadvantaged homes. This agenda is one of social reproduction, and calls for the continued characterization of disadvantaged children as deficient - problems that need to be fixed. It also teaches children that the only way they can succeed is to reject their culture and heritage and assimilate into mainstream society. Their voices of protest are silenced and they are told that they must choose to either accept a false ideology of hope or resist and face a myriad of obstacles to achieving their goals (Hamovitch, 1999).

It is only by rejecting this societal agenda that ASPs can truly effect positive change in the lives of urban youth. As E.T. Gordon (2005) states, “supplementary education programs must not reproduce the impediments to achievement often found in more traditional educational institutions” (88). ASPs have the power and potential to counteract the negative effects of poverty and discrimination that urban youth face every day in the world around them. In order to do so, programs must recognize and speak to the social mechanisms that lead to the underachievement and marginalization of minority youth. Understanding these mechanisms can be useful in the design of enormously effective programs for children (E. T. Gordon, 2005).

Gordon (2005) suggests that organizations provide programming that appeals to students and teaches skills that are academically useful and relevant to students’ lives outside of school. Bridglall (2005) adds that “high-quality programs enable young people to examine various topics, skills, or projects that interest them deeply” and encourage positive peer relations, enhanced social skills and a sense of belonging (42-43). According to Fusco (2001), quality programs also promote growth by espousing a view of children as resources instead of deficits and by creating “places of hope” where

children's voices are respected and heard (McLaughlin et al., 1994). ASPs also must be responsive to the shifting emotional, social, and cultural needs and circumstances of children from low-income homes (Halpern, 2002).

Additionally, Gordon (2005) offers that programs may have more success with urban youth if they take into account and nurture the growth of students' social and cultural capital, which will, in effect, nurture their feelings of belonging, acceptance, and empowerment. Beck (1999) adds that programs must be "culturally compatible" and must reflect the familiar atmosphere of students' culture of origin (108). Instead of teaching them that the only way to operate is under the terms of the dominant culture, ASPs can demonstrate the similarities between the two cultures, and teach children how to use these similarities as tools to succeed in the dominant cultural environment (Brooks, 2006). Through these programs, Gordon (2005) explains, "students can develop in the service of resistance, critical thinking, literacy, and other skills and knowledge that can also be utilized to achieve academic success" (99).

. Acceptance and inclusion are key to developing environments of trust and opportunities for growth and development within urban afterschool programs. When youth workers are positive and provide a supportive, encouraging environment, students are more likely demonstrate improved behavioral and academic performance (Pierce et al., 1999).

Several studies note additional characteristics as indicators of quality programs for urban youth. These indicators are present consistently in organizations that have proven to be beneficial to students in urban. Research shows that quality programs, which demonstrate the attributes discussed in the section below, are more likely to promote

positive outcomes for children both in academic settings and in their lives beyond the school walls (Piha and Miller, 2003, 1)

Quality Programs

A review of the literature on ASPs revealed that the components considered most critical to “quality” ASP programming include: a) adequate facilities and resources, b) a positive environment where students feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted; have opportunities to explore feelings, ideas, and identities, and find avenues for empowerment, responsibility, and self-expression, c) supportive relationships with well-trained staff, d) customized and measurable goals for each student, e) integration of academic and enrichment activities, f) culturally relevant programming, and (Halpern, 1999; Fletcher and Padover, 2003; Beck, 1999; Cohen, 2003; Piha and Miller, 2003; Cosden et al., 2004; Fusco, 2001; Seppanen et al., 1993; Posner and Vandell, 1999). These components work together to create learning environments that are conducive to students’ personal, social, and academic growth.

Adequate Facilities and Resources

According to several studies, the facilities and resources of an organization play a large role in the quality of programming offered to students (Halpern, 1999; Piha and Miller, 2003; Posner and Vandell, 1999). Appropriate afterschool environments should provide safe and clean spaces for activities, a warm and welcoming décor, sufficient space, supplies, and furnishings to facilitate the organization’s programming (*Making an Impact*, 2000, 2, 5). Halpern (1999) notes the importance of providing facilities and resources that offer a variety of choice in activities (86). “The ownership, size, and structure of space of after-school programs shape them in many ways” (Halpern, 1999,

87). When organizations have ample space and resources for activities within their facilities, they help to ensure that students can choose from a wide variety of enrichment programming. Ideally, Halpern (1999) explains, children should have access to facilities that allow for artistic activities (pottery, dance, painting) as well as regular access to playgrounds, parks, a library, and special rooms for music or games.

Research on ASPs finds that having adequate facilities and resources also includes providing enough space (and staff persons) to have multiple groups or classes during instructional time. Quality programs provide classes or instruction groups with small child-to-staff ratios (Posner and Vandell, 1999; Piha and Miller, 2003). Smaller class sizes facilitate better behavior management, positive regard for children, stronger relationships with students, and more effective engagement of students (Posner and Vandell, 1999; Piha and Miller, 2003).

A Safe, Nurturing Environment

One of the primary functions of urban ASPs is to provide safe passage and protection for its youth (McLaughlin, 1994; Beck, 1999; Fletcher and Padover, 2003). The best environment for healthy development and growth to occur is one where personal safety is assured (McLaughlin et al., 1994, 104). It is critical for ASPs to provide a space that offers physical security from outside menaces during hours when children and youth are most at risk, emotional safety, and nurturance from peers and adults within the program environment (Beck, 1999; Fletcher and Padover, 2003; Piha and Miller, 2003). Effective youth programs strive to protect participants not only from the physical dangers of drugs, pregnancy and violence, but also the personal and emotional dangers of alienation, isolation, and feelings of insignificance and low self-worth (McLaughlin et al.,

1994, 104). Programs must strive to facilitate safe student/staff and peer group interactions that promote confidence, acceptance security, and feelings of high self-esteem (Piha and Miller, 2003; Halpern, 2000).

McLaughlin et al (1994) note that this environment of acceptance, support, and nurturance can be established by moving beyond simply acknowledging youth's personal interests to actively giving them a voice and a part in decision-making within the program structure (105). Many urban youth, they find, come from homes where they are burdened with undue responsibilities, and reject environments where they are constantly given orders and excluded from having a voice in the daily operations. The ability to make active contributions gives youth a feeling of responsibility, ownership, and investment (105). It is especially important to tend to the unique needs of older youth, recognizing their status as elders in the organization, and their need to be treated with respect and as individuals (106).

Supportive environments do not always allow children free reign. As McLaughlin et al (1994) note, structure and discipline are often highly valued by youth in urban environments. They find that urban youth often crave the security and predictability that comes with having clearly stated expectations and consistent discipline (109). In fact, urban youth are often wary of environments without order and established rules, though conversely, they often resent spaces where they feel rules are too rigid or unfair (McLaughlin et al., 1994).

Ultimately, children feel most at home in a place that is removed from everyday stressors, where they can feel free to be themselves and have the chance to explore their own identities and take part in opportunities for self-expression (Halpern, 2000). These

safe havens offer children a rare chance for urban youth to experience a level of personal, social, and academic growth and development that they may not have within traditional educational environments.

Supportive Relationships with Well-Trained Staff

Many components of NCLB stress the importance of hiring “highly qualified” staff to ensure the quality instruction of students. The same need applies in the afterschool program setting (Cohen, 2003, Scott-Little, 2000, Halpern, 1999). Though recruiting and sustaining a quality staff is often a challenge in the current afterschool climate, it is important that staff be literate in the varied skills necessary to meet students’ educational needs (Halpern, 1999, 86).

Vandell (1999) notes the importance of considering potential staff’s level of education and training in ASP hiring practices. Vandell (1999) finds that higher education levels correlate with fewer negative interactions between staff and children and greater parent satisfaction with programs (2). Staff experience is also important, as staff with more experience tend to have better behavior management skills and more positive regard for children than do caregivers with less experience (Vandell, 1994).

Research notes that programs should also organize frequent program meetings that enable peers to learn from each other’s experiences and share best practices (*Making an Impact, 2000*). Organizations should also strive to provide regular professional development and training to ensure that program policies and practices are understood and accepted by all stakeholders (*Making an Impact, 2000*). Trainings should include an initial orientation that leads to ongoing in-service trainings on pertinent issues (*Making an Impact, 2000*).

Studies also show that in addition to educationally and experientially qualified staff, quality programs employ adults that are 1) committed to the growth and development of the children they serve, 2) able to interact with students in a warm yet authoritative manner, 3) able to offer guidance and support when needed (Piha & Miller, 2003; Beck, 1999, 119; Seppanen et al., 1993; Halpern, 2000). Staff persons, Cohen (2003) notes, should work to promote an environment of positive reinforcement and provide incentives for positive behaviors. Students in Beck's (1999) study, when asked what they liked about their program, replied that they appreciated the fact that, "They care about us" (119).

Customized and Measurable Goals

Because no two students learn the same way, Cohen (2003) stresses the importance of creating differentiated instructional plans for each student that begin with diagnostic assessments that identify areas for academic improvement (37). Instructional plans should be tailored to both align with state standards and district goals, and speak to students' individual learning styles (Cohen, 2003). The smaller learning groups and informal environment offered by many ASPs are often more conducive to meeting the individual needs of students.

Fusco (2001) adds that supplemental academic instruction is most effective when the learner is able to focus on a specific goal to improve certain skills. It is essential, Fusco (2001) notes, however, that when setting these goals, organizations take into consideration the unique needs and cultural identities of urban children.

Integration of Academic and Enrichment Activities

Several researchers note the importance of an integration of academic and enrichment activities with ASPs. As stated earlier, many programs often face pressures to focus solely on academic programming, but many find that a blending or braiding of academic and enrichment activities works best for students (Piha and Miller, 2003; Fletcher and Padover, 2003).

Scott-Little et al (2002) recommends that, when developing this curriculum, program leaders keep in mind the importance of including academic components that maintain a strong link to school-day curriculum. Fletcher and Padover (2003) find that as long as afterschool programming is aligned with school instruction and presented in fun and engaging activities, student achievement increases dramatically. Piha and Miller (2003) concur, stating that that ASPs can work to make learning fun by offering activities meet school goals while teaching a broad range of skills that will be useful to students both inside and out of the classroom.

The value in ASPs is that they provide opportunities not available in the school setting for students to actively engage with adults and peers, find their personal voice, and pursue personal goals. It is important to continue to offer these opportunities despite the overwhelming pressure to focus solely on academic instruction and standards (Hecht and Fusco, 1996).

Culturally Responsive Programming

Beck (1999) finds it critical that ASPs provide programming that incorporates and is compatible with students' diverse cultures. Providing these "culturally consistent" environments does not entail the elimination of mainstream culture from activities and

lessons, but rather the creation of a space where the two can coexist within the curriculum (Beck, 1999; Halpern, 2000). ASPs can demonstrate the similarities between the two cultures, and teach children how to bridge the gap between the two cultures to find personal and academic success within the dominant cultural environment (Gordon, 2005). In such culturally familiar arenas, students can more effectively interpret the environment and see that their culture of origin is accepted and valued (Beck, 1999, 108). Students then have increasing opportunities to be academically, socially, and personally successful without the loss of their cultural identity (Fusco, 2001, 4).

Beyond cultural responsive programming, Piha and Miller (2003) also note the importance of having a diverse pool of program staff and volunteers. Afterschool programs often recruit youth workers from a variety of sources, including teachers, paraprofessionals, college students, and community members. This array of sources often provides access to a diverse pool of adults who can serve as teachers and role models for students (Piha and Miller, 2003, 3). Programs that offer a diverse staff tend to have more cultural competency in a variety of areas, including parental relationships, effective and engaging programming, and community partnerships (Piha and Miller, 2003, 4).

As I investigate the SES program in this study, I will utilize the above criteria, along with previously discussed characteristics of successful ASPs, as a lens through which to view the quality of the afterschool program study site. While assessing the quality of the program of study is not a primary goal in this investigation, this knowledge of quality programming will help to provide a context within which to place the observations, ideas, and perspectives of the students, staff, and tutors whose experiences we are trying to understand.

While conducting this study, it is important to remember that different programs offer varying degrees of these critical components. Halpern (1999) notes that there may be cause for concern about the quality of ASPs for low-income children. While few will argue that ASPs have the potential to positively benefit urban youth, the question becomes – are ASPs living up to their potential? Some would answer no, and argue that the challenges faced by such programs far surpass their ability to affect positive change.

Potential Pitfalls of Practice: The Challenges of Filling the Void

One of the more recent challenges faced by ASPs has been significant pressure to subscribe to the increasing preoccupation with academic standards for low-income children. Funders often require providers to align programming to school instructional standards and to prove that their activities are improving student test scores (Halpern, 2002). With NCLB, and its SES provision, this pressure is an increasingly common even though many studies document the detrimental effects of focusing too heavily on academic instruction in after school environments.

Piha and Miller (2003) find that limiting afterschool programming to purely academic instruction reduces the positive effects that ASPs have on the learning and development of urban youth. The narrow focus on academic standards tends to take the attention off the enriching activities that initially differentiated ASPs from traditional school environments (Halpern, 2002). Fusco (2001) agrees and argues that programs concentrating primarily on “fixing” academic and other problems run the risk of failing to establish healthy and accepting environments for youth. Ross et al (1992) also found that while ASPs that promote increased self-esteem and confidence for students have positive effects on standardized test scores in math and reading, those focusing primarily on

homework completion did not result in increased achievement. Meaningful learning environments provide opportunities not available in the school environment for youth to make contributions, gain the respect of peers, and examine important personal goals (Hecht and Fusco, 1996). Such opportunities may be lost with the overwhelming pressure to emphasize academic instructions and standards.

Hamovitch (1996) finds that some ASPs do fall victim to the adoption of deficit perspectives of students. He concluded that these programs for urban students often create an environment that espouses a false ideology of hope and teaches students that they must either assimilate or fail. He found that student voices of resistance and opposition were silenced within the program environment, as the staff routinely discouraged students from discussing larger systems of oppression and discrimination that served as obstacles to their success (Hamovitch, 1996). The environment created by these conditions led to little academic learning and growth on the part of the students, evidenced by unchanged academic performance.

Beyond issues of programming and equity, most other challenges faced by ASPs can be traced back to issues of inadequate funding (Halpern, 1999). Many ASPs that serve low-income children grapple constantly with insufficient financial resources, staffing, and space (Halpern, 2000). Despite an increase in available funding for ASPs in general, many still find themselves unable to meet the myriad of needs of the children they serve.

These claims have been supported by controversial reports by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. Mathematica released two reports, in 2003 and 2004, indicating that they found no evidence that participation in ASPs leads to increased academic achievement

(Archer, 2004). While many ASP proponents debunked the study as invalid and unreliable, U.S. Department of Education Officials cited the study when proposing budget cuts in ASP funding for 2004 (Archer, 2004), even though these studies primarily involved students from moderate to high-income families who may not have benefited from the programs as much as those from less affluent homes.

It is easy to see that despite their potential benefit to urban students, ASPs face a myriad of challenges in practice. Those that are able to meet these challenges head-on have been able to alleviate the negative effects of social and economic inequities for children from underserved urban neighborhoods. While their ability to meet these challenges bodes well for the afterschool movement in general, it is still to be determined if the afterschool organizations endorsed as SES providers offer an adequate supplement to the classroom environment, particularly in urban settings where students face a number of challenges that can impact their academic performance.

Separate Worlds: A Snapshot of Urban Schools in America

The educational system in the United States often is characterized as a level playing field, where all students have equal opportunity to excel academically and, consequently, to attain a significant level of success in life (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Meier et al., 2004). Dance (2002) counters this portrayal by asserting that schools actually work to perpetuate rather than alleviate social and racial disparities (3). Schools often operate in conjunction with elitist power structures through economic, cultural, and political avenues to ensure the continuation of the social inequities that exist along lines of race and socioeconomic status (Dance, 2002; Bourdieu, 1977; Beck, 1999; Eddine and Sanchez, 2006).

These inequities are particularly apparent in urban schools, where the resources available to urban youth from their social networks and cultural traditions, social and cultural capital respectively, often differ greatly from the social and cultural capital valued in mainstream educational settings (Finkelstein, 1984; Oakes, 1985; Dance, 2002; Bourdieu, 1977; Yosso, 2002). While it is true that individuals in urban areas tend to share mainstream values and ideals, these principals often work in tandem with “anti-mainstream, survivalist sentiments” to create a unique set of customs commonly exhibited by the urban student (Dance, 2002, 5). Because urban youth usually enter the school with a unique set of social and cultural norms, exemplified (in part) in their dress, linguistic codes, dispositions, and peer group relationships, they often find themselves at a severe disadvantage when dealing with an educational system that does not value the assets that they bring to the table (Dance, 2002; Oakes, 1985).

One of the main functions of educational institutions is to reproduce and reward the cultural and social values of the white middle and upper class (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles, 1977; Dance 2002; Tyack, 1974). As early as the 1800’s, school leaders acknowledged that their primary goal in education was the transmission of the “dominant” European culture and the indoctrination of Protestant middle class ideals within the classroom (Tyack, 1974; Eddine and Sanchez, 2006). As a result, the cultural mores of non-white, low-income students have been devalued, and those who do not exhibit the expected mainstream social or cultural capital in schools are often labeled as deficient. This puts students from poor urban areas at a serious disadvantage compared to their affluent, white counterparts.

A History of Inequality

Minoritized groups have struggled for centuries to exert their innate right to equal participation in the educational system in America. Despite constitutional liberties guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, both state and federal policy, including the Jim Crow and “separate but equal” doctrines, continued to work against minoritized groups in their efforts to receive “educational justice” (Tyack, 1974, 115; Bond, 1950; Franklin, 2002). These oppressive systems worked to maintain a certain level of subjugation because policymakers understood that the uneducated tended to be easier to control and dominate (Eddine and Sanchez, 2006; Franklin, 2002; Bond, 1950).

Despite resistance to their efforts, minoritized groups continued to pursue formal education, believing that it was the ideal means to improve their status. Even before the Civil War, African-Americans, for instance, began building their own schools, often with the assistance of wealthy, white philanthropists and religious groups (Tyack, 1974; Eddine and Sanchez, 2006; Bond, 1950; Franklin, 2002). During this time, the consensus among white school and community leaders was that keeping minoritized children from accessing quality public education was still a priority (Tyack, 1974, 115). Though desegregation laws were passed in states like Illinois and New York in the mid-1800s, many other state regulations were created to ensure the continuation of “separate but equal” schooling (Tyack, 1974; Bond, 1950).

Sadly, the schools allocated for Black and Latino students were in horrifically poor condition and operated with only meager funding (Tyack, 1974; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Franklin, 2002). Despite protest of these conditions, school leaders were hesitant to allot additional funds (Tyack, 1974; Franklin, 2002). As a result, schools serving African-

American and Latino students often suffered from underpaid teachers, secondhand textbooks, and substandard buildings. Few openly recognized that, because of funding and other resource deficiencies; segregated schooling was “inherently *unequal*” (Tyack, 1974, 113). When minoritized students were isolated in their own institutions “few or none interested themselves about the schools – neglect ensues, abuses creep in, the standard of scholarship degenerates, and the teachers and scholars are soon considered and of course become an inferior class” (Tyack, 1974, 113).

As the use of scientific theory began to creep into educational policy in the late 1800s, school leaders became equipped with even more ammunition to justify the sub par and differential treatment of non-white students (Bond, 1950). Many viewed African-American and Latino students as inherently inferior, and school leaders consistently discouraged these students from aspiring beyond their status (Valencia, 1999; Duncan-Andrade, 2005). African-Americans and Latinos were routinely encouraged to accept their place as inferior citizens and schools worked to “adjust the children to white middle class norms” rather than attempt to address the blatant racism that existed around them (Tyack, 1974, 220; Finkelstein, 1984; Bond, 1950; Duncan-Andrade, 2005).

Despite opposition from white students, teachers, parents and community leaders, minoritized groups continued their efforts to adjust to the culture of integrated schools. The struggle to acclimate to disparities between the culture of the school and the students’ home culture was often seen as an indication of their intellectual ability, and students were often labeled as “deprived” by teachers and school staff (Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Tyack, 1974). Minoritized students regularly met with hostility and insult as both

students and teachers tried to cope with the clash of cultural norms that seemed ever-present in newly integrated urban schools.

The Current Crisis

Surprisingly little has changed over the past century, as African-American and Latino students in urban schools still find themselves significantly marginalized by institutions that commonly see them as inferior and deficient because of their race, culture and socioeconomic status (Valencia, 1999; Oakes, 1985; Garcia, 2004; Duncan-Andrade, 2005). These days, however, African-American and Latino children in urban neighborhoods must contend, not only with institutional racism, but also with the heightened dangers that they encounter outside the schools in their daily lives.

Violence and crime now color the landscape of low-income urban neighborhoods, and students often bring the atmosphere and culture of the streets into the classroom, making it difficult for them to fully concentrate on and commit to the educational task at hand (Dance, 2002; Ginwright, 2005; Zhou, 2003). Once in the school building, they also must face the challenge of transitioning between their cultures of origin to the white, middle-class culture that dominates public school classrooms (Dance, 2002; Oakes, 1985; Finkelstein, 1984; Duncan-Andrade, 2005).

Teachers play a large role in this adjustment process, as urban students of color attempt to balance the unfamiliar culture of schools with that of their home and social environments. The most effective teachers find ways to acknowledge and incorporate urban student's culture into classroom environments (Gordon, 2005; Boutte and Hill, 2006; Ware, 2006; Bazron et al., 2005; Irvine and Fraser, 1998). In doing so, teachers create a "safe space" for children from urban neighborhoods to actively participate in the

learning process. A teacher that seeks to understand and empathize with the experiences of urban students outside of the classroom often finds more cooperative students within. Students have a higher tendency to invest in teacher-student relationships if the teacher is able to “facilitate educational success in school without insulting or compromising street-savvy students’ need to survive the streets” (Dance, 2002, 83).

Unfortunately, students who attend schools in urban areas often encounter teachers who are unfamiliar with their lives outside of the classroom (Dance, 2002; Delpit, 1995). Students often perceive these teachers as devoid of caring, trust, and viable information about the challenging environment from which they originate (Dance, 2002). These teachers lack the “social capital resources that enable positive educational outcomes for urban students” (Dance, 2002, 75). Youths commonly respond to such teachers by rejecting semblances of white culture as inappropriate or irrelevant to their lives, and at times by associating academic success with “acting white” (Dance, 2002, 28; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). In these cases, students who are able to perform well academically, tend to put only minimal effort into their schoolwork and ultimately perform poorly in school (Dance, 2002). As a result, they often are erroneously labeled as academically and/or socially deficient by school staff that places the blame for poor performance solely on the innate ability of the child.

A District in Crisis

The District of Columbia (D.C.) is the 4th largest metro area in the nation and boasts a wide variety of entertainment, opportunity, and historical significance (Regional Report, 2007). In addition to housing 54 Presidents, the Supreme Court, the House of Representatives and Congress, the District also has tremendous historical significance,

with numerous monuments, parks, cultural treasures and historic neighborhoods that played a part in the shaping of the nation. Downtown D.C. is a business and political hub, offering a fast-paced, upscale lifestyle for its residents.

Just around the corner from the White House, however, is an entirely separate world not advertised in brochures. Homelessness and hopelessness reside right down the street from the District's wealthiest residential areas. Many children and families live in poverty with insufficient economic, social, and political support (D.C. Kids Count Collaborative, 2005, 2006). Recent reports boast an increase in jobs located in the District's private sector (*Every Kid Counts, 2005*). Unfortunately, the rise in employment has not trickled down to the area's poorest residents (D.C. Kids Count Collaborative, 2005). A wage gap remains between high- and low-paying jobs, and while lower paying jobs have experienced slight growth, the District has seen a significant increase in higher paying positions. The areas increasing unemployment rate indicates that most of these new positions are being filled by suburban commuters rather than D.C. residents (*Every Kid Counts, 2005*).

As employment rates "increase" the poverty rate for all District residents has held steady, though for children, the rate has shown some improvement (*Every Kid Counts, 2005*). Still, almost three-fourths of children living in the District in 2004 were African-American, and of those, 42% lived below the poverty line (*Every Kid Counts, 2006*). Eleven percent of the District's children were Hispanic, 33% of whom lived below the poverty line (*Every Kid Counts, 2006*). Despite reported improvement, these numbers are a significant concern. District children are still two times more likely than adults to live in

poverty and over two-thirds of the District of Columbia's public school students received free or reduced lunches in 2004 (*Every Kid Counts, 2005, 2006*).

D.C. Public Schools

Poor economic and social conditions often negatively affect children's schooling experiences. For decades, school and community leaders have struggled to improve the learning conditions in D.C.'s inner city. The District of Columbia's Public Schools (DCPS) have consistently battled high drop out rates, low achievement scores, dilapidated facilities, and teacher shortages (Restoring Excellence, 2004; Davis, 2005; Cave, 2002). The DCPS website quotes Richard Hurlbut's (1981) claim that the "current Rules of the District of Columbia Board of Education mandate that the educational programs of the Public Schools all be designed and implemented to provide equal educational opportunity for all students to attain the knowledge, competencies, and skills which will enable each student to function as a useful citizen" (4) While official rules may espouse equity and social justice for DCPS, the experiences of the District children tells quite a different story.

Former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige (2004) notes that DCPS test scores fall below every other state in the nation, and he acknowledges that the achievement gap between African-American students and their white peers is 70%, more than double the national average (4). Paige (2004) quotes the former D.C. mayor as stating that the school system is "a slow moving train wreck."

Nearly half of all public schools in the District have been labeled "in need of improvement" based on math and reading scores that failed to meet NCLB benchmarks (Davis, 2005). This number demonstrates an increase from 15 schools in 2003 to 71 in

2004 (Davis, 2005). Only 10% of 4th graders are proficient in reading and 7% meet expectations in math. That number decreases to 6% for 8th graders. D.C. schools also report a 23% truancy rate, compared to 1.8% in Prince George's County, .9% in Montgomery County, and .6% in Fairfax County (Davis, 2005). Far too many students are not showing up for classes, and 40% of students leave school before graduation (*Every Kid Counts, 2005*). The District is in crisis and in need of tremendous improvement. Local and federal officials have looked to a number of reform solutions in an attempt to improve the alarming conditions in D.C. schools. Unfortunately, the challenges faced by DCPS have not proven easy to rectify.

Educational Reform Efforts

As Paige (2004) admits, the problems faced by DCPS are a reflection of the District's systems, not the residents. So, what efforts are school and community leaders making to correct the system? In recent years, the most prominent educational reform efforts have included the implementation of a voucher system, an increased reliance on charter schools, and the establishment of the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Partnership.

Vouchers

The DCPS voucher system became a reality with the enactment of the School Choice Incentive Act, signed by Congress into law in January 2004. In addition to establishing the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program to create the voucher system, the Act provided funds for DCPS's "improvement activities and charter school facility acquisition" (Wolf et al., 2005). The Act requires that to be eligible for voucher funds, students must reside in the District and have a household income "at or below 185% of

the federal poverty line” (Wolf et al., 2005, ix). Scholarships, totaling up to \$7,500, are renewable for a maximum of five years, and are given directly to eligible families to cover the costs of tuition and other educational expenses at participating D.C. private schools (Chartrand, 2006, Wolf, 2005).

In the two years since its enactment, studies indicate that the voucher program has not always met expectations (Reid, 2004; *Flaws and Failings*, 2005). The program guarantees placement into private school admission pools, but students still must meet admission requirements, find transportation, and make the difficult adjustment to the private school culture. Meeting admissions requirements has been challenging for most students, because to be eligible to receive vouchers, they must attend a public school with low academic performance (Chartrand, 2006). Many of the potential transfer students are well behind the academic levels required in the schools to which they apply. With a few exceptions, most D.C. private schools have only accepted a couple of students and several have not accepted any at all, and most schools cite cultural, educational and logistical barriers to admitting “eligible” children into their student populations (Chartrand, 2006).

Charter Schools

Charter schools are another option for children attending low-performing traditional public schools. First established in the early 1990’s, more than 4,000 charter school are now in operation in 40 states and the District of Columbia compared to 2,300 in operation in 34 states and in the District of Columbia in 2003 ((*Number of Charter Schools*, 2007; Portz, 2003).

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board was established as a part of the D.C. School Reform Act in 1994 (*Fact Sheet*, n.d.). The D.C. Public Charter

School Board and the D.C. Board of Education are the two chartering authorities for DCPS (*Fact Sheet*, n.d.). In D.C. alone, there are 37 charter schools currently in operation, serving approximately 19,733 students (*Current Enrollment*, n.d.).

Though charter schools are publicly funded, they are not held to the same standards as traditional public schools and are far more autonomous (Cookson, 1997). Charter schools are allowed more flexibility with their methods of curriculum development and instruction and tend to enroll a high percentage of minority students (Goldhaber and Eide, 2002).

Charter schools have come under fire lately. Critics argue the degree to which the lack of strict accountability is affecting the quality of instruction that charter school students receive. Opponents also question the level of funding that is taken from public schools to finance student transfers to charter schools (Portz, 2003). Without these much-needed funds, many public schools struggle to compete with the growing number of alternative choice options. Currently, a lawsuit pending against the District argues that D.C. officials “are promoting charter schools instead of improving public schools” that serve large populations of African American and Latino students from low-income homes (Bradley, A, 4).

D.C. Children and Youth Investment Partnership

The third significant reform effort aimed at improving conditions for District youth is the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Partnership. Over 300 community and civic leaders came together in 1995 to create the Partnership, which proposed to “build a sustainable collaboration that changes the way in which youth programs are designed, managed, and implemented” (Keegan and Chaplin, 2002). The goal of the program was

to enhance the quality and quantity of services available to D.C. youth, particularly in the afterschool hours. Despite significant funding constraints, the organization has developed the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation. The Corporation has successfully supported the efforts of various out-of-school time services for D.C. youth and has expanded the Aftercare program, which provides a significant amount of out-of-school time services to D.C. students through DCPS (Keegan and Chaplin, 2002). Future initiatives include aiding in new school reform efforts in DCPS, increasing afterschool opportunities for older youth, and connecting with more viable funding sources.

New Leadership

In the most recent radical reform effort, D.C. mayor Adrian Fenty has taken over the school system in an effort to bring sweeping change and much-needed improvement to the district. Fenty is the first D.C. mayor with direct control of the schools and he and his team promise to improve the district's "abysmal test scores, dysfunctional management systems, and decaying building" (Witt, 2007; Keating and Haynes, 2007).

D.C., like most urban areas, has faced tremendous challenges in its efforts to provide quality schooling experiences for its students. As evidenced by the resources dedicated to the development D.C. Children and Youth Investment Partnership in particular, district leaders seem to recognize the role that supplemental education programs potentially can play in boosting academic performance, especially for the district's historically underserved students.

What It All Means

As educational and community leaders continue their attempts to address and rectify the achievement gap between white and minoritized students, it is essential that

they look beyond explanations and solutions grounded in deficit thought, to acknowledge the role that systemic inequity has played, and still plays, in the challenges that marginalized students face in school. As Pearl (1999) contends, accepting the simplicity of the deficit models absolves academics and policymakers of addressing issues of inequality. In order to serve all students equitably, the goal for educators should not be to “fix” disadvantaged children and force them to conform to a culture that is foreign to their own. Instead, the aim should be to create an environment where differences are embraced and integrated into the learning experience.

Research indicates that schools in some districts have experienced increases in achievement in response to NCLB. In other cases, however, the policy has helped to exacerbate pre-existing inequities and further disservice urban youth. The reliance on high stakes standardized testing to measure instructional quality has resulted in decreased funding and organizational chaos in many urban districts, all of which makes it difficult for educators to create environments that are conducive to learning for urban youth.

Supplemental education programs have the potential to benefit urban students and help to positively augment the instruction students receive in schools. It remains to be seen, however, the impact that NCLB’s SES model will have on participants involved in SES Provider programs. Though we know very little about the present SES model, we do know that afterschool programs in general have the ability to supplement the instruction students receive in traditional schools. It is possible, then, to use what we know about ASPs to tailor the SES provision to work to the benefit of urban students.

Afterschool organizations often have greater flexibility with programming and can work to provide more culturally relevant and accepting learning environments for

urban youth. Further investigation into such afterschool programs, particularly those that also serve as SES Providers, can increase our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist for participants within these organizations.

This study will investigate one such SES program located in D.C. through an exploration of participant experiences with an SES provider and with SES policy in DCPS. This study will be largely informed by CRT. One of the tenets of CRT is to emphasize the centrality of experiential knowledge. As such, CRT will supply an appropriate lens through which to view and value the lived experiences of participants in the SES Provider program if study. CRT will also inform my examination of the cultural responsiveness of the program environment and the interplay of race and power within the organizational setting.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

For decades, education reform efforts have resulted in policies aimed at reducing the achievement gap between white, African-American and Latino students. Many of these reforms resulted in policies like NCLB that have as much potential to exacerbate existing inequalities as they do to relieve them. As we continue to examine the effectiveness of NCLB and other reforms, it is essential that we give voice to the experiences of the children being left behind in failing urban schools. While initiatives like NCLB's SES provision have the potential to benefit urban youth, policymakers must ensure that these programs reduce inequity, not reinforce it. Educational leaders must make certain that SES providers are providing for urban students safe, accepting, and nurturing environments that are conducive to learning and development.

This study attempts to shed light on one such program by detailing the experiences of an SES provider, its staff, and its student participants within an urban afterschool program in DC. The study also explores participant experiences with SES in DCPS. By giving voice to the perceptions, ideas, and experiences of both staff and students, we can begin to better understand the challenges and opportunities of providing quality SES to urban youth.

Statement of Research Questions

Throughout the study, I attempt to answer to the following questions:

- 1) How do participants (students, staff, and parents) describe, understand and explain their experiences within the program?
- 2) What is the relationship between (student, staff, and parent) participation in the program and individual values and beliefs?
- 3) In what ways do participants experiences and perceptions align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs?

A Case for Case Study

To answer the aforementioned questions, I conducted a qualitative, critical case study. Qualitative inquiry was appropriate to this study because it allowed me to focus on understanding the meanings that people assign to their world and how they make sense of their experiences (Stake, 1995, 6). Creswell (1994) defines qualitative inquiry as “the process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (2).

Because my goal was to understand the experiences of participants within the SES program environment, qualitative case study seemed an appropriate method for this study. It enabled me to understand the benefits and challenges that participants experienced within the program environment from their individual perspectives.

Qualitative case study is a useful tool when attempting to comprehend a particular issue within a specific context and from the point of view of participants. Though a number of definitions of case study research exist, there are certain characteristics that seem to be essential to conducting a rigorous study. In order to be classified as a case study, Shulman (1981) explains, the case must be representative of a greater grouping of individuals or phenomena. The researcher must ask, “What is this a case of?” and examine how the issue of interest fits into the larger body of knowledge.

Robert Yin (2003) defines case study as a broad research strategy that empirically investigates “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. Providing a detailed, comprehensive description of the context within which a case exists is essential to the understanding of said case. By providing such detail, the writer enables the reader

to vicariously experience the case as if they were present in the setting (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Context description can include everything from the physical setting, to the social, economic, and political conditions within which the case is situated (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

The focus in this tradition is on understanding the case itself and providing increased insight into and knowledge of the phenomenon. In addition to rich description of context, case studies also entail narrative renderings numerous perspectives to provide better insight into the case. To gain these varied perspectives, case study often employs the use of multiple sources of information, commonly including interviews, direct observation, and document review (Creswell, 1998). The researcher in this method is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing these rich data, and is expected to react to and interact with the site by adjusting to situations as they occur and by making the most of opportunities to obtain and produce meaningful information (Merriam, 1998).

I chose to conduct a single-site case study because enabled me to collect extensive data on case of interest, an individual SES program provider in Washington, D.C. Case study served as a suitable methodology for understanding the SES programs through the perspectives of the student participants and program staff and within the “real-life context” of the program environment, because it facilitated a close examination of the experiences of disadvantaged youth, within the bounded system of the SES program, over a restricted period of time – one public school semester (Stevenson, 2004, 41).

Case studies can either be of an intrinsic or instrumental nature. An intrinsic study focuses primarily on the case itself, specifically because of its uniqueness. Intrinsic case studies are not used to understand other cases or some larger social issue (Stake, 1995).

An instrumental case study, however, seeks to illustrate a particular issue or problem, of which the particular case is an example (Creswell, 1998). In an intrinsic study, the case is dominant, while in instrumental research; the issue is of highest importance (Stake, 1995). I chose to employ an instrumental case study because I wanted to explore how participants experience both SES policy implementation and the ground level operation of a particular SES program provider.

Through a Critical Lens

This study was informed by Critical Race Theory, in part because I believe its emphasis on the centrality of experiential knowledge of historically oppressed peoples fits well with case study's emphasis on the importance of narrative renderings and multiple perspectives when exploring a case. CRT stresses the importance of including these narratives in discussions of education policy (Yosso, 2002). CRT also serves as a vehicle for examining the programmatic context of the SES Provider and exploring the interplay of race, culture, and power within the relational and programmatic aspects of the setting. Lastly, CRT aids in efforts to challenge the acceptance of white values and mores as the norm within educational settings and advocates for the integration of the cultural capital of students into the program environment (Yosso, 2002).

Program Site Selection

When I began the process of selecting a program site for my research in the summer of 2006, I was searching for a program with particular characteristics.

- Because of my interest in urban education, I wanted the program to be located in an **urban** city (or District) - thus the selection of the District of Columbia, an area known for its challenges in providing quality academic services to local residents.

- I wanted to study a program that served **middle school children**, primarily because they were just old enough to be able to understand and clearly verbalize the more complex concepts that I would be examining in this study. Also, there were slightly more program offerings for middle school students than there were for those in high school.
- Because my review of the literature revealed the importance of **comprehensive programs** that combined academics with enrichment activities, I wanted to find a program that included both aspects in their program structure.
- I wanted to find a **community-based** program, because programs based in the community tend to provide innovative enrichment activities and educational programming that complement the regular school day while establishing valuable connections to the surrounding community (National Institute for Out-of-School Time, 2007).
- I thought it important that the tutoring occur in a **group setting**, instead of one-on-one, so I could have access to more than one child at a time during observations.

Beyond these pre-selected criteria, I tried to let my initial informational interviews guide my site selection process.

Informational Interviews

My first impression, upon review of the list of DC SES Providers, was that while several sites served middle school children, there were few community-based organizations in that category that provided group instruction. Additionally, of those that provided services for middle school students, only 11 of the 37 programs were

community-based, site-based programs. I was able to further narrow down that number by excluded programs that were sponsored directly by schools or were focused solely towards either Latin or Asian American students and excluded other populations. I wanted to ensure that the organization I explored was racially and ethnically diverse and representative of the DCPS student population.

I began by contacting each of the seven remaining organizations, presenting myself as a graduate student, who was initiating my research on Supplemental Education Services. I explained that I wanted to investigate the experiences of participants (including program providers) with SES. Initially, I was able to schedule 4 interviews with The TAC Program, Lauren's House, Safe Space and Student Success. The remaining three providers that met my specifications never returned my numerous inquiries (I contacted each provider at least 4 times before concluding that I would receive no response). This lack of communication may have been due, in part, to the fact that I was beginning this process during the summer, when many afterschool organizations are not fully staffed.

I cancelled my interview with Safe Space when I realized they served only elementary school children, and kept the three others with Lauren's House, TAC, and Student Success. While my interviews with Lauren's House and TAC were extremely informative, my third interview with Student Success never occurred, as the program representative failed to appear for our meeting.

My first interview was with TAC, and I was immediately impressed with several aspects of their program. When I first set foot in their administrative office, I found it colorful, warm, and welcoming. All of the staff that I met was pleasant and helpful, and

very interested in the prospect of working with me on this project. During my initial interview with TAC, Allison, the Director of Communications, explained her harrowing experiences as an SES provider and regaled me with tales of dealing with unrealistic expectations, disorganization, miscommunication, and erroneous information on the part of the DCPS SES Office. I will go into more detail about their experiences in the following chapter.

Allison followed her account of TAC's SES experience with an explanation of the program itself. As she described the program structure, I felt certain that TAC would be a good fit for my study. They were a community-based program, serving middle school children, and integrated a strong, research-based academic component with a variety of enrichment activities. Additionally, they provided tutoring in group settings and espoused an organizational belief that all students had the potential to be academically and personally successful. They also had a strong social justice theme, which, I was told, integrated itself throughout many aspects of their programming. I was very curious to investigate whether the ideals and belief systems touted on the administrative level found their way down to the practices of the staff on the front line and the experiences of student participants.

Despite my initial feelings that TAC was a good fit for my study, I decided to continue with my other interviews to ensure that I had a balanced perspective when making my final decision. During my second interview, the Executive Director and Education Coordinator at Lauren's House told a very similar tale of their challenging experiences with DCPS's SES process. In fact, after going through the application process, dealing with the myriad of challenges presented by DCPS, and eventually

providing SES services to children, DCPS failed to compensate them for their participation as an SES provider.

While their experiences with SES were noteworthy, the more I learned about their program, the more I doubted Lauren's House would be a proper fit for my study. Their staff delivered tutoring on a one-on-one basis, and had minimal inclusion of enrichment activities.

The TAC Program

After meeting with both programs, and determining how well they both met my pre-established criteria (urban location, serves middle school students, comprehensive community-based program, and group instruction), I decided that TAC was the better fit for my study. The program met all of my criteria and I was curious to explore both their social justice component, and their ability to put their program paradigm in practice on the ground level.

The Afterschool Community Program (TAC), founded in the mid-1970's, is a nonprofit afterschool (and summer) organization located in the District of Columbia. The program provides year-round academic enrichment and high school transition services to middle school children from historically underserved areas. TAC delivers over 650 hours of services annually to hundreds of students at five sites throughout the District. The program's overarching mission is to develop the academic skills, behaviors, and attitudes in motivated but underserved children to improve their grades, test scores, attendance and opportunities – the most important opportunity being acceptance into top high school programs. TAC strives to help their students reach their highest potential for academic performance and community leadership.

TAC serves students in grades 4-8, and accepts students with the understanding that they will participate in the program until they complete the 8th grade. TAC charges parents a nominal program fee annually, and offers scholarships to families who cannot afford the fee. Most of the students that I spoke with at the Ward 4 site were on either full or partial scholarship.

Students are commonly referred to the program through teacher/school referral or through word of mouth. TAC makes a point to recruit students whom they deem to be “intellectually curious” and academically motivated, though the TAC staff asserts that they only turn away students who clearly state that they have no desire to be a part of the program. Students are then assigned to one of the various site locations based upon the site’s proximity to the student’s school or home.

At the multiple TAC satellite locations, Site Coordinators and staff work to develop safe, nurturing environments that foster a “community of knowledge-seekers, where academic achievement is valued, exciting, and above all FUN” (*TAC Executive summary, n.d.*). In addition to being academically relevant and designed to meet educational standards from the Stanford 9 test, TAC curriculum is also culturally and socially relevant. The TAC program is built upon four social justice themes, Freedom, Voice, Solidarity, and Justice, and each lesson is centered on one or more of the pillars.

During tutoring lessons, students “learn subject verb agreement reading Frederick Douglass’ *What is Your Fourth of July to Me* speech, literary devices with Rudolfo Anaya, Sister Souljah, and Langston Hughes, and paragraph structure reading Mahatma Gandhi’s writings” (*What Makes Us Unique, n.d.*). In their math lessons, students learn about percentages using Duke Ellington’s musical scores, and in science, scholars

examine race evolution and genetics and learn about social debates about Darwinism, the Bell Curve, and genetic engineering (*What Makes Us Unique*, n.d.). Through this socially and culturally relevant material, students are exposed to advanced concepts in ways that “increase academic confidence and achievement, heighten cultural awareness, and reinforce standards-based skills” (Curricula, n.d.).

Afterschool Academy

TAC’s Afterschool Academy takes place on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons and evenings, from 3:30 pm until 8:00 pm. Barring any school-related activities or responsibilities, students are to come directly to the site at the end of their regular school day. Each evening is broken down into the following schedule:

3:30 – 5:00 pm – Study Hall/Snack Time

5:00 – 6:00 pm – Enrichment Activities

6:00 – 6:15 pm – Team Time (T-Time)

6:15 – 7:45 pm – Tutoring Time

7:45 – 8:00 pm – Evening Wrap Up

In the following chapter, we will examine each of these program components to gain a better understanding of the program context within which subject experiences take place.

Each TAC site is staffed by one Site Coordinator, who oversees all site operations, one Volunteer Coordinator, who recruits and manages the tutors, two Academic Aides, who assist the children with their homework during Study Hall, and one Site Assistant, who helps with homework, serves the evening snack, and performs any other duties as requested by the Site Coordinator. Tutors are primarily college students

who either volunteer or participate through work study at their university. In addition to college student tutors, there are a smaller percentage of professional volunteers.

The Afterschool Academy runs from the first week in October until the first week in May, and begins in the fall with a Pre-test to gauge the students' academic proficiencies and areas for improvement. Based upon those tests, grades from school, and student personalities, children are placed into tutoring groups for Literature, Math, and Technology lessons each evening, respectively. Tutors are provided with a pre-established curriculum that they can either follow to the letter or modify to suit their teaching styles and the needs of their students. Students are given a post-test at the end of the Academy in May to gauge their progress. Progress is also measured by school grades, attendance, tardies, and standardized test scores.

In addition to the academic component of TAC, they also include an enrichment component. Each evening, after study hall, students have the option of participating in a variety of Enrichment Activities, including, in part, Dance, Art, Music, Creative Writing, Spanish, Sign Language, and Acting. Students who have trouble finishing their homework have the option of continuing work on their school assignments until the T-Time. Beyond the daily activities offered during Enrichment Time, TAC also provides a variety of other Special Events and activities for students, including:

- *Spelling Bee*
- *Halloween*
- *ThankFest*
- *Literary Love Poem Contest*
- *Olympics of the Mind*

- *Science Fair*

Follow Through

Because one of the goals of TAC is to ensure that students are admitted into a “top” high school, all 8th graders must participate in the Follow Through program on Mondays, which helps them through the high school application process. Because of the great disparity among high schools in the District, and because demand is so high for those deemed to be “quality” schools, students must go through an application process, which in some cases includes an interview. During their Follow Through workshops, students must select their high schools of interest, complete the application, write all required essays, and attend at least one high school fair, sponsored by HAP. By the end of the spring semester, most students receive word about which schools have accepted them and they must then make a choice about which one they will attend.

Summer Program

Because the need for supervision, academic advancement, and enrichment does not end with the school year, TAC follows the Afterschool Academy with a summer program that begins in June, after DC schools bring their regular school year to a close, and runs until the first week of August. Unlike Afterschool Academy, the summer program operates all day, from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm, five days per week.

Daily Schedule

8:00 – 8:30 am – Breakfast

8:30 – 9:00 am – Opening Meeting

9:00 – 12:00 am – Class Time (Classes 1, 2, and 3)

12:00 – 1:30 pm – Lunch/Recreation/Quiet Reading Time

1:30 – 2:30 pm – Class Time (Class 4)

2:30 – 3:30 pm – Enrichment Time

3:30 – 4:00 pm – Closing Meeting

As this study took place from October until February, little emphasis will be placed on the summer program.

The TAC Program Sites (WARD 4)

The TAC Program operates from four sites throughout the District. Sites are dispersed throughout the area according to the various District Wards. The sites are currently located in Wards 1, 4, 6 and 7, with plans to expand into VA, MD, and other states across the country. Each site is located in one of many DC public middle schools.

For the purposes of this study, I have focused primarily on the Ward 4 site. After receiving approval from the Executive Director to conduct my study of their program, it was recommended that I concentrate my efforts at the Ward 4 location, as that is the site that has been in operation, best demonstrates the TAC tenets, and had the highest population of SES students last year. With this recommendation in hand, I began my observations of Ward 4 during the first week in October.

TAC as an SES Provider

According to Allison, the TAC program structure aligns well with the requirements of the SES program, considering that they offer research-based academic instruction to historically underserved youth. It was, Allison stated, a great match.

Because of the correlation between the TAC program and SES requirements, TAC was required to make few programmatic changes on the ground level to become a provider.

SES students were virtually indistinguishable from students who were not receiving SES

funding. The only change at the site level was an adjustment in the way that the SES students signed in each evening. I kept this in mind as I began the process of selecting my sample of student participants. Because only 11 TAC students participated in SES, most of them from the Ward 4 site, I wanted to obtain a cross sample of students eligible for SES and those who were not.

Sample Selection

Students

While there were some students at the TAC Ward 4 site who were challenged both academically and behaviorally, the larger part of the population came from two-parent working class homes, had anywhere from below average to above average grades, and expressed a desire to succeed academically, professionally, and personally.

The student population at TAC consisted primarily of African-American students (or students of African descent). Of the 83 students on the roster, 7 were Latino, and 2 were Asian. The rest were African American, African, or West Indian. There were almost an equal amount of males and females in the program, with about 58% females, 42% males.

The students at TAC range in grade from 5th grade to 8th, with one student attending who is in the 4th grade. Student dispersement across grades and ages is as follows:

Table 1 Student Grade Level	
4 th	1
5 th	22
6 th	26
7 th	19
8 th	15

Table 2 Student Ages	
Age 9	1
Age 10	23
Age 11	23
Age 12	15
Age 13	18
Age 14	3

The students at the Ward 4 site of TAC attended a wide variety of DC Schools, both public and private. DCPS has a unique system that includes elementary schools serving either grades K-5 or K-6, middle schools serving grades 6-8, junior high schools serving grades 7-9, and high schools serving grades 9-12. Because TAC made an effort to guide students to the better performing schools in the District, most students at the Ward 4 site attended the host school, Truman Charter. Sixteen other elementary, middle, or junior high schools were represented in the student population.

Table 3 Student Home Schools			
School Name	School Type	Grades Served	No. Students Attending
Truman Public Charter School*/**	Public Charter	6-9	33
Macintosh Elementary School*/**	Public	PK-6	9
St. Michael School	Private	PK-8	9
Hardin Elementary School*/**	Public	PK-6	2
Cohen Leadership Public Charter School*/**	Public Charter	7-9	1
Wright Elementary School**	Public	PK-6	5
Westwood Educational Center**	Public	PK-8	4
Bratton Elementary School**	Public	PK-5	5
The Hampton School	Private	PK-12	1
Northwest Preparatory Academy**	Public Charter	4-8	1
The Pathways Academy	Private	PK-8	2
Haverton Public Charter School**	Public Charter	PK-8	3
Weston Elementary School	Public	PK-6	1
Eastside Elementary School**	Public	PK-6	2
Achieve Academy**	Public Charter	PK-8	1
Denton Elementary School	Public	PK-6	1
Campbell School	Private	7-12	2

**Schools considered in need of improvement that are required to offer SES funding for students(2005) 2006 data not available at the time of this study.*
*** Schools not meeting AYP in 2006*

As the table indicates, the majority of students in the Ward 4 TAC program attend schools that have been categorized as “Needs Improvement” or have failed to meet AYP in 2006. At the time of the study, data on DCPS schools in need of improvement was not yet available.

As I created my subject sample, I kept this information in mind and tried to compile a balanced sample population that reflected the overall population of the Ward 4 site. Initially, I distributed consent forms to 18 students, with the hope of finding a good sample of about 10. Of those 18, eight did not return their consent forms. One student attempted to forge his parent’s signature. I was left with the following students for my subject sample (all subject names are pseudonyms to preserve anonymity):

1. *Nina* – a 13 year old Latina female in the 8th grade at Truman Public Charter School
2. *Jonah* – a 10 year old African-American male in the 5th grade at Haverton Charter School
3. *Kayla* - a 12 year old African-American female in the 7th grade at Truman Public Charter School
4. *Mary* - an 11 year old African-American female in the 6th grade at Macintosh Elementary School
5. *Micah* - a 10 year old student from African (Nigerian) male in the 6th grade at St. Michael’s School.
6. *Jada* – a 13 year old African-American female in the 8th grade at Westwood Educational Center

7. *Kendra* – a 13 year old African-American female in the 8th grade at Westwood Educational Center
8. *Jeremiah* – a 10 year old African (Ethiopian) male in the 5th grade at Hardin Elementary School
9. *Eve* – a 13 year old African (Eritrean) female in the 8th grade at Truman Public Charter School
10. *Shareese* – a 13 year old African-American female in the 8th grade at Truman Public Charter School

Tutors

Each student involved in TAC has three tutors that they work with throughout the week. Because some tutors work on multiple evenings, I had a pool of 25 tutors from which to choose for this study. While it was unrealistic to interview all 25 tutors in the time period allotted for this study, I did distribute consent forms to 18 of them. Of those 18, 14 returned consent forms. Of those 14 tutors, I interviewed 10, including:

1. *Ms. Casey* – 18 year old white female from Maine, who was a freshman psychology major at Catholic University. In addition to being a tutor, Ms. Casey also worked as an Academic Aide at the site. This was her first year with TAC, and she tutored Kayla in Literature on Mondays.
2. *Mr. Kyle* – 25 year old white male who worked in the International Education Development field. Mr. Kyle was the former Volunteer Coordinator at the Ward 4 site. Altogether, he had been with TAC for 3 years, and he tutored Micah in Technology on Tuesdays.

3. *Ms. Terri* – 45 year old African American female lawyer. Ms. Terri had been a volunteer at various sites with TAC for 12 years, and tutored Shareese and Kendra in Literature on Thursdays.
4. *Mr. Greg* – 19 year old white male, who was a freshman engineering major at Catholic University. This was his first year with TAC, and he tutored Nina in Literature on Mondays.
5. *Mr. James* – 27 year old African American male who worked in the finance industry. This was his first year with TAC, and he tutored Mary in Literature on Mondays.
6. *Ms. Sue* - 19 year old Asian American female from Iowa, who was a sophomore International Economics and Finance major at Catholic University. This was Ms. Sue's second year with TAC, and she tutored Kayla in Technology on Tuesdays.
7. *Mr. Joseph* – 19 year old Latino male from DC, who was a junior Social Work major at Catholic University from DC. This was his first year with TAC, and he tutored Micah in Literature on Tuesdays and Eve in Math on Thursdays.
8. *Ms. Natasha* – African American female in her 30's who worked as a Legal Secretary. It was Ms. Natasha's second year with TAC, and she tutored Kendra and Shareese in Technology on Mondays.
9. *Mr. Thomas* – 24 year old Latino male who worked as a Director of Evaluation with the TAC program. He tutored Nina and Shareese in math

at the Ward 4 site on Tuesdays and has been with TAC altogether for 3 years.

10. *Mr. Justin* – 29 year old Latino male who worked as the Director of Student Recruitment with the TAC program. He tutored Ruth in technology on Tuesdays, and was the former and first Site Coordinator at the Ward 4 site. Altogether, he had been with the program for 5 years.

A large percentage of the tutors at TAC Ward 4 are recruited from local colleges through the DC Reads program. Of those college students, a large majority attend Catholic University, with a much smaller percentage attending Howard University. The remaining tutors are professional volunteers.

Staff

The last sample group included the TAC program staff that worked at Ward 4, including:

- *Ms. Katrina* –African-American female in her late 20's who worked as the Site Coordinator for Ward 4
- *Ms. Renee* –African-American female in her late 20's who worked as the Volunteer Coordinator for Ward 4
- *Mr. Travis* – 20 year old African-American male who worked as the Ward 4 Site Assistant
- *Ms. Casey* – 18 year old white female student at Catholic University (see above) who served as both tutor and Academic Aide
- *Ms. Kristen* – 24 year old white female who worked as the second Academic Aide.

I also interviewed tutors, Mr. Justin and Mr. Thomas (see above), who work at TAC's Administrative office and volunteer at the center once per week. Mr. Justin was the former Site Coordinator at Ward 4, and at the time of the study helped to coordinate the SES process for the entire program. Allison, a white female in her early 30's, was also included in the staff subject group, as she is the primary SES contact for the organization in her position as Director of Communications and Grants. She works at the TAC administrative office.

Methods

Data Collection

I conducted this inquiry over the course of 1.5 school semesters, from October 2006 until February 2007, and spent five months at the program site. My primary methods of data collection included participant observation, examination of student records (progress reports, report cards, grade histories, school assignments, tutorial lessons, testing records), and semi-structured group and individual interviews with students, tutors, program staff, and parents.

Interviews

Over the course of my time at the Ward 4 TAC center, I conducted 16 interviews with students, 10 interviews with tutors, and 8 interviews with staff. I interviewed most of the students twice, once per semester, but due to scheduling conflicts, was only able to interview Micah and Eve once. I interviewed each of the tutors and staff once, with the exception of Katrina, with whom I also conducted an informal interview at the beginning of the study, Allison, and Justin, both of whom I spoke with twice regarding their experience with SES in DCPS.

I selected the aforementioned individuals for interview because their varying perspectives provided insight into the individual and collective experiences of students, tutors, and staff within the program environment. One of my primary sources of data was the voices and stories of the student participants of the SES program of study. As Piha and Miller (2003) state, “there is no better way to assess the degree to which programs are meeting the needs of young people than asking the young program participants and engaging the voice of young people in decisions that affect their after school experiences” (5). By encouraging them to critically reflect on their experiences within the program, I wanted to ascertain their views of the setting and their interactions with program staff and tutors. I also wanted to understand student opinions about which activities and interactions were beneficial or detrimental to their experience within the program. Their perspectives can help increase our knowledge of the activities, techniques and methodologies that are effective in reaching and teaching urban students.

While it is important to understand student perspectives of their learning environment and educational experiences, dialogue with parents, tutors, and program staff will provide greater insight into the contextual factors that influence each child’s experience in the program environment. Dialogue with the tutors and staff is particularly important, as it is essential to assess both their ideas about the goals of the organization, their role within said organization, and their perceptions of the program’s participants. Understanding their views helps to paint a clearer picture of the program and explain the success or detriment of their interactions with students.

Conversations with parents also help to round out the picture of student experiences. Parents provide additional background on students, and can contribute their

ideas about how well staff interacts with students and families. These additional perspectives provide a greater context for students' academic performance, behavior, and personal reactions to the program.

Interviews primarily were conducted in individually, though I performed two group interviews with Kendra and Jada due to time constraints. The interviews were all digitally recorded (with the permission of participants) in order to ensure the accuracy of data. Both the individual and group interviews were semi-structured in nature.

My design of the interview protocols and the subsequent interviews were impacted by my theoretical framework. The application of Critical Race Theory compelled me to place significant value upon students perspective and opinions, include questions about the significance of race in student-tutor interactions, inquire about students perceptions of tutor and staff expectations, investigate participants' understanding and views of the organization's social justice themes, and explore students perceptions of and experiences navigating the culture and context of the TAC program environment. Please see Appendix B-D for interview protocols.

Observation

In addition to interviews, observation was a major method of data collection in this study. Conducting observations of program activities provided more objective insight into the manner in which daily activities are presented, program goals are communicated, and messages about individual and group perceptions and expectations are conveyed between students, tutors, and staff. I also was able to observe student reactions to daily activities, program staff, and the overall program environment.

Becoming a participant observer in the program setting entailed my involvement in daily activities at the site. I had frequent conversations with the children, asking them

about their experiences at school and in the program, often helped them with their homework, and even served as the announcer at their Spelling Bee Contest. Participant observation allowed me to move beyond anonymous observation without contact and made room for regular interaction between myself and program participants. This interaction increased opportunities for understanding the program environment through the eyes of the students and staff.

I began by spending two days at the site, Tuesday and Thursday from 4-8pm, but as the term progressed, I saw that it was necessary to increase my attendance to three days, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. While at the site, I attended and observed Study Hall, staff meetings and informal discussions, Tutoring Sessions, and enrichment activities (including Special Events). By obtaining data from these sources, I hope to provide an in-depth account of the interaction between the student participants and program staff, explore staff perceptions and expectations of student participants, and gain a better understanding of student perceptions of their experiences within the school environment.

My observations, like my interviews, were influenced by my critical race perspective. As I explored the site, I made a concerted effort to pay close attention to the interactions between students and the adults in the program to better understand the interplay of power relationships, expectations, and pre-existing perspectives within the program environment. I also paid close attention to the implementation and integration of the purported social justice themes within the programmatic context, any action or initiative that indicated the valuation of student voices and experiences, the level of expectations exhibited by tutor and staff interactions with students, and the overall

cultural responsiveness of TAC's programming, curriculum, tutors, and staff. Please see Appendix A for the interview protocol.

Document Review

In order to understand the academic benefits of the program, it is also important to examine student documents, including activities and assignments from the program, as well as school grades and assignments from the children's home schools. By examining these documents, I can begin to determine whether the program may be helping to improve students' achievement levels. Enhanced student performance both in the program and in the school setting may be an indication that students are both acquiring new skills within the program and successfully transferring that knowledge from the program setting to the classroom.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this case took place throughout the study. Following each observation, I reviewed and typed up my field notes, and wrote analytic memos of any salient issues, questions, or themes that emerged. After each interview, digital files were sent for transcription. Once transcripts were received, I reviewed them for accuracy and for any initial reactions that called for an analytic memo.

The data from each of the interviews was transcribed and entered into my qualitative data analysis software, Atlas TI. Using Atlas, I began the first level of coding with all interviews and observations. This initial stage of coding was conducted on a very micro-level, resulting in a large number of very detailed coding categories.

Because my primary goal was to understand participant perceptions of their experiences within the TAC program, I principally used interviews to answer each of my research questions. My observations and my review of various student documents helped

to triangulate the data I gathered through participant interviews. The use of multiple sources of data aided in validating the whole of the data collected. Conducting interviews with multiple participants within the setting – students, staff, and tutors – also helped to triangulate the data.

To answer my first question, I examined interview transcripts from students, staff, and tutors, and as I coded them, I searched for responses that spoke to their perceptions of TAC and their overall experiences within the program. During my review of student interview transcripts, I specifically looked for comments that described their opinions of their relationships with TAC staff and tutors, the benefits they saw in their involvement with TAC, and the areas in which they felt the program needed to improve. I also explored information that spoke to their experiences at their homes schools, as a comparison to their experience at TAC.

For staff and tutors, I looked for comments that described their experiences with and perceptions of their students, their conceptions of the purpose of the program, and their ideas about their role within the program. I also searched for data about the staff's experience with DCPS in their coordination of the SES component of their program.

The subsequent examination and coding of my field notes and all analytic memos resulting from my observations supplemented my analysis of participant interviews. Data collected from my observations provides detailed information about the context within which participant experiences take place, and either verified or conflicted with the data collected from the interviews. Coding of field notes and analytic memos focused primarily on the program context, and observed interactions between students, tutors, and staff.

To answer my second research question, I again primarily utilized transcripts of participant interviews and focused on any response that indicated an interaction between participant experiences and perceptions. This interaction included instances when ideas, values, and beliefs impacted participants' experiences within the program, and conversely, when experience within the program brought about growth or development in individual values and beliefs. While the latter was most easily found in student discussions of the benefits of TAC program participation, staff and tutor examples of the former and latter most often were found in discussions of interactions with students and/or tutor training opportunities. Coding here was determined either by the types of impacts participants described experiencing or by instances where participant ideas and perceptions seemed to correlate to a particular behavior within the program setting. It was here that my field notes and analytic memos were put to use. Review of TAC's documentation of student grades and test scores also supported any claims of a relationship between participation and academic improvement on the part of the students.

I answered my third question using interviews transcripts, observations, and document review. Again, interviews served as a primary source of analysis, as I searched for correlations between the literature on afterschool program quality and program components that participants felt contributed to their enjoyment of the TAC program. Codes for this question were drawn from the quality program components discussed in Chapter 2 and revisited in Chapter 4. Field notes and analytic memos from observations also served as a valuable tool for analysis, as observations often supported participant claims about program quality. Observations also provided a more objective view of the program's ability to meet basic standards of quality. Lastly, an analysis of documents,

including tutoring lessons and other program handouts and TAC documentation of students' grades and test scores proved useful in confirming participant claims regarding culturally responsive programming and the academic component of the program.

After initial rounds of coding, I began to group the data into larger, more overarching categories, and six themes emerged (culturally responsive programming and instruction, the culture of high expectations, the importance of relationships, tough love, the culture of power, valuing students' voices). I will discuss these themes in further detail in the Chapter 4. My identification of initial analytic codes and these subsequent themes were informed by Critical Race Theory, and its emphasis on the importance of experiential knowledge, the refutation of deficit perspectives of people of color, and the refusal to accept white values as mores as the norm (Taylor, 1998; Yosso, 2005; Parker and Lynn, 2002). Once these themes were identified, they proved useful in the organization and presentation of data.

Benefits and Limitations of the Study

In recent years, supplemental education opportunities and their importance to the academic and personal lives of urban children have become topics of note within educational arenas. The potential academic, social, and personal benefit of such programs has been well-documented in a number of academic studies. While a wealth of information exists regarding the probable impact of afterschool or out-of-school time programs in general, there is a significant dearth of data regarding NCLB's SES provision and the experiences of program participants within state-approved Provider organizations.

This study focuses on SES provision within one afterschool program provider in Washington, D.C., and will detail the experiences of ten students, two parents, ten tutors, and seven staff persons. Because of this targeted sample, this study will not necessarily be generalizable to other afterschool programs, SES providers, or SES participants. Despite this fact, due to the marked lack of data on the experiences of participants within an urban SES provider organization, this study can make a significant contribution to the current pool of knowledge surrounding SES and may inform present and future discussions regarding NCLB and its provisions. An increased understanding of how students, parents, youth workers, and Provider organizations in urban settings experience SES in its current form can aid policymakers in formulating policy that facilitates the provision of comprehensive, academically sound and personally enriching experiences to children in urban communities.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS – THE TAC PROGRAM

In this chapter, I will examine the findings of my exploration of participant experiences with the TAC program and SES in DCPS. My five month exploration of this SES Provider program in Washington, D.C. resulted in a wealth of information about the TAC Ward 4 program site and the experiences of student, tutor, and staff participants within the program setting. Their individual accounts provided insight into the implementation of SES policy within a program provider in DCPS, and detailed the extent to which subjects felt this particular program works to the benefit of participants. The study also revealed the challenges this organization faced as an SES provider in the DCPS system. Interviews with and observations of program participants revealed a direct correlation between program participation and increased confidence, improved or maintained academic achievement, and the development of positive social relationships. Some participants also experienced an increased understanding of and appreciation for diverse cultures and racial or ethnic groups, illustrating, in part, the relationship between participation in the program and a change individual perceptions and beliefs. Respondents also clarified throughout the study what they felt to be the most important components that contributed to their enjoyment of and benefit from program participation.

In the sections to follow, I will utilize the rich data collected to answer my three research questions:

- 1) How do participants (students, staff, and parents) describe, understand and explain their experiences within the program?
- 2) What is the relationship between (student, staff, and parent) participation in the program and individual values and beliefs?

- 3) In what ways do participants experiences and perceptions align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs?

I will answer these questions primarily by sharing the unique stories of each of the study participants, detailing their experiences in the TAC program from their individual perspectives. Before presenting these stories, however, I will begin with an illustration of the program context, to provide an illustration of the environment within which participant experiences took place. As Wang (1997) indicates, organizational climate and context plays a key role in student learning, motivation, and attitudes toward education. Thus, detailing the TAC program context and structure can aid in an understanding of the techniques and methods TAC utilizes to meet the goals they have set both for students and the organization as a whole.

I will start by detailing the various programmatic components of the TAC Ward 4 program site. In the establishment of the program context, I will also provide an introduction to TAC's tutors and staff, as they each play an important role in establishing the environment and culture of the program.

Once the picture of the program context is clear, I will move on to detail the lived experiences of student participants "In Their Own Words." After I have arrayed the data revealed in these stories, I will detail how all the subjects' experiences speak to the relationship between participation in the program and individual values and beliefs. I will follow with an exploration of the manner in which participant experiences in and perceptions of the TAC program align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs. Considering the lessons learned about participant experience with TAC, I will then move on to detail the organization's external experience with SES implementation in DCPS. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the

implications of these findings for students, SES providers, DCPS, and other districts and policymakers in the larger social and educational context.

The Program Context

Before delving into the experiences of participants in the TAC program, it is important to first understand the context of the program within which their experiences took place. The following sections will provide a detailed illustration of the TAC program site, to help construct a framework for the participant experiences that follow.

An Evening at Ward 4

Daily Schedule

3:30 – 5:00 pm – Study Hall/Snack Time
5:00 – 6:00 pm – Enrichment Activities
6:00 – 6:15 pm – Team Time (T-Time)
6:15 – 7:45 pm – Tutoring Sessions
7:45 – 8:00 pm – Evening Wrap Up

Study Hall

The Afterschool Academy at the Ward 4 TAC center officially began at 3:30 pm with Study Hall. Study Hall was held in the Truman Cafeteria, and as students arrived, they stopped by a sign in table to jot down their time of arrival, greet any staff persons that may be standing by the door to welcome them, and find a seat at a table, either by themselves or with a classmate, to quietly begin their homework. In addition to the Site Coordinator, Katrina and Volunteer Coordinator, Renee, Study Hall at Ward 4 was staffed by two Academic Aides, Kristen and Casey, and a Site Assistant, Travis. While Katrina and Renee spent as much time coordinating center as they did helping with homework, Kristen, Casey, and Travis meandered through the tables checking students'

work, answering questions, helping with assignments, and generally making sure that everyone is on task.

When students completed their homework, the program provided them with extra work in their Proactive Portfolios. Portfolios contained worksheets to help students develop their math, reading, writing, vocabulary, and technological skills. Worksheets were selected for students based upon their grades and pre-test assessments. Once students completed all academic assignments, they were allowed to talk quietly with their peers until Snack Time.

Snack Time

Snack Time began at 4:30 pm. Students put away their homework and line up to receive their meals. The meals were usually comprised of a sandwich or taco as the entrée, a fruit or vegetable, milk, and occasionally a desert. The students were very vocal about their displeasure with the food this year. The organization switched caterers because of complaints with their last food supplier last year, but the students were still less than pleased with the fare.

Enrichment Activities

At 5:00 pm, students prepared for their Enrichment Activity. Through its Enrichment Activities, TAC sought to provide its students access and exposure to experiences they might not otherwise have had in their daily lives, produce well-rounded students, and give the students a fun break from their academic work.

The students have a different variety of activities from which to choose each day. During my first semester on site at TAC, the program offered the following schedule (Please See Appendix G and H):

Mondays: Follow Through, Visual Arts

Tuesdays: Concerned Black Men, Fundamentals of Dance
Thursdays: Songs for Social Change, Jazz Band

During the second semester, the program offered several new activities, including:

Monday: Follow Through, Step Class, Architecture Class
Tuesday: Creative Writing, Concerned Black Men, 7th Grade Leadership
Thursday: Acting Class, Mixed Media Art, 8th grade Leadership

Activities came in a number of forms and seemed to serve a variety of purposes for the students. Some options, like Mixed Media, Spanish, Architecture, Dance and Sign Language, were meant to offer students an artistic escape from the academic rigor of the day and provide an opportunity to acquire new skills. Other offerings, like Concerned Black Men, Music for Social Change, the Poetry Contest and the Ambassador Competition, two annual enrichment activities, served as a forum for students to address and discuss some of the issues and challenges that they face in their every day lives. In the more socially relevant activities, students were able to speak about their experiences with issues relationships, sex, violence, and substance abuse; explore past and present issues of social (in) justice; learn about social movements, past and present; and increase their overall awareness of social world around them.

It seems as though the TAC program places significant value on the integration of a quality, research-based academic component, with both fun and socially relevant enrichment activities. These two elements work together to foster well-rounded students who are bright, confident, and academically focused, and hold a basic knowledge of a variety of artistic pursuits. As Renee indicated, the breadth of skills and knowledge they gain in the program should serve them well as they continue on in their academic, and eventually, their professional endeavors.

Extended Study Hall

Extended Study Hall ran concurrently with the Enrichment Activities and gave students a chance to devote extra time to their school assignments. During Extended Study Hall, Casey, Kristen, and Travis circulated among the students to assist them with any questions they had about their homework. When students completed their homework, staff often sat with them to do drills or special exercises in areas where they were struggling academically.

Team Time (T-Time)

Students began returning to the cafeteria at about 5:50, and by 6:00 pm, T-Time began. By the time the students settled into their seats, the tutors had also arrived and begun to find tables with their students. On my first day at the site, Katrina asked the students to explain what they do during T-Time:

Male 8th grader: During T-Time, we have Shout Outs, Quote of the week and Word of the week and math problem of the week (everyone clapped as he sat down).

Katrina: What two things did he leave out?

Male 7th grader: (standing) Tutor and Student of the Week... (clapping).

Allison, at the Main Office, also briefly described T-Time during our informational interview:

Allison: We do T-Time at the beginning of the...evening...We sort of establish culture and kids are encouraged to speak their mind and speak confidently...

T-Time is usually led by a team of two students, and begins with the recitation of the Culture Constitution.

Culture Constitution

The Culture Constitution (See Appendix I) was a document created in 2006 by the students, staff, and tutors at the Ward 4 site. The Constitution served as a contract of expectations between students and staff/tutors. Each afternoon, at the beginning of T-Time, the entire group stood as one and recites their part of the agreement:

Unison:	We are...
Students:	1) Independent thinkers who think beyond the obvious answers
Adults:	(We provide our students with questions that push them further)
Students:	2) Proud and confident in our abilities
Adults:	(We lift students' chins and encourage participation)
Students:	3) Respectful to tutors, staff and students
Adults:	(We respect students and their opinions)
Students:	4) Pro-active leaders
Adults:	(We empower students to assume leadership roles within the Center)
Students:	5) Goal-setters who think about our future and work hard to make our dreams come true.
Adults:	(We encourage students to think about their futures and develop plans for getting there)
Students:	6) Always prepared to learn and to do our best
Adults:	(We come prepared with the necessary teaching and learning materials).

Each of the statements by the adults was a commitment to do their part in helping the students achieve the six goals. In that way, the Constitution held both students and adults accountable to each other. Students who demonstrated the traits outlined in the Constitution received Cultural Shout Outs during Evening Wrap Up, which earned them Culture Points. This incentive program will be discussed further in following sections.

Shout Outs

The students leading T-Time then ask for Shout Outs, which provide participants the opportunity to give accolades to themselves and fellow students for academic and personal accomplishments during the day. Students must stand up and speak clearly with proper grammar, and the audience gives them respect and attention, clapping when they

finish their Shout Out. Shout Outs not only provide an opportunity for students to acknowledge themselves:

Nina: (standing) I want to give a shout out to myself because I got a 100 on my test.

...and their peers for their achievements...:

Shareese: I want to give a shout out to Jada because she had the highest grade in 8th grade math classes on the math final (clapping).

...but also served as a forum for students to show appreciation for the adults at the center...:

Student: (standing) Today, I wanted to give a shout out to [Tutor] because I think he is the best tutor at TAC (clapping).

...and for the tutors and staff to do the same for the students:

Mr. Travis: I want to give a shout out to [Student] as well because I heard that he was being a role model in his enrichment activity.

Student and Tutor of the Week

After taking several Shout Outs from the group, the student leaders then announced the Student and Tutor of the Week. Each week, students and tutors nominated individuals for the honors, and Katrina and Renee determined the winner based upon the number of nomination and their own knowledge of the individual's performance. When the winners were announced, the meeting leaders asked people to stand and explain why they believe the student or tutor deserved to be Student or Tutor of the Week. What followed was another opportunity for positive reinforcement, where the group to recognized their peers for their accomplishments. In this environment, it was "cool" to be responsible, smart and academically successful, and it was acceptable to be proud of your achievements.

During the first week back at the site from summer vacation, Katrina asked the students for their take on the Student and Tutor of the Week program:

Katrina: What does it take to be [Student] of the week? [Students] who have been nominated, tell us why you were chosen...

Student: (standing) You have to be nominated by [students] and teachers for doing well in classes (clapping)

Kendra: (standing) I was nominated because I did my work and was on task (clapping)

Katrina then asked the Tutors of the Week to raise their hands. Several people around the room raised their hands. Katrina asked them why they had been nominated.

Tutor: The qualities of a good [tutor] are participating in [T-Times] and [Close Out], and encouraging students to participate.

A few weeks into the term, Shareese co-led the meeting, and I had the opportunity to see the Student and Tutor of the Week component in action:

Shareese: Drum roll please!! (students drum rolled on the tables) The Student of the Week is.....Kayla!!! (clapping) (Kayla stands, grinning happily). Does anyone want to comment on why Kayla makes a good Student of the Week?

Mr. Justin: I think Kayla deserves to be Student of the Week because she has made a big change from last week. She is more mature and assertive and is growing up to be the great student that I know you can be.

Male 8th grader: Kayla deserves to be Student of the Week because every time you see her she says hi and always has time for you.

Shareese: Let's give Kayla another round of applause (Clapping)

Weekly T-Time Sheet

The T-Time Sheet listed the Theme of the Month, the Quote of the Week, The Word of the Week, the Math Problem of the Week, and a brief write-up of the author of the Quote. Because one of the major themes of the TAC programming and curriculum was social justice, these components often related to some social justice issue. During my time at the site, other weekly sheets (see appendices J-P) included the following:

- Themes of the Month
 - Native American Heritage
 - Latin American History
 - Black History Month
- Quotes of the Week
 - "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own." ~Cesar Chavez (social activist)
 - "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." ~ John F. Kennedy
 - "There is no negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their own constitution..." ~ Frederick Douglass (African American abolitionist, editor, orator, author, statesman, reformer)
- Words of the Week (Taken from SAT lists)
 - Aspiration
 - Congenial
 - Plausible
- Math Problems of the Week
 - 7th Grade: (Referring to a graph depicting average earnings by education in the US in 2004) According to the graph, what percent more do people with a bachelor's degree earn than people with a high school diploma?

Once Katrina introduced the Quote and Word each week, she pushed the students to think more deeply about each by asking them questions. Katrina encouraged students to think critically about their peers' answers during this process. If someone gave what they perceived to be an erroneous response; she urged them to gently correct the student and help him or her think about the question differently.

Katrina asked for students to use the Word of the Week, strive, in a sentence to show they understood the definition.

A 7th grade male student used "strive" in a sentence. Katrina looked at him with a confused expression and asked him to repeat his sentence. He repeated it, and Katrina asked if it sounded right to everyone. Many students said "no." She asked the student to repeat it a few more times, and then Mr. Thomas, one of the tutors, offered a corrected sentence. Katrina asked that the student to write down the corrected sentence and give it to her by Wrap Up Time.

T-Time Challenge

Each Thursday, the center has a T-Time Challenge (See Appendix Q). Katrina assigns everyone to large groups of tutors and students, and they compete for the champion title, temporary ownership of the TAC Trophy, and a treat (usually ice cream). The questions during the T-Time Challenge are designed to compel the students to “think beyond the obvious answers and exercise a more critical thought process. The Challenge stresses teamwork, unity, and healthy competition, and acts as an opportunity for the students and tutors to bond as a community.

During my first week at the center, Katrina explained the purpose of the T-Time Challenge as a reminder to the students:

Katrina: Let's talk about some ground rules for the T-Time Challenge. It is a way for all of us to deal with the Word, Quote and Math problems in a different way and on a deeper level. On Monday and Tuesday, we do a simple sentence and paraphrase of the word and quote. After that, we create questions to help you delve a little deeper into the meaning of the word and quote. You are to work together as a team to earn points...The winner will receive a prize during Wrap Up. Questions will be grade specific or just for the tutors. You will sometimes have time to confer as a team....8th graders are in charge...If we notice you having good teamwork and putting in a lot of effort and being supportive, you get extra points.

During the Challenge, the same rules of respect, discipline, and positive reinforcement apply as for any other activity or event at the site. Students kept talking to a minimum, speakers stood and spoke clearly when giving answers, their peers showed them respect, and each speaker received a brief applause after giving their answer.

Throughout my five months at the site, the Challenges tested students' knowledge of vocabulary and math, and exercised their higher order thinking skills. I often found, in idle conversations, students actually using the vocabulary words that they learned during

the T-Time Challenges. Speaking about the benefits of TAC, Mary unconsciously injected one of the Words of the Week from the previous month.

The interaction between Katrina and the students during the Challenges is also worthy of note. Without fail, each Thursday during the competition, the students were genuinely enthusiastic, interested, and engaged in the event. They seemed to thrive off the competition amongst themselves and their peers, and received a significant amount of positive reinforcement and support from Katrina, the other students, and the tutors. Whenever Katrina asked a question, hands rose enthusiastically all over the room as students and tutors fervently waved their hands hoping to be picked to give their answer. The activity encouraged teamwork, cooperation, positive reinforcement, and built upon the students' math and English skills. The T-Times seemed to provide a wealth of positive experiences, lessons, and modeling for the children.

Tutoring Time

At 6:15, the students and tutors dispersed into their tutoring groups, which were held either in classrooms, the library, the computer lab, or the cafeteria. Each tutor had a group of 2-4 students and focused his or her lesson on one of the three subject areas, Literature, Math, or Technology. The students had a different tutor and subject each day that they were at the center.

Tutors presented a pre-established curriculum that they downloaded from the TAC web site each evening. They had a choice of lesson plans, and had the leeway to modify the plan to better suit their students' needs or their individual teaching style. The lesson plans usually incorporated culturally responsive social justice issues in some way.

In an 8th grade Literature group, I observed the tutor and students having a conversation about the story of Anne Frank, a Jewish Holocaust survivor. After the students read a snippet of the story, the tutor, utilizing the given curriculum, tried to help them relate Frank's plight with the Nazi Gestapo to the present dangers of living in an urban neighborhood plagued with gangs and violence. They took turns reading. Greg corrected them as they read. After they finished the story, Greg asked them questions about the story to make sure they understood:

A male 8th grader in the group said that he could and that he had had to face Gestapo-like gang members. The student shared a story about an encounter he'd had with neighborhood kids.

Greg: So what feelings can you relate to?

Male Student: Scared, terrified...

Greg: So, you felt like Anne Frank when she was scared?

Male Student: Yeah...

Greg: So you can write two paragraphs...one about how you felt and one relating it to Anne Frank.

This lesson is an example of TAC's culturally responsive curriculum that seeks to present lessons in ways that may relate to students' lives.

Students were assigned to tutorial groups based on their grade level, report cards, personality, and performance on an assessment administered during the first week at the center. If a student appeared to be performing beyond his group level, he or she was either moved up a grade or given more challenging work within his or her current group.

Evening Wrap Up

At the end of Tutoring Time at 7:45, students, tutors, and staff gathered in the cafeteria to bring the evening to a close. Tutors and students again gave each other accolades, this time in the form of Culture Shout Outs, which worked with the Culture

Constitution as an Incentive Program at the center. The student with the most Culture Shout Outs at the end of the month won a prize, usually a toy or gift certificate. Students earned Culture Shout Outs by following the tenets of the Culture Constitution while in their Tutoring Sessions. After the Culture Shout Out and an example of the students' used of a Culture Constitution tenet was provided, the student received a sticker for the Culture Board.

Male 8th grader: I want to give a Culture Shout Out to Jada for being a proactive leader, (#4) because when she finished her math problems, she helped us with ours. (clapping)

Female 8th grader: I want to give a culture shout out to our whole group and [my tutor] because we were respectful to each other and our tutor (#3). We raised our hands and said thank you (clapping).

After Shout Outs, Katrina and Renee shared any remaining announcements and the students were dismissed at 8:00 pm after the staff made sure that everyone had a ride home. The students trekked back upstairs to the school parking lot where, in most cases, their parents were waiting to drive them home. Those whose parents were not available to pick them up walked home, took the bus, or were driven by a staff person or a tutor.

Emerging Themes

My investigation of TAC documentation, informational interviews, and observations revealed six prevailing themes within the program setting, including culturally responsive programming, a culture of high expectations, “tough love” approaches, the culture of power, valuing students voice, and the development of positive relationships.

Culturally Responsive Programming

Several authors have noted the importance of providing culturally relevant or responsive programming to students in urban afterschool environments (Fusco, 2001;

Beck, 1999; Halpern, 2000; Gordon, 2005; Piha and Miller, 2003). Culturally responsive education can be defined as the use of the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective for them (Gay, 2002, 62; Bazron et al., 2005). Culturally responsive education and or programming has the potential to strengthen students’ connections within academic environments, improve behavior, and enhance learning (Bazron et al., 2005; Kalyanpur, 2003). In keeping with this literature, TAC purports to do just that. As the organization espouses in their program literature:

“Students learn literary devices by reading Sojourner Truth, O. Henry, and Langston Hughes. They practice paragraph structure by writing editorials about Indian boarding schools. Conversion of fractions to decimals to percentages is taught with data from the United Nations. In all subject areas, students are introduced to advanced concepts in ways that increase academic confidence and achievement, heighten cultural awareness, and reinforce standards-based skills (Curricula, n.d.).

TAC’s efforts to provide both culturally and socially responsive programming was evident in multiple aspects of the program structure; including tutorial lesson plans, T-Time Sheets, and Enrichment Time activities. In each of these components, the organization strived to ensure that the activity and/or information is presented in a way to which the students can relate and apply to their lives.

A Culture of High Expectations

As I will demonstrate in sections to follow, both the tutors and TAC staff sought to create a program environment of respect, high expectations, academic excellence, and positive reinforcement at the Ward 4 TAC site. From seemingly small details, like the expectation that all be adults addressed as Mr. or Ms., to the larger programmatic paradigms that promoted academic excellence, self esteem, social and cultural awareness,

and a sense of community, the TAC program seemed, from an external perspective, to take pains to foster a setting that encouraged students to strive for success.

Research suggests that educational organizations that establish high expectations for all youth, and provide the support needed to achieve those expectations, tend to inspire increases in academic performance, foster positive behaviors, and an overall positive and supportive learning environment (Bernard, 1995, Lee et al., 1999, Learning First Alliance, 2001). Bernard (1995) finds that through relationships with adults who convey high expectations, students learn to have higher expectations of themselves and their abilities and develop self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism. These high expectations can be effectively communicated through encouraging statements, positive reinforcement, rich and challenging programming, constructive feedback, clear rules and behavioral expectations, and an emphasis on student participation and decision-making (Brooks, 2006).

During my time with TAC, it seemed apparent that a culture of high expectation permeated almost every aspect of the programmatic structure. The most interesting aspect was that these expectations included everyone - students, tutors, and staff. The Culture Constitution that the group recited each evening is an excellent example of the sentiment that everyone was held accountable for their actions.

To begin, the staff had high behavioral expectations of the group. All students were treated with kindness and respect by staff and tutors, and the site leaders demanded the same in return from the children. Katrina and Renee provided the students with support, understanding, and nurturance, but made it clear that students were held to a strict code of behavior. Neither Katrina nor Renee hesitated to reprimand the children

when they failed to adhere to that code. Rules were meant to be followed, and students that did not obey those rules fell victim to the “check system”. Students received up to three checks for disruptive behavior. After the third check, parents were called and students were in danger of suspension from the program. The staff believed strongly in giving second chances, however, because each student started the evening with zero checks. If they were able to make it through the previous night without three citations, they had the opportunity to begin anew the next evening. I will discuss this approach to discipline and behavior management further in the following section.

Tutors and staff were also held to strict standards, and were not to participate in any behavior prohibited for the students, including chewing gum, snacking, talking inappropriately, or failing to participate during the group meetings. On a few occasions, Renee had to address tutors who were not setting positive examples for their students.

Beyond behavioral examples, Katrina also held high expectations for students academically and constantly encouraged them to think outside the box and look beyond the obvious answers in their schoolwork, during group meetings, and in their tutoring sessions. She expected students to be prepared and willing to share their academic prowess, and when any student appeared to be struggling for an answer, it was the job of the entire Ward 4 community, tutors, staff, and peers, to aid that student in coming to the right answer. The TAC staff fostered an environment where it was safe to be smart, and students excitedly strove for opportunities to recognize themselves and their peers for their academic accomplishments.

A Tough Love Approach

During Snack Time, Katrina and Renee told the group several times that they needed to be seated, but the students continued to walk around the cafeteria. Katrina, becoming frustrated, explained that there was a reason that they made the students sit while they

ate. "Most people who choke do is because they are talking and moving around when they are eating. We are both certified in CPR, but I don't have time to be saving a child that's hardheaded today."

As I alluded to in the previous section, both Renee and Katrina fostered a culture of high behavioral and academic expectations within the Ward 4 TAC site through a combination of understanding, nurturance and support alongside strict discipline and behavior control. As the passage above indicates, Katrina and Renee both consistently subscribed to what I will refer to as a "tough love" approach from this point forward. "Tough love" can be defined as strict disciplinary measures and expectations often used as a means of fostering responsibility and expressing care or concern.

As the following passage exemplifies, Ms. Katrina frequently adopted this approach to make sure her students were aware of her high expectations of them:

At 4:55 pm, Katrina asked the students to line up for the Concerned Black Men group. Last week, the students had been disruptive during the class, and Ms. Katrina now ushered them upstairs herself. The students were relatively well behaved on the walk up and stopped quietly at each landing to wait for Katrina's instruction to proceed.

They filled up the back chairs of the classroom first as they entered (particularly the boys). Katrina announced: There are still chairs in the front! Move up please!

She went on to say: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Mr. Akim Mutomba and he is your instructor. He will tell you what you all will be doing. Remember what we talked about yesterday? About expectation? (The group: Yes!!) I want a glowing report about you guys today.

Akim commented, "They were good coming up."

Katrina: Because I was there

Student: That's not true!

Katrina: I hope note. I hope that you don't only know how to behave when me and Ms. Renee are here. (She called two students by name) You other 7th graders ... You're to be setting a good example. You are responsible. Make me proud!

While stern in nature, this exchange is indicative of Ms. Katrina's desire to foster responsibility, positive behavior, and achievement in her students. She truly wants them

to make her proud, and many of the students, seeing this, sought about attempting to do so throughout the class session.

Ms. Renee, Katrina's counterparts, exhibited her tough love in her own way:

Two African-American girls walked by Renee and she called one out because she thought she was chewing gum (strictly prohibited at the Ward 4 center). The girl replied that she'd had something in her braces, but wasn't chewing. Renee addressed the girl's friend to tell her that she was holding her responsible for her friend. They were in the same tutor group and if the girl with braces did something wrong they would both get into trouble.

In this exchange, Renee sought both to enforce program rules and teach the girls a lesson about relationships and responsibility. By holding one student responsible for the other, she showed them how their actions could impact other people and the importance of not standing by while peers break program rules.

Both Katrina and Renee regularly exhibited this tough love approach at the center. I will also show that Katrina and Renee were joined in their tough love approach by Ms. Terri, a veteran tutor with TAC who lauded the importance of discipline and structure and sought to encourage and teach her students, not to "pamper them".

This approach has been addressed in by several authors and is identified as the behavior of "warm demanders," culturally responsive educators who foster a no-nonsense, structured and disciplined programmatic environment for students (Ware, 2006; Irvine and Fraser, 1998; Garot and Joniak, 2004). These educators identify strongly with their students and believe strongly that culturally diverse students can and must learn (Irvine and Fraser, 1998). As I will show in Katrina and Renee's accounts, they took personal responsibility for their students' futures, and strongly believed that every one of their children could be successful with the aid and encouragement of the adults around them.

Garot and Joniak (2004) find, however, that tough love strategies potentially can have negative impacts on students. Designed to guide and instruct students while quelling misbehavior and distraction, tough love can at times have the opposite effect, creating and sustaining rather than dispelling conflict (Garot and Joniak, 2004). My investigation revealed data that corresponded to this literature, as not all participants responded positively to Katrina and Renee's tough love approach. While most of the students recognized that despite their sometimes "mean" behavior, the two women genuinely cared for students, others found themselves continually conflicting with the women within the program setting. One student made a joking reference to Ms. Katrina's manner during T-Time as she pushed the students to think deeply about the Word of the Week.

Katrina: I haven't heard an excellent sentence yet. We've struggled with it. So let's hear from a tutor. (AWWW! From students)

Tutor: The first day of school was a grievance.

Katrina: Ok, Let's hear from an 8th grader (hands starting waving).

8th Grade Male Student: TAC causes Ms. Katrina so much grievance that she will turn into the Hulk.

Everyone started laughing, including Ms. Renee. Ms. Katrina just smiled, took it in stride and moved on to Ms. Renee's announcements.

Staff and tutors, I will demonstrate, also commented consistently on their strict approach, and many expressed some discomfort with Katrina and Renee's style of interaction.

The Culture of Power

Though seemingly supportive of the programmatic culture of high expectations perpetuated within TAC, several of the white tutors and staff experienced significant discomfort with Katrina and Renee's tough love approach. Some of these participants demonstrated anxiety about both Katrina and Renee's tough love approach and the expectation that they to must sometimes act as disciplinarians to the children. Their

anxiety was indicative of a discomfort with what Lisa Delpit (1995) terms the “culture of power”.

Delpit explains that the “culture of power” in educational settings traditionally has five aspects: 1) Issues of power are enacted in classrooms; 2) There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a culture of power; 3) The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power; 4) If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier; 5) Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.

This theory becomes relevant to the TAC environment in two respects. First, Delpit (1995) explains that liberal individuals who are a part of the culture of power often feel uncomfortable acknowledging their position of power, and tend to avoid from opportunities to explicitly exert their authority with those holding less power. Delpit (1995) posits that such individuals “seem to act under the assumption that to make any rules or expectations explicit is to act against liberal principals, to limit the freedom and autonomy of those subjected to the explicitness” (26).

The culture of power again becomes relevant in the TAC program’s efforts to teach students the knowledge of linguistic and behavioral codes, or cultural capital, that they need to successfully navigate the mainstream culture within their school environments and gain access to the culture of power. It is important to note that the TAC staff did not seem to desire to supplant students’ own cultural codes, but rather to help them learn to code switch, the alternation between two or more languages, dialects, or

language registers, or culture switch, the alternation between two or more sets of cultural codes, when necessary (Irvine, 1990, 2003; Koch, 2000; Hughes et al., 2006).

Valuing Student Voices

Educational and child development research indicates that when students have the opportunity to be active participants in the learning process and can lend their voice to the shaping of programmatic goals, norms, and activities, their commitment to the organization is strengthened and they experience an increased motivation to achieve (Learning First Alliance, 2001). By having an expectation that students will have a voice and be active participants in their own learning, educators can effectively empower students and give them greater confidence in themselves and their abilities (Jamar and Pitts, 2005).

TAC seemed to place significant focus on helping students to find and exercise their voices, and though tutors and staff may have held disparate views on discipline and authority, they seemed to agree on the importance of valuing and incorporating student voices and experiences into the program structure. During T-Time and Wrap-Up each evening, the students had the opportunity to stand and voice their thoughts and opinions and detail any accomplishments they wished to share. According to staff, each of these program components represented an opportunity to teach the students confidence and communication skills, and to offer praise and positive reinforcement to students for a job well done. Other activities that helped students find their voice include a Poetry Contest and an Oratorical Debate where students spoke on important social issues impacting their community.

In addition to these formal opportunities, the staff also made a point to regularly offer students a voice in important decisions at the center. Students actively participated in the development of the Culture Constitution, a document which dictated many of the rules and expectations at the center for both students and adults. They also had opportunities to weigh in on one of their major concerns, the evening snack, and were able to see that voicing their opinions brought about significant change on two separate occasions. As I will show in later sections, by giving voice and value to students' opinions and experiences and showing them that they could in fact effect change in the status quo, the TAC staff helped to empower and inspire action within their students. These exercises represented a small step towards instilling in students the knowledge that challenging or unfavorable situations were not immutable, and they were not powerless within them.

The Importance of Relationships

Studies reveal that students with caring, supportive relationships with educators tend to be more socially engaged, have more positive academic attitudes and find more overall satisfaction with school (Protheroe, 2007; Ryan and Patrick, 2001). Wang et al (1997) also finds that “sustained, close relationships” between educators and students can help to reduce students stress, provide much-needed supports, and can encourage students to master new experiences, believe in their own abilities to succeed, and take personal responsibility for their education (4).

As the sections to follow will clearly indicate, the relationships formed by participants at the center had a tremendous impact on both students and adults. Students experienced academic and personal development as a result of their interactions with the

tutors, staff, and each other and the several of the adults reported being moved and in some cases, changed by their relationships with the students. The adults (tutors and staff) consistently seemed to have a genuine interest in and commitment to helping their students succeed academically and personally and most extended their relationships beyond simple instruction to establishing a deeper rapport with the students. With only a few exceptions, students seemed to enjoy their time with the tutors and most showed a true appreciation for the role of both the tutors and staff in their lives.

In the sections to follow, I will present descriptions of participant experiences within the TAC program drawn from individual personal accounts and supported by my observations in the field. The emerging themes described in this section appeared within each level of program participation and provide a framework for understanding the lived experiences of students, tutors, and staff within the TAC program.

TAC Staff and Tutors

In painting the picture of the TAC program setting, it is important to recognize the role that TAC's Ward 4 tutors and staff persons play in establishing and maintaining the culture and context of the program environment. One of the goals of this study was to ascertain how participants described, understood, and explained their experiences within the TAC program. While student voices were the primary focus of the study, interviews with and observations of both tutors and staff provide great insight into the daily operation of the program, adult perspectives of TAC and its students, and the role that tutor and staff interactions with TAC students played in students' overall experiences within the program. Below I will present a brief vignette for each tutor and staff subject

with data derived from individual interviews and observations over my five months at the program site.

Staff

The TAC staff played an integral role in the experiences of both the students and the tutors within the program. They helped to shape the environment within which participant experiences take place and the relationships they built with the students greatly impacted student perceptions of the program. It is important to note, however, that my goal was not to focus simply on their role in shaping others' experiences, but also to examine the staff's own lived experiences, views of TAC, perceptions and interactions with students, and to understand how their personal ideas and beliefs affected and were affected by their own experiences in the program.

With the exception of Justin and Thomas, I focused primarily on Ward 4 staff in this inquiry. For the purposes of this study, Justin, Thomas, and Casey straddled the line between tutor and staff, so I began my examination of staff experiences with them. I will, however, revisit Justin in future sections, to discuss his experiences as co-coordinator of the SES component of the TAC program.

Mr. Justin (Part 1)

Mr. Justin was a 29-year-old Latino who worked as both a Ward 4 tutor for Eve and two other female 8th graders on Tuesday nights and Recruitment Director at the TAC's administrative offices. He and Allison also served as the primary coordinators of the SES program for the organization. Before taking his position at the main office, Justin served as Site Coordinator for the Ward 4 site for 5 years, and tutored an additional 3

years before that. He was a veteran of the program, and the children, particularly the 8th graders, spoke very fondly of him and the time when he lead the center.

According to Justin, the primary goal of the TAC program was to help their students gain entrance to top DC high schools.

Justin: Our main purpose is to prepare our kids to be competitive candidates by the time they get into the 8th grade to on to a top area high school...private, parochial, or public.

He considered the TAC program culture an essential component of achieving this goal. He described this culture as unique in its strong focus on giving praise and positive reinforcement to students for their personal and academic accomplishments. He noted that praise was something that many of the students failed to receive in their traditional academic settings:

Justin: [The culture is] unique...It's different in that it's very, very specific on praise. And that's not something that the kids receive a lot of within a lot of the schools that they go to... They're looked down upon. The teachers are not positive...

Justin's comments here indicated that he was aware of the common employment of deficit perspectives and low expectations within the traditional school environment. Within these classrooms, many minoritized students rarely received the encouragement and positive reinforcement they need to be successful (Valencia, 1999; Gillborn, 2005; Garcia et al., 2004).

Justin considered the Culture Constitution to be a beneficial component to the Ward 4 culture of high expectations. He described the Constitution as an innovative incentive program that integrates the voices of the students with the pre-existing culture of the organization:

Justin: [It] is really unique, and I like it because it was something that was put together by the kids. She got suggestions from them on what they felt was important and what they valued...I think they take ownership in that...

Valuing the voices and personal experiences of students is an espoused foundation of the TAC program evidenced by the development and continued use of the Culture Constitution. In Justin's view, the program offered many opportunities for students to voice their opinions, and was in the process of developing new initiatives to build upon existing social justice components to ensure they are a more integral part of the programmatic structure:

Justin: Well I feel that one of the biggest ways they have their voice was definitely through that Culture Constitution that they put together. We've always tried...to get especially the 8th-graders to act as the leaders and to serve...At another site...they're gonna be going to New Orleans...I think it's for Hurricane Katrina...

We're gonna be doing more... 'Cause we've had ...a number of discussions during our program meetings to see how ...we can infuse the social justice themes...so that it goes past just their learning...to apply it to their every day world. Starting this summer, we're probably gonna have every grade have one of the different themes...

In addition to the deliberate infusion of student voice and social justice in various components of the program, Justin considered the greatest benefits of student participation in TAC to be the amount of time spent in an academically rigorous environment:

Justin: I think the amount of time the kids spend with us...doing academics ...that's one of the things that makes the program work...The kids are committing a lot of time during the course of the year and they're committing three to four years to being in the program.

Unlike some ASPs, where staff and student turnover prevents students and adults from forming close relationships and emotional attachments, students, staff, and some tutors tended to make lasting commitments to their participation at the Ward 4 site (Vandell and Shumow, 1999; Kelder et al., 2005; Whitebook and Sakai, 2004). Justin's

desire to return to the center as a tutor after accepting a new position at the administration office was indicative of his commitment to the students. In his mind, he had been fortunate to be able to watch the students learn and grow over the past four years.

Justin: I've been very fortunate because I've known them for four years. So I've gotten a chance to watch them grow and develop into who they are...

Because he had spent so much time as Site Coordinator, managing both the students and the center itself, Justin expressed his enjoyment of now being able to talk to and develop closer relationships with the students – something he had fewer opportunities to do in his former role:

Justin: [I enjoy] talking to them, 'cause that's one of the things that I didn't get when I was a Coordinator. This is the first time that I've actually gotten to...commit to a tutoring group every week because I had to direct the center...So being able to work with a group consistently every week, I'm able to see them like grow and learn new things...

Justin was a veteran of both the TAC program in general and the Ward 4 program site specifically. According to him, the program components were of great benefit to the students and provided for them skills, experiences, and opportunities that they may not have access to in their school or home environments. Justin seemed to really believe in the mission of TAC, and in the program's goal of helping students to excel personally and academically.

Mr. Thomas

Mr. Thomas was a 24 year old Latino male from El Salvador, who worked at the main TAC office and volunteered on Tuesday evenings at the Ward 4 site. Thomas was loved by both the TAC staff and many of the students with whom he interacts. Thomas tutored math on Tuesday evenings to Nina, Shareese, Kendra, and another 8th grade male student who rarely attended. Thomas had no formal experience working with children

before joining the TAC team. He explained that he decided to tutor at Ward 4 because he wanted to learn more about how the program worked on the ground level. Thomas viewed the TAC program as a means of improving the lives of the children it served through encouraging and aiding in their academic achievement:

Thomas: ... I think the reason that TAC exists is because we want to make people's lives better...and I think the people that started TAC believe that the way to have a successful future...is to impact academic achievement...

With this in mind, Thomas explained that his role as a tutor in the program was to fill a much needed place in the program and in the lives of the students and help them to develop academically and personally. Beyond that, Thomas saw it as his responsibility to initiate meaningful dialogue and interactions with the students and deliver the pre-established curriculum.

Thomas: I think that I fill a really critical spot. I take up three kids for the 6-8pm block. I think what's -- the second most important thing is having meaningful interactions with them. And then the third important thing is delivering the curriculum.

As a math tutor, Thomas felt it was also important to counter the stigma of difficulty that often surrounds mathematics, to help students see the fun and usefulness of the subject:

Everybody has always made Math [seem] unattainable. You have to be this really ungodly gifted individual to understand these concepts. And what I think is most important as a tutor in Math is to eliminate that myth. To let my scholars know that what they do on a daily basis is everything that you need to do [their math work].

Thomas realized that one of the most important things he could do for his students was to value their voices and experiences and to hear their opinions about they felt they needed from the adults around them:

Thomas: I think the most important thing that I can do is just to listen and to try to give them what they're asking for. My parents say this, "The idiots are the adults, because we don't know how to listen." And the students are going to tell us every day what we need to do. And it's just a matter of getting our heads out of our rear ends and doing it.

Thomas's comments here were indicative of the value he places on student voices and experiences and on hearing their input in the determination of their academic and personal needs.

Despite this insight, as a first year tutor, Thomas admitted to having challenges engaging students with distinct learning styles and skill levels.

Thomas: I have four very distinct learners...I think Nina has been hiding from the Math for a little while. She's not focusing on what everybody else is going through. I think she's a little slower in comprehending the topics. And so instead of trying to understand it and get through it, it's the typical, quiet kid in the back that slips through the cracks...

And Shareese is incredibly bright. She knows her Math well. She's in a higher Math class than the other three...but she didn't test as high on her pretest so that's why she's grouped with these individuals. So Shareese gets it faster. And I think Kendra falls in the middle...I'm trying to be respectful that they've been in class since eight o'clock in the morning. I have to employ different tactics with all three of them to try to capture their attention.

Thomas acknowledged here that students were often challenged by extremely long days on the evenings they come to TAC. Again this showed evidence that though students may benefit academically and personally from participation in TAC, there is a cost for that participation. From my observations of Thomas's tutoring sessions, it seemed that their fatigue was as much of a factor in the challenges Thomas faced as their divergent learning styles.

Kendra had her head on the desk.

Thomas: Can you lift your head up please? (she barely moved) Can you stand up? Do you want to write on the board? Will that help?

Kendra got up begrudgingly to write the next problem on the board.

Later Kendra again had her head on the desk.

Thomas: Kendra, please stand up (a bit irritated). You look like you're having trouble (softer voice). Can I do anything for you? Would a walk to the water fountain help? (She shook her head, not speaking) Ok.

I discovered in a later conversation with Kendra that she was extremely tired and had a headache during this particular session. Unfortunately, she did not communicate this to Thomas, as he may have allowed her to rest during the lesson.

Though he admitted to some challenges with the students in his tutorial group, Thomas seemed to really enjoy his role as a tutor with the TAC program. He also appeared to place great value upon the students' thoughts, feelings, and opinions, and tries to incorporate their input into the group sessions. During my observations of his lessons, Thomas proved to be a good group leader, patiently guiding them through the lesson (even when they were being difficult), and providing positive reinforcement frequently as students made efforts to participate and engage in the group.

As students gave answers to his questions, Thomas consistently gave praise for their responses.

Thomas: You guys are rocking today. You're doing great!

Thomas: That's a great example!

At the end of the lesson, he thanked his students

Thomas: I really appreciate you guys' hard work today. You've worked really hard.

Thomas shared that the aspect that he enjoys most about working with the students was having a chance to step outside of his own life and worry about someone else for a while. In giving his attention fully to the students with whom he worked, he was able to give less attention to his own issues and challenges:

Thomas: You know I come here, and no matter how tough my day is, I forget. It's so crazy. I've heard people talk about it my entire life like when I do this everything stops like it doesn't exist...And the process of focusing so much on these three individuals... I'm giving so much attention to [them that it] makes everything else stop.

Ms. Casey

Casey was an 18 year old white female and a freshman psychology major at CU. Like her counterparts from CU, Casey came to the TAC program through CU's work study program. She decided to work with TAC because she wanted a job that she would want to do even if she was not getting paid. As a recent high school graduate, Casey's had only moderate experience working with children as a babysitter and camp counselor.

Casey began as a tutor at TAC, working Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Eventually, she added to that the job of Academic Aide, helping students with their homework during Study Hall. She enjoyed having extra time with students, but found the role of Academic Aide more challenging than tutoring because she was required to verbally discipline the children. She said on many occasions that she did not feel comfortable chastising other people's children and had trouble doing so when the situation called for it. Casey's efforts to do so were met with significant resistance by the older students, particularly the 8th graders (Kendra, Jada, and Shareese), who said that they do not like her, because they felt she did not know them well enough to discipline them. Casey's youth and discomfort in the role of disciplinarian may have impacted their acceptance of her in that role.

Casey: I have a lot of trouble being more assertive with the kids...I've always just had a problem... yelling at you for doing something wrong...like you're not my kid...but here they're like..."You have to yell at them if they're being bad," and it's just like (she makes a face), "They're never gonna respect you!"

Casey's admitted reluctance to discipline the children is shared by several other tutors and staff, as we will see in future sections, and seems to be indicative of a discomfort with Delpit's (1995) "culture of power" mentioned earlier. According to this theory, members of this culture of power tend to feel discomfort when forced to

acknowledge their position of power and avoid situations where they must explicitly wield their authority over those with less power.

Despite her discomfort with her position in the culture of power, it was evident from my observations and our interview that Casey really cared for the students and enjoyed her time with them. She saw their value and recognized that they have as much to teach her as she did them. She also seemed to truly appreciate the impact that TAC had on the students. In her view, the program fostered a culture of respect and emphasized the importance of both giving and receiving it. She also touched on the program's emphasis on valuing student opinions and providing regular encouragement:

Casey: I mean respect is a huge part of their culture in general... Teaching kids to respect themselves...And it's great that they're like, *"Think about your own opinions and think beyond the obvious answer. You're so much smarter than you give yourself credit for."* I think that's gonna be really helpful to them when they're more in their adolescent years...

According to Casey, the Culture Constitution had proven a useful tool in conveying the programmatic culture of respect and in encouraging positive habits and behaviors. Despite some students' outward resistance to the incentive program, Casey found that they all clamored after opportunities to win Culture Points:

Casey: It makes it more...intriguing to be successful...and to be respectful... ..it pushes them I think...If I had the ability to win points and be the winner that week I would definitely be more respectful and answer a lot of questions rather than just sit back and be passive in the class...They really care about it. Like, they come off as like, *"Oh, I don't want to say this..."* but when it comes down to it they're like...*"When are you gonna give me a shout out?!"* and I'm like, *"Well you gotta work on it. You gotta give me a reason to give you one..."*

Casey also commented that the program fosters a culture of community. She noted that the relationships the students formed at the center, with peers and adults, were exceptional and of great benefit to the children:

Casey: If it's anything that keeps them coming back it's the kids, because they've kind of become a family. They know each other really well...They're

just all very respectful of each other and they really care about each other. They love each other...There are kids from different schools and it really gives them a chance to build lasting friendships...

Casey began as a tutor with the TAC program this fall, but soon took on the additional role of Academic Aide. She explained that she needed another job to help pay her college expenses, and had really enjoyed working with TAC thus far. She also liked the idea of being able to interact with the students more and get to know them outside of her tutoring lessons. In Casey's eyes, her role in TAC was to move beyond simple academic instruction to get to know her students on a personal level and serve as positive adult influence in their lives:

Casey: You're another adult in the kid's life. It's not just about helping them with their homework. Like you sit down and you talk to them and you're like, "Ok, how was your day at school. Did anything happen, good or bad...Like how are things at home? ...Like you just ask them questions 'cause you care about these kids and you see them three days a week...every week, so they kind of become like your kids...

She acknowledged the role that external factors can play in the students' ability to focus on the day's lesson and how forging these relationships provided opportunities for them to share their experiences and seek help when facing challenges.

Casey: A lot of them have a lot going on and that might affect them like later in their day...and I see that too...like if they had a bad day, during the tutoring time...it catches up to them and like they don't want to focus during tutoring groups...and you can like talk to kids...

As much as you're like their teacher, you're kind of like an older sibling when you're like my age... so they feel more comfortable talking to us...I think it's like a really beneficial experience (for tutors)...

Considering the important role that she described, I asked her what she felt she brought to the table that would have a positive impact on the children with whom she works. She explained that though she came from a different place, racially, culturally and

geographically, than her students, she could see commonalities in their experiences that helped her relate well to them:

Casey: I think it's a completely different experience for me, because...I'm in this big city and I've like never been a minority before in my entire life...I think I contribute like a different like adult in their life... 'cause probably their school teachers are primarily black and I'm just this preppy little girl who says words like "wicked"...and I contribute a different perspective, cause I grew up so different...My parents got divorced when I was six, and like I had this really weird childhood, so like I can relate to the kids (here) and I think that's really helpful, cause if they're like, "*My parents are fighting at home...*" I'm like ohh...I know how that feels...It definitely helps contribute to more understanding and relating to them than being this adult that doesn't really care about their problems...

From Casey's perspective, the challenges she has faced throughout her childhood make her more culturally responsive to the children's needs and experiences, and help her to better relate to them. Her supposition, however, rests upon an assumption that most of her students are experiencing such troubles at home. While this may be true for some, this overarching assumption may be due to her lack of experience dealing with Students of Color and she may be falling back on racial generalizations.

Despite these areas for growth on her part, Casey seemed to have positive relationships with many of the TAC students both in her role as tutor and as Academic Aide. As she discussed her students and described her interactions with them, you could tell that each of them meant a lot to her, and that she valued the relationships she built with them.

Along with Casey's enjoyment of her students came some challenges. She explained that she often struggled with keeping the students engaged when they were tired from having such a long day. While she was still working on a solution to this challenge, it is important to note that she consistently recognized how these and other external factors could influence students' ability to focus on their academic work:

Casey: It's a really long day and I understand that...They start school at like 8 o'clock...And then they don't finish until 8:00 at night? I mean some days they're just really into it and some days...I wanna make you learn, but if they just had a rough day at school and they're tired, it's hard to make them want to do it. I mean you can try to play games, but there's only so much you can do. I think that's my biggest challenge. I wish there was more that I could do, but I kind of need to face the fact that there's only so much...

This challenge will prove to be a consistent theme throughout the study, as tutors and staff acknowledged some students' struggle to remain focused during the 12 hour day.

Students also expressed their challenges with the sacrifices they had to make in order to remain TAC participants throughout their 8th grade year.

Ms. Kristen

Kristen was a white female in her early 20's and served as the second Academic Aide at the Ward 4 site. Kristen joined the organization primarily as an Aide, and chose to volunteer as a technology tutor on Tuesday evenings. Kristen began her position as an Academic Aide a few weeks after the fall semester began, and seemed immediately at home in the environment. As the only white staff person at the time, working with a population of African, African American, and Latino children, my first impression was that she stuck out like a sore thumb. Kristen, however never seemed to feel that way. She appeared very comfortable and at ease at the site.

Kristen had significant experience working with children prior to taking the position with TAC. She worked as a nanny, babysitter, camp counselor, tutor, and a teacher's aide. Her ultimate goal is to become a classroom teacher. Many of the younger children took easily to Kristen, though, as with Casey, some of the 8th graders took issue with her when she attempted to discipline them. Like Casey, Kristen mentioned on a few occasions that being a disciplinarian to the students made her very uncomfortable and

went against her nature, but she felt it is necessary because that was the behavior modeled by Katrina and Renee, her superiors at the site.

Kristen: I would say that one of my challenges is that my superiors are both strong black women, and they interact with the children in a certain way that isn't natural for me. They are very much a strict disciplinarian and they're like my role models for how I should model my behavior, but it isn't easy. I have to translate it to you know...One of my challenges has beenbeing a disciplinarian...but finding my own methods...

Here again was an example of a TAC staff person having difficulty with Delpit's (1995) "culture of power", where a liberal, and in Kristen's case somewhat radical, white educator experienced discomfort when asked to enforce her authority over her students with less access to power. Kristen explained that she preferred just "hanging out" with the kids, and engaging in behaviors that ensured she was well-liked by the students.

Despite this conflict in approaches to interacting with the students, Kristen seemed impressed with the TAC program and viewed its primary goals to be helping students excel academically and providing a safe and productive atmosphere:

Kristen: I think it's pretty fabulous. I think they are really trying to build better students...They just wanna improve their grades, you know? And give them structure...a place to be after school, you know, instead of watching TV or hanging out.

Kristen, like Casey, acknowledged the role that the external aspects of a child's life played in a child being prepared mentally and physically for success in the TAC setting:

Kristen: It depends on the day; what they had to eat; how tired they are; if they like their assignment; if something bad happened at school....

A child's home life, school life, and social life all impact whether a child can focus fully on any particular task (Rothstein, R; 2004; Dance, 2002; Gordon and Bridglall, 2005). Kristen also recognized the impact that race and racism played in inhibiting her students' paths to academic and personal success:

Kristen: Of course there's things holding these kids back. It's horrible. It's racism. It's not anything that...they have a say in, but...that has to do with ...socioeconomic differences, distribution of funds, and what chances and opportunities their parents have had, because you need money to make money. ...There are always limiting factors in anybody's life chances, but there are gonna be people who are not gonna let that hold them back, and programs like this are gonna help give kids a solid foundation to work off of. And hopefully instill a love of learning, you know, and just internalize the discipline so that they can...give them whatever we can and then hope for the best for them....

Kristen admitted that her desire to discuss these issues with the students was at times tempered by how they would react to her as a white woman. She was aware of her white privilege and the need to remain conscious of how it might be perceived by the students. She still made efforts, however, to share information with the students that was rarely discussed in traditional academic settings. She spoke in particular of sharing stories and books about Black leaders of historical social movements:

Kristen: As a white person it's not very easy for me to bridge as such, because well I have white skin privilege. I'm a part of that system. And...it could come out in a way that I don't intend it to...But I was talking to a student about the Black Panthers, because he was telling me he knew everything about it. Once he told me what he knew...I was talking to him about how that was important and why...I even said that it made certain people in power afraid because of their strength...I am kind of a rabble rouser. I promised I was gonna bring them...and I still have to do this...Asata Shakur's autobiography, because they were saying...I hate it when they tell the kids that Lincoln was trying to free the slaves. It just gets me so upset.

I probably say more than I should, because it could get me in trouble, and they're gonna say no no, my mother told me this. So I gotta show the one student the book so that he like photocopy it or bring it in...because he already told his teacher that I said that.

Nichole: Do you think that's a bad thing?

Kristen: Yes and no, because I didn't give him the full information, so it probably just slowed up class. I wish that we'd stop lying about all these things...you know. I mean, it's just really shameful, and so I figured that's why they kind of hold it back.

Kristen's comments here were significant on a number of levels. First, unlike many of her white counterparts, Kristen was aware of and openly acknowledged her

white privilege. White privilege can be defined as any occurrence, whether individual, systemic, political, economic, or social that works to privilege whites at the expense of minoritized people (Blachett, 2006; Branscombe et al., 2007; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; McIntosh, 1990). Most white individuals remain oblivious to the idea of white privilege due to feelings of entitlement, and those who are aware tend to ardently deny or ignore its existence (Blachett, 2006; Denevi and Pastan, 2006). Kristen's acknowledgement of her white privilege seemed to be indicative of her awareness of the existence of a hegemonic racial state and the role that racial privilege plays in the perpetuation of that state.

Kristen was also one of the few adults with whom I spoke that actively sought to discuss and increase students' awareness of the role that race and racism play in their daily lives. She sought to open dialogues with students about issues that impacted them and noted TAC's efforts to include student voices in programmatic decisions and encourage students to voice their opinions effectively and productively:

Kristen: Well...in the T-Time Meeting...they ask for their opinions for like how things can improve in the system...and at the TAC program, what would they like to see change... I think that by also giving them structure and showing them...When you have a problem with someone, you don't just yell at them. You don't fight with them. You talk it out...but I think that there's certainly more they could be doing...

Kristen seemed to be an insightful young woman, and one of few tutors and/or staff persons who spoke openly with students about issues of race and culture. She had a passion for learning, which she tried to transmit to her students. Despite her challenges adjusting to becoming a strict disciplinarian, Kristen's comments indicated that she had a beneficial experience with the TAC program and believed in its goals and tenets.

Ms. Renee

Renee was an African-American female in her mid-twenties and was originally from the DC Metro area. Though Renee was new to the Volunteer Coordinator position at the Ward 4 site, she had several other roles within the program over the years prior to this study, including Enrichment Activity teacher and Site Assistant.

Renee presented a reserved personality at the center and seemed focused on managing the behavior of the students and making sure that they are on task. Despite her reserved nature, Renee obviously cared a great deal about the students. I often saw her interacting with the children, making sure they were okay and had what they needed, and she could occasionally be seen laughing and joking with them.

As evidenced earlier by Casey and Kristen's comments, Renee was a disciplinarian, and held students to high, strict standards. She did not hesitate to reprimand a misbehaving student and often raised her voice to get their attention among the fray of the other students. Her "tough love" approach to dealing with the students was interpreted by some students as an indication that she did not respect them as individuals. Despite this perception, the students admitted that she had good intentions and genuinely cared about them and their well-being.

Irvine and Fraser (1998) found that when warm demanders show students tough love, the students tend to show respect and take pride in the educator's "meanness". While that may be the case for most students at TAC, others developed some resentment towards Renee, as I will show later in their accounts. Garot and Joniak (2004) note that this is not uncommon when youth workers adopt a tough love approach and find that

tough love can at times create and escalate conflict. I will discuss this further in later sections.

From Renee's perspective, the TAC program served to expose students to new opportunities to which they otherwise may not have access, and to prepare them with the skills necessary to take advantage of those opportunities. Renee described the organizational culture to be centered on respect and the perpetuation of high expectations for both the students and the adults that serve them:

Renee: No matter what center you go to you should see a staff person telling a student if their head's down, hold their chin high, to stand up when they speak and to raise their hand quietly, things like that...Creating the expectation for the students that they'll know that you respect them and you want them to respect you...We want to stand so everybody can acknowledge them that they're speaking...letting them know that [they] are important, what [they're] saying is important...

We really want it to be known that yes, we have expectations of you as a student, but...we want you to have an expectation of us...

Renee played an important role in establishing and maintaining the culture of the Ward 4 center, and her comment here confirms the staff's strong emphasis on respect and high expectations for all participants. Both Renee and Katrina utilized the center's Culture Constitution as a tool in perpetuating this culture, as it laid out a clear set of behavioral guidelines for both students and adults:

Renee: At minimum we have a list of behaviors that [everyone is] supposed to exemplify...so they have something visual that they can really hold to like they can say, "Okay, well, I did X, Y, and Z, I need Culture Points. I'm doing what I'm supposed to," and they can say, "Oh, my tutors did not come with his lesson."

The Culture Constitution was created in part to give students a role in setting the rules and expectations for the Ward 4 center and to integrate their voices into important aspects of the programmatic structure. Renee detailed a more recent example of an opportunity for the students to lend their voice to decisions made at the center:

Renee: This semester we started off with letting them do an evaluation of the program... and one of the common themes was of course snack. So, we let them know if you don't like it...don't just say this is wrong, give us a solution. And then we will take their solution ...to the staff at the office so we can say, look...they have these ideas.

Now every month we have a special snack that's not the regular sandwich-- and they didn't just change it at Ward 4, they actually changed it for every center...So, we give them opportunities to voice their opinion and we also give them an opportunity to actually see where their voice has been heard and has been implemented into the program in the culture at center -- not just the center because we can tell them, *"You all changed the whole thing for all the centers. You should be proud of yourselves!"*

This incident was an excellent example of empowerment in action. Here Katrina and Renee created an arena to encourage students to find and express their voices, acknowledged their input and opinions as valuable and set out to make changes as a result. Instead of just taking student comments and developing their own plan, the staff encouraged students to always begin thinking of solutions when voicing opposition to a situation. The staff then took their solution to the TAC administrative offices and helped the students to effectively bring about a significant change in the status quo.

Ms. Katrina

Katrina was the Site Coordinator of the Ward 4 TAC program site. She was a DC native and had been with the TAC program for four years. She began as Volunteer Coordinator at the Ward 7 Center in 2003 and moved to the Ward 4 Center in 2004. She became Site Coordinator for Ward 4 in March of 2005 and has held the position ever since. Of the current program staff at TAC, Katrina had been with the organization the longest and her site was often praised for its organization, structure, and creative programming.

Katrina considered her role in the program to be similar to that of a school principal. She managed the program site, the students, curriculum delivery, and her

program budget. Her job, and that of all of the Site Coordinators essentially was to make sure that the students and staff, including tutors, had everything they needed to be successful in meeting the program's goals.

Like Renee, Katrina had a "tough love" style of dealing with students. Like most "warm demanders", she was very involved in their lives and was a source of support, understanding, and encouragement for her students. I often would see them confiding in her, and she frequently pulled students aside to inquire about their well-being if they seem to be having a bad day.

One student, an African American male 7th grader, kept attracting negative attention from Ms. Katrina for his behavior and eventually earned a "check". Ms. Katrina told him to sit off to the side by the supply table by himself and away from other students. Eventually, she went over to talk to the student privately about his behavior and what was going on in his life. They spoke quietly for about 20 minutes as she explained that he had to be careful because his behavior now could affect his future. The student nodded and listened intently as she spoke, occasionally interjecting his thoughts into the dialogue.

Katrina added to this caring approach an appreciation for structure and discipline within her program. She made her expectations clear to the students and encouraged them to meet those expectations behaviorally and academically. Katrina had no problem disciplining or correcting students publicly and many students took issue with these public reprimands. Overall, however, the students recognized her care and concern and her desire to all of her students do well.

She explained that the TAC culture of high expectations, respect and encouragement was a byproduct of the overall organizational culture. Each Ward had the same goals and general environmental makeup, but each Site Coordinator conceptualized and presented that culture differently, depending upon their personality and the needs of their students:

Katrina: We actually have our own culture document at TAC [administrative offices]...What we expect from the kids is exactly the same as what we expect from ourselves as service providers ...The TAC culture is the same, but it is like the way it is presented might be different...Partially because our kids are different...They have different experiences, different home lives. Our staff are different...So it's like respecting that whole diversity within our kids and within our staff and everyone brings their own flair to it....

Regardless of the nuances of the program sites, perpetuating a culture of high expectations for both students and staff remained a high priority. Katrina noted that the social justice component of the program was an important part of the TAC culture. As with most respondents, however, her explanation focused primarily on giving students a voice. She explained that valuing student voices was an important component of the program structure, though, she admitted, encouraging students to confidently voice their opinions sometimes backfired on the staff :

Katrina: (laughing) It's funny because...it kind of turns on us a little bit, because we teach the kids to voice their opinions and their ideas, and if they have an issue to stand up for it...But then it turns around if they have an issue with us, they're like, "But you guys taught us to state our opinions and to speak up!" Especially when the kids have issues with an adult. I told them, you still respect that adult as an adult. Like, if you have an issue with them you say it, but it is the tone and the mood and the body language that you present that usually upsets the adult, because it's like, you are trying to go back and forth with me as an adult and it's like you still have see that adult as an adult.

It seemed significant that even when students took issue with program rules or staff behavior, Katrina and Renee still encouraged them to speak out about their opinions, though they emphasized to students the importance of being respectful in their protests. The staff's willingness to take criticism and constructive input from the students indicates the sincerity with which they value the students' voices and perspectives.

Katrina admitted, however, that the incorporation of the other social justice themes was still a work in progress, but something that the organization was actively addressing:

Katrina: I don't think it is as transparent to the kids (during the after school program) that okay, just all the curriculum, everything that we talk about with the quote, even though the quote is...based on like issues of like a social justice is woven into it...We are working on trying to...tie a grade into each theme (freedom, voice, solidarity, and justice). Like the 8th graders will have freedom and so on... We are going to integrate the themes more so into their experiences each year...Everything will be more geared towards social justice themes and make it more obvious to the kids.

It seemed from my observations and interviews with staff and students that, outside of “voice”, the themes were not as apparent in the day-to-day structure of the program as TAC claims. Though the T-Time sheets and some of the Enrichment Activities and Tutoring Lessons did at times address social and/or cultural subjects or themes, there could be more active discussion of social justice issues to better prepare students to deal with racial and social injustice outside of the TAC walls.

Despite this admitted area for improvement, my observations over the past several months led me to believe that Katrina was one of the primary reasons the Ward 4 site was so successful and served as a model for other TAC locations. Not only was she a veteran of the program with a comprehensive knowledge of how to best achieve organizational goals, but it was apparent that she cared deeply about the students she served. Though her tough love approach might have been abrasive to some of the children, in the end, they all admitted that they had benefited, and expected to continue to benefit, from the environment she fostered and the programming that she and the other staff, tutors, and activity teachers provided.

As I will show in later sections, Katrina seemed very aware of the important role that she played in the lives of her students and of the many challenges in their lives she had to help them overcome as she pushed them towards the road to success. She appeared to truly believe in all of her students and their ability to beat the odds and live down any

negative expectations society may have held of them. Katrina also worked hard to convey this belief to her staff, so that they too could communicate high expectations and positive reinforcement to the students in their care.

Staff Summary

The TAC staff at Ward 4 appeared to be a well-balanced group that served the students well. They all seemed to agree that the goals of the program go beyond simple academic instruction and high school preparation to imparting to the students knowledge, skills, and behaviors that would help them be successful in school and in life. Each staff person seemed to be invested in encouraging and supporting their students and in empowering them to both envision and achieve their academic and personal goals.

The staff, particularly Katrina and Renee, seemed to place significant value on providing a culturally responsive environment for students. From their recruitment of the tutors to the T-Time and Enrichment activities, they sought out opportunities to infuse the students culture and interests into the program setting. Several scholars note that such culturally rich and responsive programming helps to make the learning process more relevant and effective for students (Watras, 2007; Bazron et al., 2005; Goldstein and Noguera, 2006; Gordon, 2005).

Within this culturally responsive environment, the TAC staff also seemed to realize the importance of valuing students' voices, knowledge and experiences. As several staff persons noted, the program provides regular opportunities for students to lend their voices to the programmatic process, including T-Time and Wrap Up nightly, and on other occasions where programmatic decisions were made or particular issues arose that impacted the students. In each case, the staff remained open to hearing the

students' ideas and opinions and ensuring that they were active participants in their own learning. The students were seen as valuable resources and such opportunities for cooperation fostered the development of closer relationships with peers and greater engagement in the learning process.

The staff also seemed to be on one accord regarding the perpetuation of TAC's culture of high expectations. Jamar and Pits (2005) find that in order for positive change to occur in students' performance, staff perceptions of students' abilities must coincide with the purposes of program initiatives. At TAC, the staff gave the impression of consistency in their belief that all students were capable of achieving academically with the aid of a supportive team of adults.

Several respondents also placed value upon the relationships they formed with the students and acknowledged the role that these relationships played in fostering a positive learning environment. Research shows that caring, supportive relationships with trusted adults promote students' positive academic and personal development (Brooks, 2006; Pianta and Walsh, 1998; Protheroe, 2007). While I will show in later sections that the students did in fact benefit from their relationships with both tutors and staff persons, it seemed in both cases, that the adults reaped the rewards as well.

A number of staff participants commented on Katrina and Renee's style of interacting with the students. These comments continue throughout both the tutor and student vignettes as several respondents noted the strict approach to interacting with students. Though their "tough love" tactics were not understood or adopted by all, most participants appreciated that Katrina and Renee were adept at effectively managing the students and the program site.

It is also important to note that because the staff and tutors who commented on Katrina and Renee's "tough love" approach consistently proved to be members of the mainstream racial group, their discomfort with strict, disciplinarian styles of interaction with children may be a result of their uneasiness with overtly exerting their "cultural power" with their students (Delpit, 1995). In a trend that will continue with several of the tutors in the following section, both Kristen and Casey expressed a preference for more friendly, peer-like interaction with students as opposed to taking a more authoritarian approach.

These six themes weave consistently throughout the study. In the next section, each will emerge again as the tutors share their experience within and perceptions of the TAC program.

Tutors

Considering that the tutors were integral to the daily operation of the program and spent the largest amount of one-on-one time with the students, I felt it important to include their voices, experiences, and perspectives in this study. My primary goal was to ascertain how each of the tutors perceived both the goals and purpose of TAC and their students collectively and individually.

Ms. Terri

Terri was an African American female who appeared to be in her mid- to-late-40's. She was a veteran tutor and had been with the program for over 17 years. She volunteered on Thursday evenings and teaches Literature to Shareese and Kendra. Prior to working with TAC, Terri volunteered in her church's youth department, taught Sunday school, and participated in other activities with the church's youth.

Terri's consistent participation in and dedication to TAC and its students was indicative of her belief in the program's ability to positively impact students. Terri consistently communicated that though TAC serves varying purposes for individual students, the program provides an opportunity for students to learn the basic academic skills they may not acquire in traditional academic settings.

Terri took a fundamentalist approach to instructing her students and focuses on ensuring they have basic reading and writing skills instead of using complex instructional techniques.

Terri: That's a new thing that they've been doing a lot of about this culture, but that's not something I really focus on. I'm a very basic...I think that a lot of times people come into TAC with very kind of lofty and naïve notions about how they are going to come in and save these kids. And I think it's really very basic. They need to learn how to read and write. It's real basic for me. I don't worry about culture. I don't worry about – they need to know how to read and write.

Terri's "basics" approach had the potential to both help and hinder her students' academic progress. As Delpit (1995) notes, it is just as important to encourage Students of Color to utilize critical and higher order thinking as it is to ensure that they have basic academic skills. While Terri did not seem to believe that her students were incapable of such higher order thinking, her focus on "just the basics" might have neglected time that could be devoted to more critical thinking exercises. As Jamar and Pitts (2005) explain, "It is no longer sufficient to be proficient in basic skills; students are now expected to develop deep, conceptual understanding of a broad range of...concepts." While acquiring and developing basic skills continues to be important, it is important that African-American and Hispanic students also have the opportunity to cultivate their higher order thinking skills (Jamar and Pitts, 2005).

Like the Katrina and Renee, Terri takes a tough love approach and holds her students to strict standards. She explained how she envisioned her role in the program:

Terri: Discipline and structure. I'm no nonsense...I'm not going to pamper them. I am there to encourage. I am there to teach.

My observations of her tutoring sessions with Kendra and Shareese confirmed her strict approach with the students; however, it was apparent that Kendra and Shareese had a respect and appreciation for her interest in their scholastic and personal well-being.

During one of their exercises, Shareese got frustrated and snapped at Ms. Terri.

Terri: Not today Ms. Shareese

Shareese: Ok, Ms. Terri (respectfully)

They exchanged papers and went through the answers. Ms. Terri made them clearly state their answers and gave them much praise when they answered correctly. Kendra got a question wrong....

Terri: I'm gonna disagree with you, but I understand what you were trying to do. We'll give you half a point for good measure.

The girls seemed more engaged than I had seen them in their other tutoring groups. They showed respect for Ms. Terri and she them. Even when Kendra or Shareese would become frustrated, Ms. Terri was able to quickly bring them out of it by maintaining firm control over the group. Ms. Terri was very confident in her authority in the situation, and it created an environment where the children obeyed her and worked hard for her.

Terri noted that she occasionally was challenged by the girls' struggle with raging hormones and a strong interest in dating and boys. She found it made them a little less focused during sessions. She also commented that each seemed to battle insecurities and discomfort with being intelligent young women:

Terri: ...I've got two young women. Both very different in some respects, and then in other respects very much the same. In sameness they are both insecure. They both have got hormones that are in flux. The boy thing is really kicking in. They are both embarrassed about being bright. They are uncomfortable with it...

Her perception that both girls were embarrassed about being bright is of note here. As I will show in the student vignettes, Shareese commented a number of times on the fact that she felt safe being smart at TAC. She implied that in other settings, she experienced discomfort with her intelligence and admitted to “dumbing down” to fit into social groups. Several authors indicate that students are often challenged within school and social environments in their efforts to develop a scholar identity, or a commitment to a standard of academic excellence (Whiting, 2006; Welch et al., 1996; Tyson et al., 2005; Ogbu and Fordham, 1986). TAC, however, provides students with a safe environment to cultivate their scholar identities.

Terri noted that her favorite aspect of working with the children was simply the relationships she builds with them and the difference she believed she was making in their lives. She explained that when they respond positively or affectionately to her it made any challenges they faced worthwhile:

Terri: Good kids. They are a challenge, but there are lots of rewards. You get an occasional hug, and you get some really good work out of them. The kids make it worth it all. I wouldn't have done it so long I think if I weren't somehow getting something despite all of the frustration, something out of it. It's for the kids.

Mr. Kyle

Kyle was a white male in his late 20's who tutors Technology on Tuesday evenings to Micah and two other 6th graders. Kyle was unique in his position as a tutor because he served as the Ward 4 Volunteer Coordinator before Renee. Kyle explained that he returned to TAC as a volunteer because he genuinely believed in the program:

Kyle: I really believe in the mission of TAC and still think it's a great program and that it really fits a niche here in DC and other places around the country...which is supporting school districts... that have holes in their educational system...

According to Kyle, the goals of the program included helping students gain admission into top DC high schools and increasing overall opportunities for success by providing a consistent, stable environment that emphasizes academic achievement:

Kyle: Well I guess the overall goal would be to obviously get the kids into the top area high schools...But you know, obviously there's kind of more of a overarching theme too, which is just that everybody deserves an equal opportunity to succeed in life.

I guess there's something to be said...for the fact that the kids who are in the program are in it for four years and there's something like four hundred extra hours of academic work each year...So I think it's just that rigorous academic element and then being around other kids who theoretically feel the same way, you know, who are equally motivated...

While the program did in fact provide a rigorous academic element and extended hours in school, several commented on the sacrifices that students made in order to participate. It remained to be seen whether this rigor was in fact in the best interest of the students.

Despite this question, it seemed apparent that students benefited personally and academically from their participation in the program and its culture of high expectations.

Kyle described the TAC culture as one that focuses on “raising chins”.

Kyle: Well I guess the TAC culture is... “raising chins” is kind of the official tag line... promoting a good, positive attitude about academics...about grades, about school in general and of just about developing life goals, and living your dream. It's just that kind of culture of like positivity if that's a word...I think the shout outs that are given -- during T-Time and Wrap-Up are kind of a good example of that...really stressing that you did these things, you're successful in school and your extracurricular activities, you should be proud of that and you should let everybody else know that too.

Alongside the culture of high expectations, positive reinforcement seemed to be a consistent theme throughout the program, with an emphasis on helping the students to feel proud of their personal and academic accomplishments. By reinforcing positive behaviors and achievement, the tutors and staff sought to help students have higher expectations of themselves. I will show evidence of this impact in the students' accounts.

As mentioned earlier, TAC also strived to provide socially and culturally relevant programming through their social justice themes of freedom, voice, solidarity, and justice. Kyle had little to say about three of the four themes, but explained that the program moved beyond lifting chins to actually helping students find their voice. He described TAC's social justice component as a work in progress, but one that the organization had recently begun to give increased attention:

Kyle: Well, I guess that that's something that can be kinda hard to do sometimes... they're trying to incorporate that more in the future. But at this point, I guess the big opportunities for that are just in the curriculum itself....I know like for math for instance I think there's some kind of a lesson on, I think the difference in income between the different races and I think between men and women...It kind of brings to light some social issues...

Again it seemed that though TAC placed significant emphasis on providing culturally and socially relevant programming in theory, they were still working to consistently put this goal into practice on the programmatic level.

Though Kyle admitted that Ward 4 was one of the most smoothly-run, well-managed TAC centers in the District due to Katrina's leadership and her experience with the program, he, like some of the staff members, noted her tough love style of interacting with the students.

Kyle: Katrina has a personality that's more...up front and blunt with the kids. And she can sometimes come across as being a little mean-spirited or not being a good listener. I happen to disagree with this, having worked with her...And I think Renee balances that out a little bit because I think the kids really feel comfortable coming up to her...But then at the same time, Renee I know for a fact has some elements of how Katrina runs center too in terms of being very strict ... I guess the way I was Volunteer Coordinator, I was definitely, like I'm a very patient person and almost to an extreme...

Kyle explained that both women adopted a strict approach, though at levels that seemed to provide balance within the center. He acknowledged the differences between their approach and his own and noted that he was not one to be a strict disciplinarian with the

students, preferring to adopt a more patient style which he admitted may not have always been beneficial.

Though less explicit here, Kyle's comments seemed, like Casey and Kristen, to denote a discomfort with both Katrina and Renee's tough love approach and any expectation that he too should act as disciplinarian to the children. His apprehension again called to mind Delpit's (1995) culture of power, and implied a discomfort with strongly exerting any authority over the children. He admitted that though misbehavior was rarely a problem in his group, he had difficulty wielding a strong hand to keep the students in line when they began to have too much fun with the lesson and veer off task. I noticed this in practice during my observation of his tutoring group.

Kyle had been challenged by frequent disruptions in his group. While he had good relationships with all of his students, they appeared to be TOO comfortable with him and tended to veer off task as they laughed and played. Instead of telling them directly to maintain their focus, he developed an exercise where to teach them the importance of listening when people spoke. They began by talking about their Thanksgiving holiday and the students continuously interrupted him as he spoke.

Kyle: The reason we're doing this is because 1) It's nice to talk before we go into the lesson (Male Student – It shows you care). It does and I do care. (Micah – I don't care [laughing]). 2) It's important (Male Student – people don't care) to learn to focus and to listen to people when they're speaking.

I was saying the reason we are doing this is so we can practice listening well to people. When someone is talking you have to give them your attention, like in church or school. How can we apply that to our group?

The students were smiling and actively participating in the conversation. They seemed engaged and obviously liked Mr. Kyle, but they were not in control behaviorally. It seemed they were so excited to be in the group that they could not wait for him to finish to interject. He was finally able to calm them down and finish making his point.

Kyle: One thing we're going to do is cut down on the random comments we make. I love being in group with you guys, but to make sure we do the lessons and do all of the fun stuff like the rockets, we have to stay on track. You have to think, I want to say this, but I'm not going to. Does that make sense?

Kids (in unison): Yes.

While Kyle obviously saw a need to enforce more discipline in his group, instead of the tough love approach, he adopted a more democratic method; explaining his thoughts to them and getting their buy-in.

My observations and interview with Kyle revealed that he, like most of his peers, did not subscribe to deficit thinking, but maintained positive perceptions and expectations of his students. It was evident, however, that he, like the other white tutors and staff, felt discomfort when placed into the role of stern disciplinarian with his students, which, as evidenced by the above example, often led students to feel free to laugh and play when it was time to learn. Despite this challenge, Kyle's students all seemed very comfortable with him and appeared to truly enjoy the session. Kyle's dedication to his students and to TAC was evident. He seemed to value and respect his students and is able to deliver fun, engaging lessons for them.

Mr. Joseph

Joseph was a 19-year-old Latino male in his junior year at CU. Joseph had moderate experience working with children before he began at TAC. In high school, he worked with inner-city children at a child development clinic at the University of Maryland to meet his community service requirements for graduation. Joseph was a Social Work major at CU and planned to work with children and families upon his graduation. Joseph tutored at TAC in multiple subjects on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The students had only positive things to say about Joseph and claimed that his classes are always fun.

My observations of Joseph revealed that he related well to the students. He dressed in baggy jeans and t-shirts, wore his hair in corn rows, and often spoke with street

slang. The children seemed to appreciate these characteristics about him and some described him as “one of us”. They also appreciated the fact that he was somewhat lax with the rules and let them play during tutoring sessions. I will explore his reasoning behind this leniency below.

Joseph considered his role as a tutor in the TAC program to inspire his students and provide for them a viable model for achieving academically and personally:

Joseph: My role as a tutor is to try to inspire kids...to push themselves further... if I can be a role model to them, and try to set an example, just based on what I’m teaching them, and they actually learn something, that’s – well, I think that’s the best success there...

Joseph also felt that it was his responsibility to help students see how their actions today impacted their ability to achieve their goals in the future. He felt that he empowered students to want to succeed by pointing them to the right “path”:

Joseph: A lot of kids are like, “I don’t want to do this.” Or you hear kids say, “I want to make a lot of money. I want to do this.” But if you show them, “Here, this is the route that you want to take, if you want to do that...or be successful in life.” Not necessarily making a lot of money, being happy and successful. You show them what you have to do to accomplish that. So I think if you show them how the choices you make, where it leads you...I think they will understand that.

He felt it very important to show respect for his students, instead of “treating them like kids”, and trust them with responsibility:

Joseph: [Laughter]. I don’t know. I think one, because kids don’t want to be treated like kids. They want to be treated like individuals...I think that’s what more problems come from, when you treat a kid too much like a kid, or give them no respect, or give them no responsibility that they start acting up.

His approach aligned with literature from the Learning First Alliance (2001) that notes the value of respect, responsibility, and leadership within positive learning communities. Communities with these attributes lend themselves to motivation and commitment to learning (Learning Alliance, 2001).

Joseph proved himself to be relatively adept at empathizing with his students and their circumstances. He felt it particularly important to acknowledge the challenges they faced in making such a significant academic commitment to TAC and offered them respect for their dedication:

Joseph: It's a 12-hour day...I give them lots of respect for coming here and putting up with more work, to listening to us, who they hardly know... So I think if you can incorporate something – more hands-on, depending on what subject you teach...because these kids don't want to hear lectures...I feel like, man, they need a break...

One of the ways he illustrated his consideration for their sacrifice was by allowing the students time for free play during their sessions. As student subjects will detail in later sections, Joseph frequently allowed them to talk and play during their Tutoring Time. He disagreed with Katrina and Renee's strict, tough love approach and the way that they established such a structured environment at the center:

Joseph: I think they want to have structure...They want to have like cadets...They want to set the rules, make sure everyone follows, like having a tight ship. It's hard to do that. ...There's nothing wrong with having an organized class, but you have to understand where these kids are coming from...

While research indicates that such structure, organization, and explicit expectations help to promote a positive learning environment and reduce incidents of negative behaviors among students, Joseph views this structure as constrictive and suggests that a less structured environment would be more culturally responsive to the students (Osher and Fleischman, 2005).

Ms. Sue

Sue was a 19 year old Asian-American CU student from Iowa. She had an energetic, positive personality and often greeted everyone with a smile. Sue was a sophomore at CU and majored in International Economics and Finance. Her career goal,

however, was to own a salon. Sue had no experience working with children prior to working with TAC, but was a peer tutor in high school. Sue was in her second year as a tutor with TAC at the time of the study, and conveyed that she had had a positive experience with the program and students thus far.

Like Kyle, Sue described the goals of the TAC program as both helping students prepare for admission into a top high school, and helping them grow academically beyond the basic lessons that they learn in school:

Sue: I would say the goal of TAC is to help middle school students, prepare for a very good high school...It takes them through basic skills, but not only that, going above and beyond their level... going above what they're doing in school...to get them to what they want to do.

Sue's description of program goals touched upon the TAC's emphasis on high academic standards and its culture of high expectations. She initially focused on the academic focus on the program, but continued on to acknowledge additional social and personal supports it offered.

Sue: I feel like it's very, very supportive. Everyone's very supportive. Everyone is always encouraging you. You really see that during T-Time and Wrap Up – especially at Wrap Up, where there are Culture Shout-Outs. Like just...what's expected of you at TAC, not only as students...but tutors also.

Sue depicted the program as one with a supportive and nurturing environment, where the staff had high expectations, not only of the students, but of themselves and the tutors as well. As I will show, her sentiments were shared by the majority of the tutor respondents.

Sue noted that TAC did an adequate job, through their employment of the social justice themes, of delivering socially and culturally relevant programming. She also commented that students were frequently provided opportunities to give voice to their feelings and opinions and to be actively involved in the programmatic process:

Sue: Giving students a voice. Oh, that's *so* present. At the beginning of the meeting – the meetings are led by students...Everyone is allowed to give a culture shout-out. When there's ever a change or anything, input is given by everyone. It just doesn't just change. They know about the change and they help with the change...When there's a contest, like last night, Literary Love Poem, they were able to give their input on who had the best poem...

As with most respondents, when speaking about the social justice element of the program, Sue focused primarily upon opportunities provided for students to express their voices within the program. She conveyed an overall respect and appreciation for the impact the various program components have had on the lives of all participants. She also expressed the feeling that she and the other tutors played a vital role in academic and personal development of the students:

Sue: I believe that when we come in, it's our job to teach...the material that was given to us. We don't have to teach it the way they tell us to teach it. We can mix it up, make it fun, make it however you think it's gonna be exciting to the kids...I believe our role is the hands-on role and actually getting the students to learn...and to like have fun.

I will demonstrate later in the students' account that these qualities align with the manner in which most of the students described their ideal tutor and tutoring session. They continually stressed their desire for the tutors to engage them and make the lesson fun. Sue also felt it important to be consistent and available to the students and to let them know that she cared about their lives beyond her role as a tutor:

Sue: I'm a tutor every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and I feel like I'm there...consistent...Not only am I there for them academically and when they need help with homework, we do that, but...like I'll give them my e-mail address and my phone number, just in case if they ever need to call me...I'm there for them any way they need me to be.

Sue again spoke to the sentiments of the students, who mentioned on several occasions that they wanted tutors who were consistent and cared about their lives. It would stand to reason that Sue's perspective on her role played a large role in her students' affection for her. Research shows that educators who take the time to develop positive relationships

with students contribute to feelings of connectedness and academic motivation (Osher and Fleischman, 2005; Learning First Alliance, 2001; Brooks, 2006)

Because Sue tutored Technology and Math three evenings per week, she worked with a number of students, including Kayla on Thursdays. Sue explained that her favorite aspect of interacting with her students was getting to know them beyond their academic relationship.

Sue: I really enjoy...when we talk about just things outside of tutoring - what they enjoy doing...It's just a lot of fun to talk about that, and they get so excited...That's what I love about it, because it's when we are able to get to know each other even more than just the educational aspect of it.

Again, her response indicated a focus on developing positive relationships with students beyond the instruction that took place within the tutoring session.

Sue noted that her biggest challenges when working with her students were maintaining her patience when things were challenging, and like several other tutors and staff, dealing with discomfort when situations required her to be a disciplinarian:

Sue: Some of the biggest challenges, I would say would be my patience...and also discipline, because I know you're not there just to be their friend, you're there to tutor, but...it's hard to tutor them if they don't want to be with you. Especially with Kayla, when it comes to discipline and getting down to it - "Okay, you cannot do that..." I hate it because I know what's gonna happen.

Here yet again, Delpit's (1995) theory of the culture of power seemed to be at work. As with many of her peers, Sue expressed a reluctance to exert explicit authority over her students. During my observation of one of her Technology sessions, I noted her discomfort with firmly correcting Kayla when she began surfing the net. Kayla, subsequently, seemed to see their interaction as a game and continued with the problem behavior.

As I sat behind Kayla, I noticed that she had left the screen with her lesson and was now checking her personal email. Interestingly, she alerted Ms. Sue to her behavior.

Kayla: See, I'm still practicing!

Sue: Where did you go! (Sue rushed over to Kayla's computer)

Kayla deftly changed back to the lesson screen.

Sue: I was practicing typing in my username

Sue: Yeah right

Kayla went back to yahoo and again alerted Sue who came rushing over.

Kayla I don't have any friends online!

Sue: Kayla! I asked you not to do that and you went ahead and did it.

Kayla: You never said that.

Sue: Kayla, I said no. Stay on the right screen.

Despite her challenges here, Sue's positive perception of and interaction with the students was evident in their exchanges during tutoring sessions. During my observations, Sue appeared to have a good rapport with her group, and they all seemed comfortable interacting with and being themselves around her. Sue seemed to be just as comfortable often casually joking in return. Despite her reservations voiced in our interview, she occasionally tried her hand at disciplining the students when necessary, but also gave copious positive reinforcement. Though the technology lessons often call for minimal instruction, she made sure that the students were on task and engaged throughout the session.

Sue's responses indicated that she has had a worthwhile experience with the TAC program, its students, and staff over the past 2 years. Though she acknowledged that challenges did exist, she maintained a positive outlook on the experience as a whole. Sue also demonstrated a keen awareness of the importance of her role in the lives of her students and took her responsibility seriously. She, like several others within the

program, found it challenging to adopt an authoritative role with the students, but moved beyond her discomfort to ensure the students stay on task.

Mr. Greg

Greg was a 19-year-old white male in his first year at CU, where he majored in Mechanical Engineering. Like most of the CU tutors, Greg came to TAC through his campus work study program. Greg had minimal experience working with children before he began tutoring with the TAC program. In high school, he volunteered to help students in grades K-6 during their gym classes, but had no other experience.

As a tutor with TAC, Greg considered it his responsibility to provide both academic and personal guidance, though he commented that he rarely had opportunities to provide the latter:

Greg: I'm there to give them guidance. And it obviously can be with a physical math problem or if they have other questions or problems I can help them out... If they bring it up. I mean I don't bring it up. I mean if they bring something up that they had a bad day at school, I try to help them out, talk them through it.

Unlike other tutors, Greg admitted that he was not proactive in his efforts to develop personal relationships with his students. I confirmed this during my observation of his group, where he strictly followed the curriculum without any diversion to establish a rapport with his students.

I also noted that Greg, like his peers, showed discomfort during situation that called for discipline and authority to reign in the behavior of the students. During my observation of one of his Literature sessions, an 8th grade student blatantly disregarding his instructions. Greg seemed at a loss about how to respond.

Student: I'm gonna go downstairs and get a pencil

Greg: I have one right here. Besides, we're reading. You don't need one now.

(The student got up anyway) I know where I can get one.

Greg: I have one right here.

The student walked to the teacher's desk in the Latin Room.

Greg called out to the student to get him to stop

The student kept walking and got a pencil from the teacher's desk. An action strictly prohibited by TAC. Neither students nor adults are to use the school teachers' resources.

Greg (as the student sat back down): Ok, got it? Now sit. Let's each read a paragraph.

Of the tutors that I interviewed, Greg seemed the least enthusiastic about the program. Most of his responses were brief and non-committal, and it was difficult to gauge his thoughts about TAC and his students.

Mr. James

James was an African American male in his late 20's. He was one of the program's professional volunteers, and works as a Financial Analyst at a corporation for public broadcasting. He tutored Literature to Mary and three other 6th grade students on Monday evenings. James's participation in TAC was his first experience working with children and youth as an adult, though he worked with pre-school children when he was in high school. James explained that he decided to volunteer with TAC because he noticed a lack of positive black male role models for urban children, and he wanted to step in and try to fill that void:

James: There were a combination of things, just casual observation of just the lack of positive black leadership and also, just recognizing that even amongst my friends who are, a lot of them who are white and are volunteering in D.C., virtually none of my black friends are doing that...I think that its important that, especially underserved kids and kids of color, if they're going to have mentors, that they see that people who look like them are also taking an interest in their condition and their well-being.

Research notes the lack of positive role models for African American children and the great need for more black males to participate become involved in their communities as mentors, particularly with African American boys (Whiting, 2006; Shreffler, 1998). For the majority of my time at the Truman site, James was the only African American male tutor (during my last month there, they recruited one additional male), and James noted that he was far from proud of his unique status at the program:

James: It's really unfortunate, 'cause I know that there are many other black males in the city who could provide even greater support to these young people. So, it's sobering that I'm the only black male. It doesn't make me feel great at all that that's the case; in fact, it makes me feel pretty bad each time I'm there...

James discussed the importance of cultivating a programmatic environment where children of color could enjoy learning and are rewarded for their academic interests and successes. He discussed how this type of environment helped to counter the social mores that tell African American children that academic success is not a "black ideal":

James: [TAC] activities create a culture of "intellectual curiosity"...A lot of the kids struggle sometimes, but I think that the idea that they are there to learn and not to hang out, I mean, it's good that they have fun but they're also creating, finding peers who are like-minded and that it's okay to be smart and interested.

There's one boy in my group...I can tell that he probably gets it from a lot of kids, his peers at least, that he's a nerd. And I think that's detrimental; especially for him as a young black boy to have to deal with that because the idea that being smart isn't a black ideal is not good...I mean, I'm not trying to disregard the women either, but just looking at the statistics and reading articles, it seems that young black males are hemorrhaging. So, I think that TAC does create... engenders a culture of accepting just smartness...

Like Terri, James recognized that students, particularly black males, are often ridiculed by peers for their academic achievement (Whiting, 2006). Consequently, students like the one mentioned in James's example may feel discomfort in openly exhibiting his scholar identity. As I will continue to show throughout this study, both tutors and students commented frequently about their appreciation of TAC's efforts to cultivate a culture of

high expectations and achievement where students felt at ease exploring their love of learning.

James expressed that he believed his role in the program was to engage the students, both in their academic work and in discussions about the larger world around them. He also saw his role to be one of a symbolic representative of the black male, showing them that there are people who look like them that were interested in their lives and in their success:

James: I see my role there as more or less as symbolic for one, for them to see that there is an adult, a relatively young adult who's black and happens to be male who's also interested in them. But also serious about their intellect, too and trying to push them...to push their academic limits a little bit...I try to just be a positive example for them and help them and...try to understand them, too, not just go with the curriculum but also gauge what they're strengths are and encouraging them.

James took a particular interest his male student and seemed to commiserate with the student's struggle with being an intelligent young man in a school environment that belittled academic interest and success. James also exhibited a particular interest in Mary, though his focus resulted more from discomfort and confusion regarding her often brusque personality and "tough" demeanor. James admitted to being challenged by Mary, her behavior, and what he viewed as her proclivity for being a distraction to the other students in his group:

James: Mary is, she's just got a lot of energy, and I think sometimes misguided energy. And she knows a lot more than she lets on. I think she pretends to not understand concepts or themes for attention, so I think she's a lot smarter that she puts on.

I mean she's almost never had a good day. Every time she's been in the class, she always has to go to the bathroom or she's just distracting...For the most part, I'm able to get through the curriculum and feel like I'm making an impact for three of the students but Mary, it's tough.

Dance (2002) posits that youth often adopt “postures of toughness” in response to the mentally, emotionally, and physically challenging environment in which they live. These tough fronts can help to grant them safe passage from those who would perpetuate verbal or physical violence within their school, social, or home lives. While Dance’s (2002) study focuses primarily on black males, we see here that females also adopt tough fronts in response to challenging social environments. I will discuss the motivation behind Mary’s tough personae later in the student accounts.

James seemed very aware of the interplay of social, cultural, and racial dynamics in the lives of the children and how those external factors influence their self-perceptions and identities, though he was still learning about how these factors could influence his female students as well as those who were male. Overall, his comments indicated that he believed the TAC program had a positive impact on the children, particularly on those who felt uncomfortable cultivating or displaying a scholar identity within the traditional school environment.

Ms. Natasha

Ms. Natasha was an African American woman in her middle to late 30’s who worked as a Legal Secretary for a law firm in DC. Natasha had significant experience working with children in various volunteer capacities. She volunteered with youth groups at her church and worked with an organization that provided homework help to students over the phone. She worked with children from the ages of four to twenty. Natasha had been with TAC for two years at the time of this study, and worked as a Kendra and Shareese’s Technology tutor on Monday evenings.

Natasha conceptualized the goals of the TAC program to be expanded opportunities for children and helping them to have bright, positive outlooks about their futures:

Natasha: One of the main objectives is to open their minds, and give them a more positive outlook, and let them know that there are greater opportunities out there...I think they want them to think outside of the box...I think they challenge them, and they're trying to reach those that probably would not be challenged in another environment.

Here is a slightly variant take on the culture of high expectations, as she moved beyond the goal of increasing grades and gaining entrance to top high schools to discuss changing ideas and outlooks and imparting new skills that would help them in other aspects of their lives. Natasha also acknowledged that TAC promoted a culture of mutual respect among students, tutors and staff, and encouraged students to challenge themselves and think outside of the box:

Natasha: It seems as if they're trying to cement what kids should already be doing, like be respectful towards one another...Respect your elders. And learn how to articulate yourself. Again, they're challenging them to think out of the box...

Natasha also recognized the importance of extending her relationships with the students beyond their tutoring sessions. She mentioned her desire to engage them in activities outside of TAC to expose them to new pursuits that could be incorporated into her lessons. Her efforts to further develop her relationships with her students could potentially increase levels of trust and connectedness and improve students' interest and motivation within tutoring sessions.

Natasha noted that the biggest challenge she faced while working with the students was motivating them to focus and actively participate. While she recognized that the children were tired and distracted, she failed to acknowledge the role that their 12

hour days could play in their demeanors during the session. She seemed to recognize, though, that whatever the reason for their occasional lethargy, she played a significant role in setting the tone of her sessions. If she was enthusiastic and excited, there was a greater chance that her students would be as well.

Natasha: I think after I've gotten them engaged...finished whatever assignment, then I'm like, "Okay, good. That worked out." Because sometimes, I can come in there dragging, and then have to like – when I get to the door, "Okay, perk up," because I have to set the environment for them. And then after I get them moving a little bit, then I feel like, "Okay, I've accomplished that. I think they've learned one more thing...So I think after that, then I feel like they've accomplished something..."

The time commitment involved in TAC participation is significant, and students and families could decide to take part in the program for a variety of reasons. Natasha posited that the students saw programs like TAC as an avenue through which they could change their present circumstances. She used the example of an oratory contest the program had in the year before, where students spoke about the gentrification that was taking place in their DC neighborhoods. With such activities, she notes, TAC gave students an opportunity to both consider and voice their opinions about the challenges they face in their communities:

Natasha: One thing that I notice is that these kids are very aware of where they live and what's going on, and I think they want change...I think their environment and the desire to want more and want to make a change for – I don't think for all of them, it's about "making a change just for myself." I think they want to make a change for those to come, for their...whatever ethnic group they're a part of, and just the community...

I've noticed that this program has challenged them. Like I don't know if you know last year, they did a topic on gentrification...They were being challenged by the community, because that's who came out. "Why do you believe that it's good and why don't you?" ...I'm like, that's a lot for them to think about, but the thing is, they're living that.

So they're aware of it, and they want to make a difference...One of the things I think TAC does is – with that type of topic is that they're saying, "We want to know what you think about it." Because they do have an opinion.

Nichole: So you feel like TAC kinda gives them a voice?

Natasha: Yeah...Definitely.

Natasha's comments here represented a glimpse into a much larger issue. She insightfully noted that many parents and students recognized the numerous social, political, economic, and educational obstacles at work to stymie their efforts to achieve academic and professional success. Programs like TAC that offered an academic rigorous environment, opportunities for positive social and personal development, and exposure to new opportunities were often seen as a mechanism for overcoming some of the systemic barriers commonly faced by individuals in historically underserved communities.

Educators play a significant role in imparting to students the knowledge and skills necessary in overcoming these obstacles and achieving their goals. In the next section I will examine how TAC works to prepare its tutors to serve in this role through various workshops, trainings, and tutor support opportunities.

Tutor Training

I spoke earlier of the importance of having a well-trained staff, and of the efforts that TAC puts forth to offer a variety of training opportunities to its tutors. I mentioned briefly in each vignette tutors' prior experience and training, and here I will examine tutors perspectives of those trainings and the degree to which they learned from and/or took advantage of those opportunities.

According to respondents, TAC offered regular site based workshops, district-wide group meetings called Tutor Powwows, and skills-based trainings presented by external organizations. While many of the tutors admitted they did not take advantage of the trainings due to time constraints, those who did attend found them very helpful in improving their approaches to teaching and interacting with their students.

Sue and Casey, for instance, attended a skills-based workshop that significantly impacted their perceptions of race and culture. Sue, well into her second year with TAC, admitted that she had not taken advantage of the trainings during her first year. This year, she made more of an effort and reported being significantly impacted by the sessions that she attended:

Sue: This year, there was a speaker that came in...It was a wonderful program, and I absolutely loved it, and I learned so much...There [also] are meetings...where all the Wards come together and talk about things...Those are also helpful, because we get to hear what other tutors think, and they share their solutions, and we practice tutoring...

Our other training was ... He taught us kinda like how to think about where these students are coming from, and how they would want to be treated, and how if you treat them a certain way, you're gonna have to expect that they're gonna treat you this way...

I just remember that it was such a good training...It was about attitudes and it was about just teaching styles. He taught us that you don't say "Speak proper English,"...not to like bash their way of speaking, because that's right to them. ... I couldn't even stay for the whole thing, but it was very interesting, and I learned a lot.

The Tutor Powwows seemed to serve as an avenue of support for tutors as well as an opportunity for learning and skills development. Tutors had the opportunity to share best practices and insight into any particular challenges individuals were experiencing within their tutoring groups.

The workshop Sue mentioned seemed targeted towards changing youth worker's ideas about the value of the cultural capital that their students brought to the classroom. By learning to embrace students' culture while providing them with codes that facilitate their adoption of the mainstream culture when necessary, tutors can help bridge the gap between students' home and school environments (Ware, 2006; Irvine, 2003).

Casey provided additional details of the training described above by Sue:

Casey: There was one long one but I learned a lot...like how to approach kids. Like instead of using "Use proper English" say, "Did you know that you speak two languages? You speak English that you read and you speak English that you speak." Like don't deny them what they have. Just reinforce when in an English classroom, this is the way that everyone speaks.

It's like math in the sense that ...these are the numbers that we use that make it clear for everyone. So, if you're in the learning environment, don't say like, "Leave that...Use proper English." Cause it is proper English. It's the way that they speak. There's nothing wrong with it...But when you get in the classroom just make that distinction that this is where we speak the English that you would read...

When you leave this classroom, it's fine...When you're talking to your friends, that's fine. But when you're in here, everyone just needs to be on the same page, and I think that's a great concept and like we learned about other ...like letting kids establish what they think the rules should be, and then enforcing those rules, is like really helpful because they feel like they have ownership over that, and giving them responsibility encourages them to behave.

It's such a learning experience. There was so much that I learned...They talked about this study they did with black and white children...with a black doll and a white doll, and these little black girls and boys were asked which doll is pretty and they pointed to the white doll and they asked which one looks most like you and they pointed to the black doll and it's like...absolutely ridiculous, but we just deny so much of people's culture based on race...I wish that this program could follow me wherever I go to school, 'cause it teaches me so much about life...

Her account reinforced that this training opportunity enlightened participants about the value of their students' cultural capital. The workshop encouraged tutors to place value upon students' cultural norms and modes of communication while helping them to understand and utilize the cultural codes valued by the mainstream culture. As noted by Delpit (1995) and Dance (2002), teaching students who do not already participate in the culture of power the codes of the that culture provides them with valuable opportunities to learn and practice the "rules and social graces" that will help operate more comfortably within mainstream settings (Dance, 2002, 82).

Tutor Summary

The tutor interviews revealed that most of the subjects had positive experiences with TAC and its student population. Most tutors seemed committed to the mission of the

organization, and several were strong proponents of the goals the program sought to accomplish. The tutors seemed to have a genuine desire to positively impact the lives of their students.

As I mentioned earlier, the themes of high expectations, valuing voice, positive relationships, tough love, and the culture of power revealed in the discussion of staff experiences continued to a large degree amongst the tutors. The tutors seemed to believe in and work to perpetuate the culture of high expectations that permeated the TAC environment. Many noted the benefit of such expectations and the positive reinforcement that staff utilized to encourage students to reach their highest potential. Very few tutors expressed deficit perspectives or low expectations when discussing their students. Those who did commonly mentioned a lack of energy or enthusiasm on the part of the students. While some recognized the role that the extremely long day played in some students' demeanors, other failed to recognize the significant impact of this particular factor.

During our discussions of the program's social justice themes, a few of the tutors also mentioned the emphasis that TAC places on giving students opportunities to exercise their voice. According to tutor respondents, students had regular opportunities to voice their opinion about issues both within and outside of the program, and had regular input into programmatic decisions that impacted them.

A large majority of the tutors interviewed noted the importance of developing positive relationships with the students beyond their academic interactions and acknowledged the benefits that these relationships had on both themselves and the students. They felt that their role in the program extended beyond simple instruction to include interacting with the students on a more personal level. Some saw themselves as

role models, setting positive examples for their students, and others sought to act as mentors, helping to guide their students in both their academic and personal pursuits. Though several admitted to being challenged at times by their role, each tutor commented on the enjoyment they experienced when interacting with, teaching, and guiding their students.

With this group of respondents, only one tutor adopted the tough love approach, while several others expressed discomfort with Katrina and Renee's roles as warm demanders and with any expectation that they too play the role of disciplinarian with the students. As with Casey and Kristen in the staff section, those who communicated or demonstrated this discomfort were individuals in position of cultural power who evidently felt unease at the prospect of exercising this power among those they believed to be without it.

The tutors are an important component of the TAC program, and spent the most time interacting with the students on an individual basis. The tutors highlighted here seemed to have a good grasp on the role that they played in their students' TAC experience and took the responsibility seriously. As we will see in the section to follow, the students commented often on having very positive experiences with these tutors, and most conveyed that outside of their peer relationships and academic progress, the relationships they built with these individuals were one of the most important benefits to being a part of the program.

In Their Own Words: Student Experiences in the TAC Program

One of the primary goals of this inquiry, as expressed in my first research question, was to ascertain how program participants describe, understand and explain

their experiences within the TAC program. This section details those experiences using student participants' own words and voices. The data for this section comes primarily from interviews with students, though I provide some context with my observations in the field. I have compiled this data into individual vignettes telling the story of each subject's experiences within the TAC program.

The TAC program purposed to have a positive impact on students personally, socially, and academically, but it was the students themselves who best inform us if the program was truly successful in achieving this goal. In the following sections, I detail the experiences of the students at TAC in their own words. Each child's story is titled with their "name" followed by a listing of three words. I asked each student to give me three adjectives that best described them in an effort to better understand the students' self concepts before we began the interview. I organized their stories into several common sections. I begin each vignette with descriptive background information on each student, detailing their appearance, personality, and any important information that I learned about them during my time at the site. The sections following this description detail each student's experience at school, views of and experiences within the TAC program, perceptions of and interactions with TAC staff and tutors, benefits of TAC, and areas where they believe the program is in need of improvement.

Nina – Educated, Motivated, and Pretty

Nina was an 8th grade student at Truman Middle School. She was 13-years-old, Latina (her parents are from El Salvador); with chocolate brown eyes, a golden complexion, and long dark brown hair that fell in soft waves well below her shoulders. As a student at Truman, she primarily wore the school uniform of blue pants or skirt,

white polo shirt, black shoes, and white socks. She was slightly below average in height with a slim build. She was an attractive little girl who received a lot of attention from the boys around her. She told me that she had already had several boyfriends, unbeknownst to her strict parents. Nina had been in the program for 3 years, since the summer before her 6th grade year. Nina's parents seemed involved and active in her life, particularly her father, whom she described as protective, stern, and loving.

Nina was very popular in the TAC program. Most of the students knew and liked her, and she was something of a leader, actively participating in program activities and taking her responsibilities as an eighth grader very seriously. Nina was a very smart girl, who primarily earned A's and B's in her classes. I noticed both in Study Hall and Tutoring Time that she sometimes struggled to persevere when faced with challenging questions, but when pushed and encouraged, she easily found the answers and demonstrated her true academic prowess.

During Study Hall, Nina came to me to ask if I could help her with her science homework. At first, she tried to just rush me to give her the answer, but I helped her find the answer in the text and understand why it was right. Initially she would repeatedly say, "I can't", whenever something would challenge her or she could not immediately find the answer. She would say, "Let's just skip that one Ms. Nichole. I'll just put something down later". Once she started actually reading carefully through the chapter, however, she would always find the answers herself. When she finished her worksheet, she exclaimed, "I'm done, AND I get it!"

Nina had been in the program for three years, and appeared to have a close relationship with the TAC staff and her tutors. She seemed to have a particularly close relationship with her math tutor, Mr. Thomas, a Latino tutor and TAC employee who also was originally from El Salvador. She seemed excited to see him each Tuesday evening, and as I discussed earlier, he mentioned as well that he had taken a special interest in her academic and personal progress.

I conducted two one-on-one interviews with Nina, one during each semester. During our first interview, Nina was having a challenging day and was unusually succinct during our discussions. She gave relatively short answers and seemed anxious to leave and get back to a homework assignment that was worrying her. Despite her distraction, she was able to present an interesting picture of her experiences with and perceptions of the TAC program.

Experience at School

Nina attended Truman Middle and believed that overall it is a good school. She felt that the teachers often overwhelmed the students with excessive homework, but still was able to maintain exceptional grades. She expressed frustration; however, that some of her teachers did not understand the tremendous work load that they hoisted upon the students:

Nina: Some of the teachers I don't like....just because they give us a lot of homework and they act like we don't have a life after school.

Despite this frustration, she explained that she had relatively good relationships with all of her teachers, especially her Spanish teacher, who she noted was her favorite:

Nina: She's my favorite teacher. She teaches Spanish...We do a lot of fun work...She keeps us laughing and like she tells jokes...She just knows how it feels to be a kid. I guess that's why she doesn't give us a lot of homework because she knows we have other homework. But like, at the same time she can be hard...

Nina's description of her Spanish teacher aligned with literature indicating that these positive relationships lend themselves to increased motivation and commitment to learning on the part of students (Protheroe, 2007; Learning First Alliance, 2001; Osher and Fleischman, 2005). As I will show in later accounts, this teacher is a favorite of other students as well.

Overall, Nina performed well in school and received excellent grades on her report card:

Nina: I got one B and the rest A's

The TAC Program

Nina primarily perceived TAC to be positive and beneficial. In her mind, the program served as an opportunity to receive homework help and socialize with her peers.

Nina: You actually get help. I like sitting with my friends and talking to them...I like the tutors. They teach good...We use our brain more than any other students...Oh! It helps with high school.

Beyond the academic assistance she received and the opportunity to interact with friends, Nina also commented that she had developed new confidence in herself and her abilities as a result of her experience at TAC. Through the program, she explained, she had grown from a shy little girl into a confident youth who now enjoys speaking publicly and actively participating in program activities:

Nina: I used to be *really really* shy and I didn't raise my hand or anything like that, but now I *always* want to do that. And so I think it's helped me to get out of my shell...

Nichole: So you feel more confident?

Nina: Um hm. (Yes)

Nina is one of several students who experienced such social and persona growth within the TAC environment. Staff's consistent positive reinforcement and their promotion of high expectations seemed to effectively instill in some students a new level of confidence. Later student accounts will demonstrate further evidence of this impact.

Nina also shared that TAC had changed her views about the importance of education, and that through the program; she had discovered that learning could be fun:

Nichole: Do you feel like TAC has affected the way that you view your education?

Nina: Yeah, 'cause sometimes TAC can be fun and teach in a fun way and at school...they don't do that...Yeah...cause now I actually want to come to school.

Nichole: You didn't want to come before?

Nina: Uh uh (No)

Nichole: What made the difference?

Nina: I have TAC after school.

Here again Nina reported experiencing growth in response to her time with TAC. The culture of the program and the often innovative presentations of lessons helped to cultivate Nina's love of learning and show her that the learning process can be fun.

Despite these benefits, Nina later reiterated her distress about her significant workload. Considering the extremely long day for students, her concerns seemed quite valid. Several students regularly noted that once they entered the 8th grade, their teachers assigned much more work. It is understandable, then, that it would become challenging to devote the same amount of time to TAC as they did in earlier grades and still be able to complete all of their work.

TAC Tutors

Even though she admittedly struggled with the time commitment and her heavy workload, Nina still seemed to appreciate her experience at TAC, particularly the positive relationships she formed with the tutors and staff. She mentioned that the growth and development she had experienced over the past three years was due in part to her interactions with them.

According to Nina, some of her tutors expressed the need for an improvement in her attitude. She shared that learning to control her temper was one of the important lessons she had learned while participating in TAC:

Nina: My attitude...A lot of the tutors have been telling me I need to work on it.

Nichole: Ok. So what do you think about that?

Nina: I need to change it.

Nichole: Think so? ... Have they given you any guidance about how to do that?

Nina: Try to think before I act

Nichole: How is that going?

Nina: Good. Well...I'm trying to.

Two of Nina's three tutors, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Greg. Both had very positive things to say about Nina and her work during their lessons together. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Thomas took a special interest in Nina's personal and academic development. He commented that she often seemed a bit lost and that she was searching for her self ...her place. He felt it to be his place as a fellow Latino to serve as a role model for her in an environment where Latino role models were scarce. He questioned whether she had contact with many Latino's in her regular school day and vowed to do as much as he could to help her to be successful. It was this kind of caring and concern, shown by most TAC tutors and staff that may have inspired Nina's comments both in the previous and following sections.

TAC Staff

In addition to her positive opinions of her tutors, Nina expressed similar sentiments about Katrina and Renee:

Nina: [Ms. Katrina is] a good Site Coordinator. Like if someone has a problem she makes you feel better...like...she knows how to approach you when you have a problem.

Nichole: What about Ms. Renee?

Nina: Yeah. I like her. She understands how we feel sometimes.

Unlike her stated experiences with some of her teachers at school, Nina seemed to feel nurtured and understood by both Katrina and Renee, and felt she could talk to them about any problems she had outside of the program. These positive relationships evidently had a favorable impact on Nina and her academic, social, and personal development.

Benefits of TAC

Over the course of our conversations, Nina conveyed numerous benefits of being a part of the TAC program, including obtaining assistance with her schoolwork, developing supportive relationships with numerous caring adults, learning to enjoy and value her education, and increasing her level of self confidence. According to Cohen (2003) this nurturing environment can provide frequent incentives for positive behaviors and improved academic performance. When asked if her life would be any different if she were not in the TAC program, she responded that it provided a positive, safe place to spend time after school, and outside of TAC, there are not many places where her parents would let her go without them.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

Nina's largest complaint about the TAC program centered on the food, a common sentiment among all, and her difficulty in managing her excessive workload due to the significant amount of time she invested in TAC. She, along with many of the 8th graders, also felt a bit overburdened at times by Ms. Katrina's high expectations. Some of the senior class (8th graders) felt that she placed undo pressure and responsibility upon them and asked them to take on more than they were interested in bearing. While the 8th graders enjoyed their seniority in the program and could often be observed looking after the younger students, their comments indicated that took on any additional

responsibilities begrudgingly. I will show that this trend continued throughout some of the stories of the other 8th grade respondents, but first I will introduce Jonah, one of the younger students in the program.

Jonah – Smart and Caring

Jonah was a fifth grade student who attended a charter school in Northwest DC. Jonah was a relatively quiet child, and interacted with few of the other children. He often kept to himself and sat silently doing his work. Despite his seemingly quiet nature, Jonah occasionally would come alive during group activities and enrichment classes and those around him were able to glimpse his intelligence and unique sense of humor. Jonah was of average height for his age with a solid, medium build. He had a caramel complexion, and routinely wore his school uniform of a red polo shirt with the school logo, khaki pants, and black shoes or boots. He often wore a black “do rag” to cover his hair. Outside of the rare moments when he let loose during the enrichment activities, I did not see him smile or laugh often. He seemed to be a very serious child. I also got the impression that there is a lot going on behind that silent façade, for there were times when he made extremely insightful comments in classes, enrichment activities, and during our interviews.

Experience at School

Jonah was an average to above average student who receives 2’s and 3’s in school on a scale of 1 to 4. Jonah described having mixed experiences at his home school. While he professed to enjoy his Art and Spanish classes, and received average to above average grades, he also described a school environment where enrichment activities were scarce and where students were “jacked up” by teachers who faced little consequence.

Jonah: Some of the teachers...they jack up the kids...They make 'em back up to the wall...they like...push you around and shove you...Sometimes the parents...they get mad. And sometimes they come up to the school. But the principal, he doesn't really do nothin' about it.

Nichole: Have they ever done that to you? (Jonah shakes his head)

This type of environment is hardly conducive to learning for children and would seem to create an adversarial relationship between teachers and students. Dupper and Meyer-Adams (2002) note that such maltreatment of students occurs far more often than many may think and claim that such techniques are used often to control students. Such interactions, however, may have more of a tendency to create fear and oppositional behavior than any positive outcome.

Jonah also expressed the feelings that teachers at his school generally fail to listen to students, and he felt as if his voice was rarely heard. This theme emerged several times throughout our conversations and implied that Jonah's school environment was not particularly conducive to a positive learning environment. The fact that students felt unheard and physically or emotionally threatened could significantly impede their ability to be mentally and emotionally prepared to learn (Dupper and Meyer-Adams, 2002). This environment may also have been the reason that Jonah's grandmother decided to move him to a new school the following school year.

The TAC Program

As with his experiences at school, Jonah seemed to have mixed feelings about TAC. While he recognized the benefits of being a part of the program, he struggled with devoting so much of his time to the endeavor. He commented that on the three evenings per week he attended the program, he usually had to go to bed as soon as he got home,

with no time to relax and play. Despite these mixed feelings, he appeared to be an advocate of the program and the role that it played in the lives of student participants:

Jonah: I think that...the way...that it's organized is ok...I think it's fun sometimes... Cause...like when the tutors teach us in smaller groups...

Jonah explained that he originally wanted to participate in TAC because he did not want his teacher to have to spend so much time helping him in class.

Jonah: So...I could learn more stuff and in class...so the teacher doesn't have to spend all of her time on one person...she can go back and forth teaching. It'll help me bump my grades up and help me get into a better high school...

Jonah's comment about his teacher's time seemed noteworthy and less indicative of his personal concerns than of a message he might have received from his teacher when he sought out individual attention with his school work. If so, this would explain his later comments about the benefits of smaller group sizes at TAC and more individualized attention.

Now that he is well into his first year at TAC, Jonah shared that he is learning a lot, particularly in math, and has even moved ahead of his classroom curriculum.

Jonah: I learned about decimals and negatives and positives....cause usually...in my school, they haven't taught us about negatives and positives, or stuff like that.

Nichole: So you're kind of ahead of what they're teaching you in school now?

Jonah: Yeah

Jonah, like many of his peers, seemed to appreciate being able to learn skills and concepts in advance of his class at school. This advancement worked to increase students' confidence levels and their belief in their individual ability to excel academically. Jonah felt that participating in TAC will help him to improve his grades in school and could continue to help keep him one step ahead in math.

TAC Staff

Jonah had little to say about Katrina and Renee. He commented only that he approved of the way that they ran the center and that he got along with them both relatively well:

Jonah: I think they um...are pretty good. I think they're doing good the way they're doing...

Nichole: What do you think their expectations of you are?

Jonah: To go beyond the limit. Yeah. To...make...to um...not to make B's and C's and stuff...to make A's

Nichole: So they have pretty high expectations of you?

Jonah: Yes.

Jonah demonstrated recognition of the high expectations that the TAC staff hold for him and the other students. Like his peers, he acknowledged their hope that he would strive to perform to the best of his ability both academically and behaviorally.

TAC Tutors

In contrast to his reserved responses regarding TAC and its staff, Jonah became slightly more verbose when discussing his tutors. He stated that he enjoyed all of his tutors, but liked Literature and Technology most because his tutors developed innovative ways to make the lessons fun for students:

Jonah: I like the technology class the best...and Literature...because in Literature...we read and stuff...and then we do things for points...and then we get prizes. And in the technology classroom, we get to get on the computer, and create um...Microsoft...we go on Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word and create slideshows and stuff.

Nichole: You like all your tutors?

Jonah: Yeah

As I alluded to earlier, Jonah expressed that he found it easier to communicate with his tutors at TAC than his teachers in school, because of the smaller class sizes.

Jonah: Sometimes...it's not that many teachers to communicate with...cause it's only two fifth grader classes...at my school...and it's more than one teacher here...because they have smaller tutor...smaller teacher groups...

Despite the ongoing debate about the true benefits of smaller class sizes, in Jonah's case, and other students to follow, the small groups seems to have had a positive impact on students' learning experience, particularly because they have the opportunity to interact more with their tutors and receive more personal attention (Bye et al., 2004; Maasoumi et al., 2005; Normore and Ilon, 2006; Robertson, 2005). From what we now know about Jonah's school environment, it is understandable that this feature would be extremely attractive to him.

As with all of the students, I asked Jonah what characteristics his perfect tutor would have, based upon the teachers and tutors that he had worked with thus far.

Jonah: They listen to you....they always try to help you...they try to be nice and they try to make the class fun for you so that you can learn comfortably...and...that they try to work on you for...to your education

Nichole: Um Hm. Do you think you have that with all of your tutors that you have now?

Jonah: Yes

Nichole: ... Do you feel like you have that with Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee?

Jonah: Yes.

It seemed particularly important to Jonah that he felt heard by his teachers and that they strived to make learning fun for students. As research indicates, feeling understood and heard by adults within educational settings fosters in students the motivation to achieve (Learning First Alliance, 2001; Brooks, 2006).

Benefits of TAC

During our conversations, Jonah mentioned several benefits of his participation in the TAC program, including smaller class sizes, positive relationships with caring tutors and staff, fun enrichment activities, and improved academic performance. He believed that he was better off having become a participant and felt that his life would be different if he had not made the decision to become involved:

Jonah: Yes. Probably....it would be worse, 'cause I probably wouldn't be achieving to a better high school and middle school and stuff...

Although Jonah openly admitted that the long days required of TAC participants were not favorable, he also admitted that he was better off because of his involvement. Later accounts will show that this delicate balance of gains and losses proved to be quite precarious for several of the students when it came to their commitment in the program.

Kayla - Smart, Cute, and Talented

Kayla was a 12 year old African-American girl in the 7th grade at Truman. Each day she wore the Truman uniform of a white shirt, blue skirt or slacks, and black shoes. Kayla had a dark caramel complexion, and when she was not wearing long braids, she usually had her hair pulled back in what was often a messy ponytail, with several strands coming loose as if she had had a long day. She had a slim build and was a relatively tall for her age and shot up to almost my height over the course of the semester (she came about to my shoulder when I first arrived). Overall, she was a cute, gregarious girl who smiled often and spoke openly. She was polite in most cases, but had been known to get into trouble because of a quick temper.

Experience at School

Like several of her peers, Kayla reported having mixed experiences at Truman. While she greatly enjoyed her Spanish teacher, who seems to be a favorite of several Truman students, she had difficulties with some of her other teachers. She expressed that she was often treated unfairly and like Jonah, felt that many of her teacher did not listen to her. She explained that one teacher “got on her nerves” because he wrote her up for being tardy, and another teacher gave her a grade that she did not deserve. She also took issue with the school’s requirement that students spend half an hour during lunch time reading quietly after they had eaten. Despite these challenges, Kayla remained an above average student and received one A, four B’s, and one C on her progress report.

The TAC Program

At the time of our interview, Kayla was beginning her third year in TAC. She did not have very many positive things to say about the program in her initial description. She claimed that Study Hall was boring, the snacks were often unappetizing, and her enrichment activity this term was not to her liking once she was moved out of her original class. Her initial negative depiction was interesting, because she later had very positive comments about the program. These varying opinions may speak to the mixed experience that several older students had with TAC, particularly after they had been with the program for several years and the routine became, for them, a bit rote.

Kayla described her perceptions of the overall culture of TAC by illustrating the rules and expectations that Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee had of the students. While not always happy with the rules and structure of the program, Kayla recognized that it would eventually work to her good and help her prepare for life outside of the program. She also

commented that she was able to translate some of the academic and personal lessons to her life beyond TAC:

Kayla: [I've learned] like how you act around somebody professional, and how we should behave out in public...Basically teaching us manners...

Nichole: Do you think that's useful?

Kayla: Yes...sort of... Yes because I'm acting a little better...

Nichole: So are you able to take what you learn in TAC and apply it in school for instance?

Kayla: Yes...like my Pre-Algebra teacher since I'm ahead of what he's doing I can tell him what I learned and how...

Here again is an example of a student who had moved ahead of her class at school due to participation in TAC. This trend seemed particularly consistent with TAC's 5-7 graders, though appeared less frequently among the 8th graders. This could be due, in part, to the increasingly challenging material that the 8th graders had begun to undertake at school.

TAC Staff

Just as Kayla admitted to having a challenging relationship with some of her teachers at school, she also was open about her issues with the Ward 4 staff. She had little to say about Ms. Katrina but felt that Ms. Renee was "mean" and strict. She took particular issue when Ms. Renee yelled at her and other students in front of their peers:

Kayla: Well...I think Ms. Renee...she's mean...I think Ms. Katrina is a little bit mean but nicer than Ms. Renee...

Like some of the other student subjects, Kayla takes issue with Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee's "tough love" approach, and is affronted when they reprimand her, particular in public settings. As Garot and Joniak (2004) have warned, Kayla's protest to the women's style of interaction is a potential consequence of tough love. Kayla shared that she would

consider them to be less mean if they took students aside to chastise them instead of embarrassing them in front of their the other students.

TAC Tutors

Kayla seemed to have better relationships with her tutors than she did with the TAC staff. She noted that the small group sizes facilitated better interactions with the TAC tutors than with her teachers at school:

Kayla: Well...tutors yeah because it's just like three people in the group with the tutor

Nichole: So you feel like you can get more attention there? (She nodded).

Kayla represents yet another student who benefited from the small group sizes and individualized attention afforded by TAC tutors. Kayla continued to explain why these smaller classes facilitated learning and communication with tutors:

Kayla: Because, when we're at school, it's more students in yo' class, and when you're at TAC with your tutors there's like 3 or 4 people so it's better to understand.

Kayla gave the impression that she had good relationships with most of her tutors, especially Ms. Natalie, her only African-American tutor. When I asked about the significance of race in constructing her ideal or "perfect" tutor, however, she replied that race was of little importance to her in determining whether she would have positive interactions with them:

Kayla: It doesn't matter... (She said smiling shyly)... They have to like...like...teach us...like teach us in a fun way and then let us have fun after that.

As I will show in later sections, this was a consistent response among the students who expressed that a tutor's ability to listen, understand, relate, and make learning fun was more important than race or gender.

Benefits of TAC

Kayla appeared to view the benefits of TAC largely in terms of the program's role in helping her to attain her academic and professional goals. Though she obviously valued her relationships with her tutors, she spoke more often about the skills and knowledge that she would be able to put to use outside of the TAC program. She explained that TAC had taught her to want more out of life:

Kayla: Like now I wanna do more things in life...Cause they made me wanna become a Fashion Designer

Kayla summed up her perception of the benefits of TAC by stating that at the end of the process, it will have helped her to obtain a "good job":

Kayla: With TAC, I can learn new things and then pass all my grades and then they'll help me go on to high school and then college and get a good job!

Areas for Improvement

Kayla was relatively clear about her views on the improvements that should be made in the TAC program. Her primary issue involved Katrina and Renee's role as warm demanders and the occasions when they interacted with the students with raised voices. Kayla suggested that instead of yelling at students in front of their peers, they take them aside to discuss issues with them privately.

Though Kayla commented that the facilities and resources overall were adequate for the program, she did note that the food was often undesirable and would prefer a different caterer. Again this proves a common complaint among the students and some of the staff. Kayla also mentioned in passing that she would appreciate lessons that were more interactive. Considering the long 12 hour day that each student devotes to academic endeavors on TAC nights, it seemed reasonable to allow students more opportunities to

be active and move around during lessons to keep them alert and excited about the learning process.

Although Kayla acknowledged having benefited from her experience at Ward 4, she voiced valid concerns about both the format of the tutoring sessions and her interactions with Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina. Despite these admitted areas for improvement, she had, however, experienced a boost in test her scores, an improvement in her behavior and an increased focus on her future. She also seemed to have made a relatively positive impression on both her tutors and her peers, as was evidenced when she was nominated Student of the Week:

Mr. Justin - I think Kayla deserves to be Student of the Week because she has made a big change from last week. She is more mature and assertive and is growing up to be the great student that I know you can be.

AAM - I think Kayla deserves to be a Student of the Week because she's a really good friend and even though we argue, sometimes she tries to help people in need and pays attention.

Though a couple of tutors mentioned having occasional challenges with Kayla, her temper, and her need for attention, overall they recognized that she is a charming, intelligent young lady.

Mary- Fun, Outgoing, and Beautiful

Mary was an 11-year-old African-American girl in the 6th grade at Macintosh Elementary School. I originally had not planned on including Mary in the study, but as I was speaking to other students about participating, I noticed her watching me curiously. Eventually she began approaching me, after I spoke to each student, to ask if she could “join”. She had no idea what I was doing with the other students, but was insistent that she be a part of it. I told her “no” the first several times, but towards the end of the evening, I asked her what school she attended. When she told me she attended

Macintosh, one of the Ward 4 feeder schools classified as being “in need of improvement”, I told her that she could participate.

Mary was an outspoken, boisterous little girl, who had no problem speaking her mind. She had a bit of a “tough” personae, and could be quick-tempered. I had pleasant experiences with Mary, but occasionally observed her being obstinate with others, both students and adults. Overall, however, she was an agreeable child who wanted to do well.

Mary was of average height with a slim build and had a medium brown complexion. Though Macintosh required students to wear uniforms, on the day of our interview, Mary wore a black cotton long-sleeve shirt, with “Chicken Noodle Soup” in gold letters and light blue jeans. Her hair was in a spiky ponytail at the top of her head. Megan had a bright smile that she shared often with those around her, although it disappeared quickly when her temper reared its head.

Experience at School

Mary had few positive comments about her school. She explained that Macintosh would be closing its doors in the next years and she felt that despite parent protests to the contrary, the school should be closed. Mary described a volatile school environment at Macintosh, and she mentioned that she had witnessed several fights and arguments there and had even been a part of a few of them:

Mary: It was like fights and arguments. I wasn’t in the fights, but I was in the arguments...but I got in a fight with this girl...she got on my nerves. I wanna fight her this year...I’m like... (punches hand in fist) ummmmm!

Mary also seemed to have challenging relationships with the majority of her teachers. She felt some were too strict, and others were quite unfair to students. She shared an example of a teacher who had recently given her and her classmates F’s on a test for forgetting to bring pencils:

Mary: Today is a perfect example. We had this test...and I ain't have no pencil 'cause usually when I go to music, he always gives us a pencil when it's a test. So he said, don't raise your hand 'cause I'm not gon' give you no pencil. And so half the class basically failed, because we din do the test.

Mary's story here is indicative of classroom environment unlikely to produce positive learning outcomes for some students to do the teacher's seemingly harsh and punitive pedagogy. Mary's frustration and anger towards the teacher is likely to impact her decisions about her level of participation and receptivity in his class from this point forward.

Despite these issues with her teachers, Mary commented that felt supported and understood by them, with the exception of the teacher who gave her an undue "F". Overall, Mary earned average grades in school. On her latest report card, she reported receiving five B's and two C's, which represented an improvement from previous school terms.

Student Experience at TAC

Mary was the second child in her household to participate in the TAC program. Her older brother graduated of TAC a few years prior to her participation. His positive experience had been a large factor in Mary's mother's decision to enroll her daughter in the program. Mary, however, made it clear that she was not initially a fan of TAC and did not enjoy her experience last year due to a lack of friends in the program:

Mary: I din' really come for TAC in the 5th grade, 'cause to me, I din' really care for TAC because it wasn't people that I liked there...It was just like all...B.S...

Mary explained that in the sixth grade she made new friends, she thought the program was fun:

Nichole: So what made you stay during the 6th grade year?

Mary: The friends! ...And it's kinda like...it's really fun... this year

In addition to the friends she made within the program, Mary also noted the academic gains she experienced as a result of her participation:

Mary: [I've learned] how to write...a essay...or how to do the math...'cause you already learnt it and when they do it in the classroom you can be like oh! I know this stuff and you're just gonna be like speeding through it ...cause like first advisory I didn't really do well...but I'm *striving*... I'm striving for to be on honor roll this year...cause we had this test today, and I really think I did so well...

Like Jonah, Mary was one of several students who enjoyed the benefit of moving ahead of her class at school to the skills and knowledge she acquired at TAC.

Nichole: So your grades have definitely improved since you've been in TAC?

Mary: That's what I think.

Nichole: So what do you think overall that you've learned so far being in TAC?

Mary: Our words...our weekly words. I put 'em in my essays now...and I read more...It was like...The more I read...the more I get smarter...

Her improved performance seemed to imbue her with the confidence to, as she says, “strive” for continued academic improvement.

TAC Staff

Despite the overall academic gains Mary experienced as a result of her TAC participation, she expressed negative perceptions of Ms. Renee and Katrina and showed displeasure with their strict, tough love approaches to dealing with the students. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest, she rated Ms. Katrina “a 3.5 or 4.5” because of her austerity:

Mary: She just too strict...I mean...it's ok to be strict at times...but... (shook her head).

She acknowledged, however, the staff's high expectations for her and other students and their efforts let students know they believed their ability to achieve academically:

Mary: [They expect] more out of us. And like they know that we can...they know that we can do...They know that we can...pull more ...like...they know that we're so much more...like they know that we're so much more than average or proficient...

As Irvine and Fraser, 1998) explain, it is not uncommon for students to describe warm demanders as “mean”, while still acknowledging the positive impact they have on their lives.

TAC Tutors

In contrast to her feelings about the staff, Mary spoke highly of her tutors. In her opinion, much like her peers', the perfect tutor was someone who could relate to her and make learning fun, and she thought that each of her tutors was “real fun”. Also like other students, she felt that the race and gender of her tutor made little difference in their ability to relate to her:

Mary: My family always says...don't be like white people were in the olden days because you may never know...that may be a good relationship... that might can be your best friendship or whatever. Don't like judge a book by its cover.

I found it quite interesting the consistency with which the students discounted the importance of race in their interactions with tutors. This reaction may have been due to the fact that they spent less than two hours each week with the tutors, or maybe the tutors with whom they interacted were consistently adept at delivering culturally responsive lessons and interacting with the children in a way that made them feel understood and supported. Mary alluded to the fact that her views on race originated from her family, who taught her not to judge people negatively because of their racial background. According to Mary, she enjoyed her tutors, Mr. Joseph in particular, simply because they were fun and had interesting conversations:

Mary: Mr. Joseph. He cool. He like understand you and he's just like Mr. James, but better! ...it's so fun...we talk while we're on the computer ...we play games when we're on the computer...We talk to each other and we talk to Mr. Joseph. There's no doubt about it!

Benefits of TAC

Although she initially expressed negative views of the program, Mary noted several benefits of TAC, including improved academic performance, new friendships, and positive relationships with her tutors. She commented that she thought the program was fun and that it really had helped her to get ahead in school.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

Like several of her peers, she expressed negative feelings about Katrina and Renee in their roles as warm demanders, and felt that their tough love approach was too strict for her liking. Despite Mary's mixed feelings, however, she recognized that her participation in the program would be beneficial to her in the long run. She commented that she was striving to do better in school, and that her improved academic performance, the support and encouragement that she received from her tutors, and the assistance provided to help her gain entrance to a good high school would all open doors for her in the future.

Micah – Fabulous, Fantastic, and Amazing

Micah was a 6th grade African male student from Nigeria. He had been in the United States full-time for two years now, and seemed to be adapting well. Before moving to the U.S. full-time, he spent his school years in Nigeria and summers in the States. Micah was a good student and was well-liked by his peers. He was of average height for his age, with a slim build and a smooth dark brown complexion. He wore his hair short, shaved closely to his head so only a light dusting of hair remained. He had a

delightful sense of humor, a bright smile, and could often be found joking around with his friends or the adults around him.

Micah attended St. Michael's, a private school in DC, and normally wore the St. Michael uniform of blue slacks, a light blue button down shirt, a blue tie, and black shoes. He always looked well-kept and neat; especially for a 10 year old little boy. Although he had only been in the country for a few years, he spoke English very, well with only a mild accent. He shared that he aspired to be a movie star or a scientist.

Nichole: Do you know what you want to do when you grow up?

Micah: Yeah... I can't tell you.

Nichole: You can tell me! Give me a little clue...

Micah: ... I wanna be a movie star....An actor...And then...I wanna be a scientist...The scientist that makes robots and makes experiments.

Experience at School

Micah was one of the few students who had only positive experiences with the teachers and staff at his school. He had mixed feelings, however, about the school facilities, explaining that there were only limited areas for them to play outside, which is often the case in urban schools (Bazron et al., 2005; Agron, 1998; Dejong, 2004; Learning First Alliance, 2001).

Overall, Micah performs well in school, receiving A's and B's on his progress report:

Micah: I got ...Two A's and four D's...I mean B's!! (laughing)

Student Experience at TAC

As with his school, Micah's overall opinion of TAC was positive, He shared that he was in the program to learn, and that participating had helped to move him ahead of

his classmates at school. Here again, it was apparent that getting ahead in school was a common benefit valued by several of the students:

Nichole: Why do you think you are here?

Micah: ...To learn math, technology, and English...They taught me that in the summer and now they're teaching me that in my class now. So I'm one step ahead.

Micah was also one of the many students who commented that TAC was a place where students could be successful academically without fear of ridicule from peers. He explained how students at his school thought it was "bad" to do well academically:

Micah: It's a good thing that you're smart. Some people think it's a bad thing... At school...They think getting all A's is a bad thing. They call people geeks and nerds

Nichole: Do you ever feel like you don't want to do well because you're gonna get teased?

Micah: No. I want to do well.

As mentioned earlier, during the discussion of Mr. James's experience, this devaluing of the scholar identity is not uncommon within the urban school environment, but Micah seemed to have developed a resiliency to any ridicule and maintained his desire to succeed despite negative reactions from his peers (Whiting, 2006; Tyson et al., 2005).

During a discussion about the culture of TAC and opportunities to lend his voice to programmatic operations, Micah shared that he had been a participant in the development of TAC's Culture Constitution, which he described as an incentive component that motivated students to "do good thing instead of bad things".

Micah: We made it last year (The Culture Constitution)... It's good because we have competition. It's like a competition. And so people wanna do good things...it change their mind to do bad things so they can win sumthin...(and later...) When I said that people mostly do it for the [prizes]...but I don't do it for mostly the prizes.

Nichole: Why do you do it?

Micah: Because I could like to [make an] example for myself so I can then do it in school

Micah was an example of a student who was able to take both academic and personal lessons learned within the TAC setting and apply them to his life outside of the program. In his and other cases, TAC helped students to bridge the gap between home and school. Though drawing this connection could be challenging in some cases, many students were successful in translating their achievement in TAC to their classrooms at school.

TAC Staff

Along with his positive view of TAC generally, Micah seemed to have a good perception of the program staff, and spoke well of his interactions with them:

Micah: I don't know much about Ms. Renee but I know about Ms. Katrina 'cause Mr. Kyle was the old Volunteer Coordinator. So Ms. Katrina...she helps us with our homework...

Micah expressed that though both Mr. Kyle, one of his tutors, and Ms. Katrina were both fun, they still expected him to focus and do well academically:

Micah: Both of them are fun. Sometimes like they put fun to everything. Like if they want to make something fun. Like if we are doing homework, we can play on the computers if we do our homework. We have to focus... They expect of me to be smart. They expect me to get A's. Cause they help me. And I would let them down if we are doing bad....

Through the promotion of a culture of high expectations, the staff instilled in the students the belief that hard work and achievement should be the norm. The fact that Micah felt that he would let them down if he does not do his best seemed to be a byproduct of a culturally responsive environment where students feel particularly connected and committed to achievement and was particularly indicative of the

inculcation of TAC's culture of high expectations into the mindsets of the students.

Micah seemed to recognize and welcome the high expectations that the TAC staff had of him, and worked hard to meet those expectations. He appeared aware of his own abilities and appreciated their aid in helping him meet his potential.

TAC Tutors

Micah expressed having positive relationships with all the adults with whom he interacted at the center, and had a particular affinity for Mr. Kyle, the former Ward 4 Volunteer Coordinator and tutor for Micah on Tuesday evenings. Micah also spoke highly of his other tutors, with the exception of one, whom he admitted was a little “shaky” in his teaching style:

Micah: Yeah he's a little bit shaky...but he knows math.... Sometimes I don't get what he says...and sometimes (another student) doesn't get what he says too... 'cause he use hard words too much. I don't think he use too much description...I be trying to tell him to put more description and he does put more description...yeah description

Mr. Joseph is real fun...We always read...we did creative writing...If we did good he could let us play games with...the other group in the same room...

As Micah described his perfect tutor, who he felt to be “fun”, he, like his peers, responded firmly that the race and gender of his tutor does not matter at all:

Micah: [The perfect tutor would] be more fun...like Mr. Kyle...he bought us rockets. 'Cause he does technology...like... experiments. ... 'cause at the end of the year he will have a remote control rocket that will fly...me and [the other students in my group] will try to fly it...and we play Battleship

Nichole: Does it matter if they're a man or a woman or if they're black or white?

Micah: I don't care.

Benefits of TAC

Micah indicated several benefits of being a part of the TAC program. In addition to the positive relationships that he developed with the TAC adults, he also mentioned

getting ahead in school, being a part of an environment where it was okay to be smart, and appreciating the times when students were able to just have fun; which, incidentally, Micah mentioned were lacking a bit this year.

In conversations with the TAC staff and with Micah's tutors, I received only accolades about him and his exceptional personality and academic prowess. Even his peers had positive things to say during Micah's reign as Student of the Week. Micah was an example of a student who had affirmative experiences both in school and in the TAC program. He did well in school, was aware of his abilities and value, and had already begun envisioning the future that he wanted for himself.

Shareese- Hilarious, Goofy, and Friendly

Shareese was a 13-year-old African-American female in the 8th grade at Truman. She was an attractive, intelligent young lady, who had become a leader during her four years of participation with TAC. Shareese was a good student, and appeared to be very focused on her academics. When her peers were talking, playing, and avoiding their assignments, Shareese could almost always be counted on to complete her homework.

Shareese was of average height, and struggled with her weight for a while. Lately, she reported gaining new confidence in her self and a new commitment to improving her health. As a Truman student, Shareese usually wore her school uniform, consisting of blue pants, a white Polo shirt with the school logo, black shoes, and white socks. She usually wore her hair straight and neat, barely brushing her shoulders.

Shareese was well-liked by many of her peers at TAC, but she spent most of her time with Jada and Kendra, two 8th grade girls who attend Westwood. The three girls appeared to be close friends and spent time together outside of the program. They also

presented a united front in their lack of appreciation for some of the rules at Ward 4, including bans on listening to music, eating candy or snacks, and talking at inappropriate times. Throughout my time at the site, I witnessed them having regular confrontations with both Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina. As a result, Shareese grew resentful of the women, and lost some of her enthusiasm for the program.

Despite these challenges, Shareese seemed very aware of the benefits of the TAC program, and the positive effect that her continued participation would have on her academic and personal future. She also was conscious of the fact that despite their strict natures, the staff had good intentions and wanted only good things for all of the students.

Experience at School

Though Shareese considered Truman to be a fun school, she described her experience at school as challenging in many ways. She often had conflict with her teachers, who, she felt, did not show her enough respect. She described her experience with one teacher who she felt underestimated her intelligence and treated her like she was “dumb”:

Shareese: I don’t get along with my Science teacher... He thinks I’m dumb. Like he tried to get me in trouble one day...He know he checked my homework, and he sent a letter home. And then I got in trouble, but then my homework was right in my notebook. He had it checked off. He just hadn’t checked it off on his paper.

Considering the impact that such low expectations and unsupportive teacher-student relationships can have on student performance, it is increasingly impressive that Shareese was able to maintain her exceptional academic performance.

Shareese shared that in addition to regular conflict with some of her teachers, she was often subject to teasing and taunting from her peers; however she learned not to let their comments affect her with the aid of one of her teachers:

Shareese: My gym teacher like...he motivates me... he understands because he knows that it's not easy being big. He's workin with me because I know that compared to where I was when I first came to Truman...I was pretty big, but now I'm workin' on it. I am getting' down to where I should be, and I'm takin' it step by step...He helps me. If I want to give up he tells me to keep going...

Shareese had a positive view of her school overall and enjoyed the relationships that she has built with her friends. She also did very well in her classes, despite her strained relationships with some of her teachers. Shareese told me about her latest progress report:

Shareese: I got A's. The only class I got a B in was gym. I got an 89.

Student Experience at TAC

During our first interview, Shareese had primarily positive comments about TAC. Like Micah, she expressed her appreciation of the fact that TAC provided a safe environment where students can "be smart" without ridicule from their peers:

Shareese: It's like...a program where you can be yourself freely. Like you don't have to worry about what people think like in terms of academics. Like some places you may feel that you have to dumb yourself down to fit in and stuff, but at TAC you're around a whole bunch of other people who are at the same level of intelligence as you, so you get to express yourself and you get to be smart...

It is quite significant that TAC established an environment where students felt safe cultivating and expressing their scholar identities. From Shareese's depiction, TAC was one of the few places where she felt able to truly be herself. She went on to explain how the relationships she formed with the adults at TAC contributed to her appreciation of the program:

Shareese: It's fun. It's sort of like school but it's more interactive than school. It's a smaller teacher-student ratio. So you get more one on one time with your tutors and teachers... You get to talk to the people at TAC. Like the TAC staff. If you're having problems, you can talk to them.

Through these positive and supportive relationships and her participation in the programmatic components of TAC over the past four years, Shareese reported

experiencing significant personal growth. She shared that TAC helped to improve her self esteem, taught her to better deal with conflicts, and provided opportunities for her to develop positive relationships with peers as well:

Shareese: I've had big self esteem growth. Like when I first came to TAC I didn't really talk to anybody at all. I was to myself. I sat alone. Then I ran for ambassador and I ended up winning with a seven minute speech...It was fun. TAC has kinda taught me not to let people get to me as well...

Nichole: How else has TAC helped to increase your self esteem?

Shareese: Public speaking, and helps you build friendships... [The TAC staff] talks to you and asks you how you're doing. Stuff like that. Helps you solve your problems.

This account indicated that the environment that the TAC staff cultivated and the program services they delivered to foster the culture of high expectations went beyond increasing achievement to helping foster positive social and personal growth. As Brooks (2006) states, acquiring these skills is an important component of helping students find success in school.

Shareese described how TAC also taught students to deal with issues and adversity, to exercise their voice in certain situations, and to communicate effectively:

Shareese: They teach us how to come at people respectfully....or how to voice your opinion without being rude...like with poise and etiquette. Because you know all of us in this program don't come from the best of places. Some of us might come from the projects, some of us might come from the suburbs, some of us come from the city ...We all come from different parts. What I'm basically trying to say is that TAC...they look beyond that, and they help us learn how to talk...They teach you to stand up straight and you're just gonna keep practicing it until you get it right.

Shareese alludes here to TAC's efforts to impart valuable cultural codes to students to aid them so they can adequately navigate environments that operate using mainstream cultural codes while still maintaining and valuing their own cultural capital.

Shareese shared that without TAC, her life would be a lot different, and she would not have experienced the development she had while participating over the past several years:

Shareese: I think I'd still be that girl in her shell...They teach us because you're having problems it doesn't mean it's the end of the world. Like you have to look beyond that and you have to try to see the best in every situation...

From her comments above, it would seem that Shareese benefited significantly from her participation in TAC and gained new confidence and valuable social skills. She appeared to have a positive view of the program and its ability to positively impact students. In the following sections, however, her opinion of the program changed dramatically, due in part to increasingly conflictual relationships with Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina.

Perceptions of Staff

In our initial conversation about the TAC staff (primarily Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee); Shareese's comments were relatively tame. She had positive comments about Ms. Katrina, and though she took issue with Ms. Renee on some level, she recognized Renee had good intentions:

Shareese: Ms. Katrina is cool...I've been cool with her since I've been here...Ms. Renee sometimes she just adds her two cents sometimes when it's not needed...That's why I haven't really clicked with her since she's been here....She's alright as a person. It's just her way sometimes. But she's not a bad person. She has good intentions...

Our second interview, however, apparently took place after several confrontations between Ms. Katrina, Ms. Renee, and the three girls, Shareese, Jada, and Kendra. Shareese even considered leaving the program in response to these conflicts. As a result, Shareese had many more caustic remarks about the staff and the program itself. I noticed several incidents myself where Shareese, Jada, and Kendra butted heads with Ms. Renee in particular.

Shareese, Jada, and Kendra were talking during Study Hall, and Ms. Renee called them over to where she was standing by the main entrance door to tell them they were setting a bad example. She told them that they needed to sit in separate corners of the room. Jada resisted the intervention by not giving eye contact and walking away as Ms. Renee speaking to her. The more Ms. Andrea tried to interact with her, the more Jada resisted.

Ms. Renee made her sit down in front of her and tried to talk to her calmly, but Jada slumped in her chair. Ms. Andrea asked her to sit up because slumping like that was bad for her back, but again Jada resisted. While talking to Jada, Ms. Renee mentioned Shareese's name, Shareese, who was sitting at a table nearby, perked up and wanted to know why they were talking about her. She got upset and when Ms. Renee spoke to her, she looked as if she would cry. Jada got up and went to Shareese, despite Ms. Renee's protests telling her to sit down, and tried to comfort Shareese.

Ms. Andrea repeatedly called them both over to her. They both ignored her. Laura came back over, but Monique stayed where she was. Eventually, she walked over, obviously upset. Ms. Andrea tried to talk to them calmly, but they both resisted her. Eventually she sent them back to their table with no progress made.

While this degree of conflict between the girls and Ms. Renee was uncommon, I did observe increasingly frequent tense interactions between them during the second semester. I am not clear about what sparked these incidents, but the girls seemed progressively resistant to both women as the school year advance. As I have illustrated, Shareese in particular experienced a significant change in perspective during the second semester. After giving a relatively positive assessment of the staff during our first interview, during a comparison of her teachers and the TAC staff in the second interview, she favored her teachers because she felt that they did not yell at students as much as the TAC staff:

Shareese: Like my teachers...sometimes they're more open to me than the (staff) at TAC...They walk away when you're talking to them, and I don't appreciate that...and like I could be talkin' in a calm voice and then they like... they start yellin'...and of course if you yellin' gettin in my face Imma yell back. Then they blame it on me getting me in trouble...that's why I wasn't s'posed to come back...

My mom din want me to come back...My mom said I could come, but she said I didn't have to. She said if it happened again she said to just come home...

Despite my observation of some conflicting moments between Shareese and the staff, the drastic change in her views seemed a bit surprising. At the time of our last interview, she had already been with the program, and subsequently Ms. Katrina, for four years. It seemed odd that so much would change in so little time. Further conversation revealed that during our conversation, she was also upset with an incident that occurred at school that day, where she had been erroneously reprimanded and written up by a substitute teacher. As a result, she was particularly sensitive and had the overwhelming opinion that people kept accusing her when she felt she was not doing anything. Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee's tough love approach seemed to only exacerbate her feelings that she was being targeted and treated unfairly.

Perceptions of Tutors

As Shareese and I discussed her TAC tutors (Ms. Terri, Ms. Natasha, and Mr. Thomas), her accounts again varied between our first and second interviews. During our first interview, her perceptions of her tutors were primarily positive. She commented that tutors were fun and that she had experienced good relationships with them since she has been in the program. When she described her perfect tutor, she also commented that she often experienced those qualities in the adults she had worked with thus far:

Shareese: They're friendly and understandable... Like they teach you and they making sure you understand how to relate it to reality...and they have a positive attitude because if they come in here and they're moody and stuff, the chances are I'm going to be unfriendly back.

During our second interview, however, her comments changed dramatically. She criticized the tutors for their lack of dedication and consistency and had no positive comments:

Shareese: None of them are dedicated. They don't ever come...

This comment is not unfounded, as several of the CU tutors did prove a bit inconsistent, particularly because they were at the whim of their school schedule and responsibilities. Shareese, however, did not have any CU tutors. Her three tutors, Ms. Natasha, Ms. Terri, and Mr. Thomas, were all professional volunteers and attended the program faithfully. It is possible that she may have been referring then, to her peers' experiences with the students from CU.

Despite Shareese's fluctuating feelings about her tutors, they had good things to say about her. Both Mr. Thomas and Ms. Terri commented on Shareese's intelligence and her potential to achieve academically:

Thomas: Shareese is incredibly bright. She knows her Math well. She's in a higher Math class than the other three. She's doing Geometry when the other two are doing Algebra.

Terri: (Speaking of Shareese) I think one you can look at her and kind of go...she will finish high school. She will get her B.S. or B.A. degree, will probably go onto her graduate degree.

Benefits of TAC

Throughout our conversations, Shareese consistently recognized the many advantages to being in the TAC program. She acknowledged the importance of the academic assistance, friendships, and relationships with caring adults. Shareese also placed significant value on the program's role in her improved self confidence and self esteem. The biggest benefit, according to Shareese, was TAC's ability to open doors for student participants, both to top high schools and to outside organizations like the Jack Kent Cooke Program:

Shareese: You get placed in like the best high schools, and they help you apply to other programs. Like me and Eve...They recommended us for Jack Kent Cooke...

In the second interview, despite the challenges she had experienced with Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee, Shareese still recognized the benefits she experienced as a TAC participant and shared the impact the program had on her academically:

Shareese: TAC taught me not to be ashamed of being smart. Cause like in elementary school, people used to be mad because I was smart and got good grades...

Being a part of TAC has helped Shareese and several other students to find a level of comfort with embracing her scholar identity and proudly pursuing academic and personal excellence. As stated earlier, this seemed to be a theme for several of the students.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

In our first interview, Shareese reported that there were no “downsides” to being a part of TAC, though she did acknowledge the high level of dedication that participation required:

Shareese: You have to be dedicated to come and stay the entire after school and the summer. You have to be dedicated to come to TAC. And disciplined...well no. That’s not really a downside. Downside... (thinking) I don’t think there are any downsides...

Though Shareese retracted “dedication” as a downside, it is again important to note that the significant time commitment was a challenge of significance for many of the TAC students.

In contrast to her initial response, during the second interview, Shareese had several critiques of the program, including her issues with the staff and tutors, and the perception that the tutoring lessons were boring. She offered some suggestions for the program, including more interactive lessons and fewer T-Time meetings:

Shareese: [Tutoring sessions are] boring...They’re just not interesting...TAC is supposed to be a fun enrichment program, and like the tutoring session is like so boring. It’s not *not* fun. And I think there needs to be more interaction in that sense...

Nichole: What else would make it more fun?

Shareese: Just like more games. And like we shouldn't have T-Time every day...It should be like...Like in the summer time we did it once a week and the other days we did homeroom...[We should] just go straight to tutoring...Or get an extra half an hour for enrichment or extended study hall....

Shareese had been with TAC for four years, so it was not surprising that the program's routine generally, and tutoring sessions specifically, might have begun to feel a bit rote to her. As we will see later in Jada and Kendra's account, they too felt less challenged and enthused about the program after having been involved in it for so many years.

Even with this consideration, however, the variation between my first and second interviews with Shareese was quite significant. Her opinion of the program seemed to change dramatically. I wondered how much of her animosity had to do solely with her issues with TAC, and how much was a result of the challenging day she had had at school.

Overall, however, it seemed that Shareese's experiences were beneficial to her. The growth of her confidence and self esteem were extremely significant and recognized by both her and her mother. Unfortunately, her recent conflicts with the staff had begun to sour her experience within the program and might have decreased some of its beneficial effects.

Eve – Quiet, Respectful, and Intelligent

Eve was a 13-year-old African student in the 8th grade at Truman. Eve's family was Eritrean, though she was born in the US. As Eve acknowledged above, she was a relatively quiet child who only opened up with people that she knew well. She was a tall,

slim girl with a glowing personality and a bright smile that she shared often with those around her. She was studious, well-mannered, and well-liked by everyone in the program.

As a Truman student, Eve was usually clothed in the school uniform of a white polo shirt with the school logo, blue slacks or skirt, and black shoes, and she often wore her hair in braids. Overall, Eve had a very pleasant, gentle personality, and was a sweet girl with a bright future. She excelled academically, and received straight A's for the first time during the fall term.

Experience at School

Eve reported having a relatively positive experience at school, though she mentioned that her school was strict, with a uniform and dress code. She explained, "They try to help you realize about the world and fairness and stuff and punishment." Eve seemed to have a good relationship with many of her teachers. After some prodding, she told me about the teachers that she enjoyed, most of whom she considered to be fun, creative, and helpful. She did not speak about the teachers with whom she had less than positive relationships, but she commented that if she could change anything about her school, it would be the racial makeup of the teaching population:

Eve: Diversity in the teachers...cause there are more white people as teachers but more black kids as students...In elementary, most of my teachers were black...

Eve was the only student to speak about this racial phenomenon in Truman's classrooms, and expressed that her teachers should better represent the students whom they teach. Her comment is understandable, as many African American teachers have a culturally specific pedagogical style of teaching that makes learning more relevant and effective for students and strengthens student connectedness to school (Irvine and Fraser, 1998; Bazron et al., 2005).

The TAC Program

As Eve moved on to describe TAC, she commented often about the benefits of the program and the importance of the relationships that she formed over the past four years:

Eve: It's very academic...it helps you during school...You get ahead in the summer, 'cause they get you prepared for the next grade level you're going to in the fall...You can grow up with the people who come. I've been here for five years...and you know [my friends here]...It's like I've know them for a long time and now that I'm leaving, it's kind of sad...

These peer relationships, and the sense of community that they engender, seemed to be an important program component for several of the student respondents. Research indicates that these positive peer relationships increase students' sense of community, motivation, and commitment to learning (Osher and Fleischman, 2005; Learning First Alliance, 2001).

It was the promise of these relationships and the potential academic benefits that initially led Eve to participate in the program:

Eve: I wanted to participate, 'cause it would help me throughout school. Like homework help and stuff. I mean, I don't have like five other people in my house helping me while I work...[TAC] can help me get prepared and...if I am doing bad in school or if...my grades are going down...they can help me with that. I was excited like I wouldn't have to worry about who would help me...and the new people I would meet too.

For Eve, TAC represented a significant source of academic support. Being so focused academically, she seemed to find comfort in having several avenues available to her for the provision of homework help and academic instruction.

TAC Staff

Eve had primarily positive comments about Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina. She seemed particularly appreciative of Ms. Katrina's support while her parents went through their divorce. She spoke of the women's high expectations of her and their desire for her

to do well academically. She also mentioned that Ms. Renee could be a bit strict, but again seemed unwillingly to elaborate.

Eve: (On Ms. Katrina)... I'm ok with her. She knows my parents. She knows my situation and stuff, 'cause my mom is like...she talks with her an stuff.

Ms. Renee, I just met her like during the summer so... She is very nice. Sometimes she can be a little strict and stuff, but she's nice. Ms. Katrina can be strict and stuff too, but that's good...

They expect me to be a good leader...'cause I'm always quiet and not loud and stuff...And they expect me to get good grades too...

Though some student respondents seemed quite willing to share their critical opinions of Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee's tough love approach, others, like Eve and Nina, seemed more hesitant to say anything negative, conceivably out of either a desire for propriety or a sense of loyalty to these women with whom they had developed close relationships over the past several years.

TAC Tutors

Eve expressed that she had good relationships with her tutors, and seemed particularly fond of Mr. Justin, who interviewed her when she began the program and was her first Site Coordinator:

Eve: They're good. We bond and get to know each other...I have Mr. Joseph on Tuesdays...and Mr. Justin...I've known Mr. Justin ever since I started...Mr. Joseph...he's cool. He understands kids 'cause he's like a kid. He's in college now...

Nichole: Do you feel that they're supportive, understanding, and respectful of you?

Eve: Yeah

Eve described her "perfect tutor" as someone who was understanding, respectful, and genuinely enjoyed spending time with students. Despite her earlier concern about the

race of her teachers at school, she responded that the race and gender made no difference here, as long as they were not racist and made an authentic effort to get to know her:

Eve: The perfect tutor...A person who understands kid's feelings...Like I wouldn't want that kind of tutor [that doesn't like kids]. A tutor who's young...like would understand a young person...A tutor who is nice and respectful...who cares too...can't be like, "Oh, I'm just getting paid to come here. I'm just here for the money."...It doesn't matter if it's male or female...

Nichole: Do you feel that gender or race makes a difference in a tutor's ability to relate to you and understand you

Eve: Not really...unless they're racist ...Just be there teaching me...Get to know me...

Ruth appeared to have very positive perceptions of and experiences with the tutors and staff at TAC. Similarly, the adults with whom Eve interacted expressed positive regard for her as well. Mr. Joseph, Eve's Literature tutor, commented that she was extraordinary, and "one of the smartest kids I know". Mr. Justin, Eve's Technology tutor and former Site Coordinator, also noted Eve's tremendous growth in confidence since she had been in the program.

Benefits of TAC

While sharing her experiences and perceptions of TAC, Eve noted several advantages of being a part of the program, including obtaining help with schoolwork, getting ahead in school, developing lasting relationships with peers and supportive adults, and gaining access to new opportunities:

Eve: Like applying to TAC and actually getting in...that shows that I can get into other things that I want to do...and how I got into the Jack Kent Cooke program...like out of 600 kids like 63 made it...That's like something that I felt proud about.

Eve felt that her life would significantly different had she not chosen to participate in TAC, in part because of the opportunities the program provided to students:

Eve: Yeah it would, because during TAC, I've gotten some like opportunities and I got into one big program I probably would have never gotten into if it wasn't for TAC, and meeting the new people I've met and friends and being able to experience college life...I thought it would be so different...

Here she is referring to the visits they take to college campuses every year during the summer program. Students stay for two nights in the dorm rooms and get a small feel for college life. TAC, it seems, is true to its word in many respects as it opens doors for students to experience new opportunities to which they may not otherwise have had access.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

Despite her positive experience in the TAC program, Eve noted a few areas for improvement, primarily involving the facilities and resources at Truman:

Eve: They have everything for the supplies that you need they have...Sometimes you run out of computers...like there won't be enough sometimes, but most of the time we do...and we have to be careful...cause it's not our stuff...And in the classrooms you have to put everything exactly like it was...Other than that it's good...

It seems, for Eve, that the benefits of the program far outweighed the challenges. Eve seemed very aware that the program not only helped her to be successful in school, but also opened doors for her academically and personally that she may not be able to access otherwise, particularly as it relates to her experience as a Jack Kent Cooke scholar.

Jeremiah – Smart, Strong and Handsome

Jeremiah was a 10-year-old boy of African Descent. He and his family were born in Ethiopia and came to the U.S. several years ago. He had spent most of his life in the U.S. and speaks with only a slight accent. He was of average height, with a medium build. He had a reddish-brown complexion and curly dark brown hair. Jeremiah was a very pleasant child, and it was evident that he loved to learn. He was in his element in

academic settings and received good grades in school. He loved his teachers, and loved the positive attention they give him for being his achievement. He enjoyed the spotlight and seemed to have a lot of respect for authority.

Experience at School

Jeremiah was in the 5th grade at Hardin Elementary School. He reported having a very positive experience and Hardin and considered the learning environment to be “fun”:

Jeremiah: Hardin is fun. Everything is just exciting at Hardin.

He also expressed having positive relationships with his teachers. He considered them to be “fun” as well, and talked about how he enjoyed all of his classes and excelled in most of them. Jeremiah was the student most excited about school and completely at home in his scholar identity within both his TAC and home school environments.

Student Experience at TAC

Jeremiah’s was experiencing his first year with TAC during this stud, and he seemed to have enjoyed his experiences with the program thus far. He shared how being a part of TAC has helped him academically:

Jeremiah: I like it. I learn a lot from it. From the beginning of my school, I kept getting A’s. Doing the TAC program after school I kept on earning my A’s. I never got a minus...Before I started [TAC]...usually I [got] 3’s. Now I’m getting 4’s.

It’s fun. I like to be with the tutors. They help us a lot with our work, and if we have time they teach us other things above the lesson we’re supposed to learn, so we get ahead...

Like several of his peers, Jeremiah seemed excited that his tutoring lessons helped him to get move ahead of his classmates at school. Overall, Jeremiah found there to be several benefits to his participation in TAC:

Jeremiah: The grades, the behavior, being held responsible and accountable by your teacher, and having respect for others.

Unlike some other students, Jeremiah saw a benefit in the strict, structured environment provided by Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee. He enjoyed the responsibility and accountability they encouraged and saw value in the emphasis on giving and receiving respect. He also saw great benefit in the program's use of the Culture Constitution. In his mind, it helped students to excel academically and develop behaviorally:

Jeremiah: It's a good thing. It helps us develop how we act and how we can improve our knowledge. And, it encourages us to become first place. It's also helping us in our education and acting our personal...I don't know how to say...

Nichole: Like your personal behavior?

Jeremiah: Yeah

Perceptions of Staff/Tutors

As with the program in general, Jeremiah had only positive comments about Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee:

Jeremiah: They're both great people that should be running this program. And, even if they're sometimes mad, it's because they are really busy and they want to get something settled, so they don't want to take much of the time. So, I say they are really responsible.

Nichole: What do you think they're expectations of you are?

Jeremiah: For me to get all 4's and get into a good high school and college.

Again, Jeremiah was the only student who expressed that Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee's firm, tough love style of interacting with students was positive and understood that sometimes they might have to be strict to manage their large group of students. He also commented that all of his tutors were "great!" and presented lessons in a way that was easy for him to understand. He shared that he felt supported, encouraged, respected, and understood by all of his tutors and generally had a positive experience with them:

Jeremiah: They are prepared always. They always keep me ahead and I never get bored.

During my observations of one of his math sessions, Jeremiah seemed to truly enjoy and be actively involved in the lesson, and he received frequent praise from his tutor for his enthusiasm.

Jeremiah and his tutor were working on multiplication using math flash cards.

Jeremiah quickly went through the easy ones, so his tutor went to the harder set. Jeremiah did a good job with those too. His tutor gave him frequent encouragement and positive reinforcement. “Yes!” “I’m impressed!” “Excellent!”

Jeremiah responded positively to the praise – smiling and giving answers more enthusiastically.

Such encouragement and praise within the learning environment helps instill resilience and strengthens feelings of confidence and self-worth in students (Brooks, 2006).

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

Jeremiah had few comments about challenges or areas for improvement in the TAC program. Like most students, however, he did see the need for an improvement in their Snack Time meals. He also wished that they could have more free time for games once they completed their homework:

Jeremiah: Like after...if we’re finished with our homework, or at study hall, if we are already finished, but we didn’t wanna go to a studio, for us to have some games or activities we could play until it’s time to go to our tutoring class, so....we have a time to have fun while we also have time to learn and study.

Jeremiah was joined by his peers in his desire for more time for free play, a component that may be a useful addition to the programmatic structure considering the number of hours that the children devote to academic pursuits on the evenings they are at TAC. While several students do participate in enrichment activities, Broughton (2006) notes the importance of unstructured free time and explains that it gives children the

opportunity to use their imaginations and make their own decisions (instead of having an adult make them for them during structured time). Unfortunately, conversations about out-of-school time for “disadvantaged” children often focus on safety and increased time for structured academic enrichment and rarely emphasize the need for free play (DeAngelis, 2001; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1994; Scott-Little et al; 2002)

Despite these areas for improvement, Jeremiah seemed to have a very positive experience at TAC and appeared very excited about his improved academics and opportunities to interact with staff, tutors, and peers. He seemed very clear about the fact that his participation in TAC not only helped him presently in school, but would also help him to achieve his future academic and professional goals.

Jada (Intelligent, Athletic, and Truthful)/Kendra (Fun, Outgoing, and Educated)

Jada and Kendra were two African American 8th grade girls who attend Westwood Educational Center. They were close friends and I rarely saw them apart from each other. They began the program together three years ago and would finish it together as well at the end of the school year. When the time came to interview the two girls, the end of the semester was close at hand, so I decided to do a “group” interview and spoke to them together. I also posited that they might be more forthcoming if they had each other to lean on.

Jada was 13-years-old but appeared much younger. She was short for her age, approximately 4’2, with a very slim build. Possibly to make up for her small stature, Jada developed an outspoken and occasionally abrasive personality. She had a very short temper, and would not hesitate to release it in the direction of anyone who caused her

displeasure, adult or student. Despite this short fuse, Jada was an extremely intelligent young lady, who demonstrated tremendous academic potential. Despite this obvious aptitude, her grades often range from A's to D's depending on her relationship with her teachers. The semester of this study, she received 3 A's, 2 B's, and 2 C's, but reported that she would be receiving one D in the following advisory.

In the 4 months that I spent with the program, I had several conversations with Jada. The more we spoke, the more she revealed to me the sweet girl that lived inside the hard outer shell. In the midst of a very pleasant conversation, she would suddenly revert back into her "tough front" to brazenly challenge anyone who confronted her (Dance, 2002). It became increasingly apparent that this was simply a protective defense mechanism that she had developed for reasons she never shared with me.

Despite her posturing, I also noticed that many of her adult relationships, particularly those at school, had led her to have lowered expectations for herself. In a discussion about her high school applications, Jada claimed that she was going to attend one of the poorer-performing high schools because her teachers told her she would just be "kicked out" of the top schools:

Jada: (counting on fingers the schools to which she applied)
Banneker...Wilson...I'm going to Roosevelt. It's terrible.

Kendra: She don't want to go to no Roosevelt. She's just playing.

Jada: I'm serious. That's my neighborhood school.

Nichole: Yeah but you want to go to the best school.

Jada: That is the best school for me...People say I'm gonna get kicked out.

While high expectations and positive reinforcement have the power to increase achievement and self-confidence, lowered expectations, as we see here, can have the

opposite effect on students, instilling in them a distorted and erroneous understanding of themselves and legitimizing their subordinate status (Shields et al., 2005; Valencia, 1999).

Kendra was also 13-years-old, but of average height and slender build. She was an attractive young girl who usually wore her hair either straight to her shoulders or in long braids down her back. She had a more relaxed and laid back personality than Jada, but still had been known to display her attitude, skirt the program rules, and speak back to the adults in charge at Ward 4. Instead of immediately jumping into a confrontation like Jada, however, she is more likely exhibit quiet resistance to authority.

Kendra was an intelligent girl who earns average grades in school. From my observations of her tutoring sessions, she was easily distracted and worked best with tutors or teachers who were engaging and made the lesson relate to something of interest to her. On her last report card, she earned 3 B's, and 4 C's (1 a C-), but was capable of doing much better. She shared that she wanted to be a doctor, much to the amusement of her friends, who frequently teased her about this career goal because of her grades.

Student Experience at School

Like some of the other students interviewed, Jada and Kendra described having mixed experiences in their school environment. While they reported having positive interactions with some of their teachers and school staff, they had negative encounters with others and a principal that they claim yells at and physically assaults some of their classmates.

Jada: It's not as great as it should be.

Nichole: What could make it better?

Jada: A better principal, number one. (Kendra: Yes!)...She needs an attitude adjustment... 'Cause she yells at us like we're her kids. She hits some of us... She never hit us, 'cause, yeah... You know me.

Nichole: What about your teachers?

Kendra: Oh, they're so cool.

Jada: Except for one...He's too...

Kendra: He's always trying to make a joke out of everything...He acts like a little kid.

This is the second report from a student detailing a school staff person physically assaulting students and again begs the question of how students can be expected to learn within such an environment. Highly punitive settings threaten students' ability to thrive within the academic setting (Hahn et al., 2002). It becomes more important, then that they are able to form positive, trusting relationships with adults within that setting. The girls mentioned one teacher in particular with whom they had an exceptional relationship:

Kendra: Oh, she is so cool... There's something about her. She teaches math. She's just cool. She's like one of us.

Jada: We can talk to her like she's one of us....She don't act like a kid. She act's like an adult, but...

Nichole: But you feel like you can relate to her?

Jada: Yes.

As with most of the students, the girls noted characteristics consistent with culturally responsive educators in their comments about their favorite teachers. Unlike with their tutors, the students seemed more consciously aware of the importance of cultural responsiveness in their relationships with teachers.

Student Experience at TAC

Jada and Kendra were two of a few students who were having a less than positive experience at TAC this year. Though they claimed to have enjoyed the program in years

past, they found themselves clashing regularly with Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee. Jada and Kendra are uncomfortable with the high expectations that Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina have for them, and would prefer that they bestow the 8th graders with less responsibility:

Jada: It's fun when you first start. Like the 5th grade is fun but as you get older it's like... they expect so high of you when you get older.

Nichole: Would you prefer that they have low expectations of you?

Jada: No, not that. It's just --

Kendra: It's to the point that they -- there's a little kid next to you talking... When you tell them to be quiet and a little kid keeps talking you say you told them to be quiet and then they expect that you're not telling them good enough or --

Nichole: Why do you think they expect that of you guys, of the 8th graders?

Kendra: I guess 'cause we're always here but we like to have fun too... We have little minds. We're not grown-ups. We don't feel like looking after little kids.

The girls' comments here represented a dichotomy for the TAC staff and others who deal with adolescents. While they, like most teens, were adamant about not being treated like children, they also shied away from accepting any added responsibility or accountability at the center.

Despite these apparently overwhelming feelings of culpability, they admitted the program was sometimes fun. The girls mentioned on several occasions that they felt the previous years were better when Justin, Anna, and Ranetta were running the Ward 4 site:

Kendra: Ms. Anna and Ms. Ranetta was here. That was the best... Cause they were fun. They didn't always yell at us and stuff....

This reference to yelling is yet another allusion to Ms. Katrina's and Ms. Renee's adoption of a tough love style of educating and interacting with students. Jada and Kendra, like some of their peers, seemed to appreciate a milder approach, like they apparently found with former staff.

Jada questioned why Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee continue to try to communicate and interact with them when they see the girls “don’t care”:

Jada: If they know you don’t care they’re still rapping to you and then when you get to the point that you tell them you don’t care, they get mad. When they KNOW you don’t care. (Punching hand with fist)

Nichole: Why do you think they still try to talk to you even though you don’t care?

Jada: So it can get in our head, but even if it does get in here it’s coming out the other way. (Kendra giggles)

Nichole: But why do you think they still try?

Jada looked at me shyly and smiled

Though the girls often react negatively to the authority figures at the TAC program, they acknowledge that the staff cares about and genuinely wants the best for all of the students. The girls admitted that they feel safe, supported, and encouraged to do well, though they again brought up the fact that they did not appreciate the staff’s high level of expectations. Despite their challenges within the program, Kendra and Jada saw the benefits of being in TAC and viewed the program as an avenue for gaining admission into the District’s top high schools.

Interestingly, whenever Kendra tried to explain that she had received academic help in the program, Jada would immediately interrupt her and interrogate her on why she felt that way. It is possible that because Jada struggled less than Kendra in school that she received less academic benefit from the program and was unable to see that Kendra appreciated the help. Jada did admit, however, that the program helped her in focusing on her future and understanding the steps she must take to achieve her goals. In a conversation that we had about the Culture Constitution and its purpose, the girls initially

derided it, but eventually admitted that the concepts helped them keep their eye towards the future:

Jada: So we can set the standards...like short term, medium term, long term goals...I'm thinking about my future because I want to become a lawyer so I know I've got to get good grades and go to one of the top colleges that you can study law for your major and then go to law school, which means I need to study hard and things like that...

Jada also admitted that being a TAC student helped to change the way that she viewed school and her education in general. While Kendra disagreed, Jada stood firm that the program staff had taught her that learning could be fun:

Jada: I thought school was boring. Then when I came to TAC, they made me think that school can be fun but also learn something.

In the end, both students conceded that despite their issues with the program, their participation over the past several years had a positive effect on their lives. Jada in particular confessed her belief that if they had not had the positive influence of the TAC program, both she and Kendra would have turned out a lot differently:

Jada: Yeah...We would be terrible.

Kendra: Yes. We would be some bad people. (Laughing)

TAC Staff

Despite the apparently antagonistic relationship between Jada, Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee, at one point she and Ms. Katrina were relatively close. With the arrival of Ms. Renee this year, Jada felt that their relationships changed, and she apparently felt some pain and resentment about the difference. Both girls implied that this change was due to Ms. Renee's presence at the site and felt that Ms. Katrina behaved differently when Ms. Renee's was around her.

Jada: Like last year, me and Ms. Katrina – I'm gonna admit this – me and Ms. Katrina, we was cool or whatever but now this year, now that Miss Renee came it's like oh, that's how your gonna be? We was like cool.

Kendra: Yeah. They talked on the phone and everything.

Jada: Yeah, but like this year, I just don't want to be around her no more.

Jada looked sullenly at her hands while playing with her bracelet and refused to give me eye contact during this conversation. She seemed genuinely upset about the change in her relationship with Katrina.

Prior to Ms. Renee's arrival, Ms. Katrina at the center with Mr. Kyle, a white, 20-something male who admitted discomfort with being strict and firm with the students. It is highly conceivable that the dynamic within the center has changed significantly due to Ms. Renee's arrival and Ms. Katrina's response to the new and different personality.

TAC Tutors

Jada also had a challenging time with her tutors during the year of the study, particularly with her math tutor, Mr. Jeff. I was not present at their first session, but Jada seemed to immediately take a disliking to him and displayed her dislike openly. During the session that I observed, she was obviously resistant and ignored his efforts to include her in the group discussions and activities.

As I joined the session, I noticed all three of Mr. Jeff's students leaving the classroom for parts unknown. Mr. Jeff simply sat in his chair, making no move to bring them back.

Jeff: Obviously I don't have control right now....

Jada and her friend returned at 6:50, over 30 minutes after the session started, and began giggling and talking as Jeff started the lesson.

Mr. Jeff wrote a problem on the board and said, "I bet Jada knows how to do it," trying to engage her. She simply ignored him.

Later during a discussion about averages and means, Mr. Jeff asked Jada what happens if they keep putting weight on quizzes. She ignored him and wrote on her paper. He asked her two more times and she said nothing. She must have softly spoken her answer at one point because the third time he asked her she replied loudly, "I said it gets bigger!!"

Jeff: Yes, it will get bigger. Now, let's read over the next problem.

Jeff seemed to be a relatively timid man. I had no idea what happened between him and Jada to bring about her animosity towards him, but all of their interactions seemed to run in this vein. Jada admitted that she has had trouble holding on to her tutors this year:

Jada: I don't have tutors...Every time I run away tutors...I feel so ashamed to show my face because run away tutors.

Kendra: I think 'cause she laughs too much.

Jada: I don't laugh in Mr. Jeff's class. I sent him away when it was just me.

Surprised by her claim that she had no tutors, I asked for more information. She explained that Mr. Jeff had left, and she had asked to leave another tutor's class because, Jada claimed, she verbally abused students. Jada explained that this tutor told a student that "he could not read". The tutor is no longer with the program. Though she did have a third tutor, she disliked the group because she was the only girl. Kendra described having only slightly better relationships with her tutors, Ms. Natasha, Ms. Terri, and Mr. Thomas:

Kendra: Well on Monday Ms. Natasha don't come anymore.

Nichole: She doesn't come? (I had just spoken to Ms. Natasha, and though she had missed the previous week, she was in fact returning to tutor)

Kendra: On Tuesday I have Mr. Thomas...[Thursday I have] Ms. Terri.

Kendra: I get along with Mr. Thomas sometimes but me and Shareese feel...

Jada and Kendra: He favors Nina.

It was ironic that Kendra made this comment and observation, because in my conversation with Mr. Thomas, he admitted to taking a special interest in Nina because of their shared cultural background. Though it was positive that he has taken to Nina, the other students in the group apparently feel he gives her too much attention.

Like other student respondents, Kendra and Jada described the characteristics that would be present in their “perfect” tutor. They immediately began describing some of the tutors they had in previous years and detailed how much they had enjoyed being in those tutoring groups:

Kendra: She was fun... She was different from the other tutors.

Jada: Because she made the lessons fun even though they was boring as who knows how.

Kendra: It’s like she can relate– not she can relate to us but –

Jada: She doesn’t make us bored... She tries to figure out what we think is fun. Tutors, what they think is fun is – ugh.

Nichole: So she tries to make the lessons relate to your lives and that’s what made it fun? (They nod)Okay.

Here again, Kendra and Jada touched on the importance of the cultural responsiveness of educators. The women they described were not African-American and did not share the girl’s cultural background, but were apparently adept at delivering lessons that the students found interesting and communicating with them in a manner that made the students feel understood and encouraged.

As with several other students, when I asked them if the race or gender of their tutor had anything to do with the tutor’s ability to relate to them, both Jada and Kendra agreed that a tutor’s age and personality were a more likely to be important factors:

Jada: No. I think it’s age.

Kendra: Well some the age makes a difference. For others it’s their personality. You’ve got to have character.

Benefits of TAC

Jada and Kendra took issue with several aspects of TAC. The increased responsibility, high expectations, and the change in their relationship with Ms. Katrina all

detracted from their experience within the program. Despite these challenges, they admitted that their participation the program over the past three years had been beneficial to them. Kendra had been served by the academic assistance, and both girls attested to the positive impact that the program had on them behaviorally. Jada also expressed that TAC had changed her perception of education and academics and helped her to develop a true appreciation for school. Lastly, the girls agreed that TAC helped them to established short-term and long-term goals and gave them tools to be successful academically and personally in the future.

Areas for Improvement

As stated above, Jada and Kendra took issue with several of the changes that had taken place in the program over the past year, particularly the staff turnover and subsequent changes in their interactions with Katrina and her “tough love” approach to disciplining them. Ironically, both girls called for lower expectations of 8th graders and a decrease in the level of responsibility that 8th graders were expected to take in the program. Like most other students, they also were quite displeased with the culinary offerings at the center.

Student Summary

Though the student participants highlighted in this section shared varied experiences within the TAC program, there appeared to be a few consistent themes. First, each student expressed in some way their appreciation for the academic benefits of their participation in TAC; though each student experienced these benefits in different ways. Some students enjoyed moving ahead of their curriculum at school, while others noted an overall improvement in their academic performance and grades. Jada and Nina both

developed a love of learning through their TAC participation, while Shareese and Micah shared their appreciation for the TAC environment that fostered and cultivated this appreciation for academics in its students. Lastly, almost all of the student respondents made some reference to the fact that TAC opens doors for them to achieve their future academic goals; including attending a top high school and college. Others also acknowledged that the academic and behavioral skills they learned in the program would also help them in college and beyond.

All of these benefits seemed to be fostered by the culture of high expectations fostered within the Ward 4 program environment by Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee. Each of the students recognized and commented on the high expectations that the staff and tutors held for them, and the adults desire that they do well in school and in life.

Several of the 8th graders, however, expressed discomfort with the level of high expectations and added responsibility that the staff placed upon the senior class. While Ms. Katrina and Renee comment that they believe they are preparing the students for role of leadership and responsibility, the students feel only that they have been placed with an added burden which they have little interest in bearing. Regardless of the students desire to relieve themselves of this added responsibility, several students still acknowledge that the culture of high academic expectations within the center has lead to positive changes in their perceptions of the role of education, their beliefs about their ability to achieve academically, and their actual performance within the school classroom.

In addition to the academic benefits, several students also reported valuing the relationships that they built with the adults and their peers during their time with TAC and the overall sense of community that existed within the program. Along with the

academic skills and personal development, these relationships were one of the most important components that they would take with them as they move on through and eventually from TAC.

Students seemed to place particular value upon the relationships they developed with their tutors. They consistently reported that they considered their tutors to be fun, caring, understanding, and easy to relate to, and they stated that they learned a lot from the lessons their tutors presented. These relationships are important in sustaining and promoting the culture of high expectations with the center and establishing a positive learning environment.

A few students, including Shareese, Jada, and Kendra, recounted having mixed experiences with their tutors since they had been with the program. Jada in particular had a hard time developing positive relationships with her tutors this year, though she explained that had not been the case with tutors in past years. Shareese also mentioned an issue with consistency among the tutors and claimed that they were not always as reliable in their attendance as they should be. Shareese rarely misses an evening at TAC, so it is understandable that she might expect the same from the adults around her.

Student experiences with the TAC staff were more varied than with the tutors. It is important to note that “staff” in most cases included only Katrina and Renee, as the rest of the Ward 4 staff was relatively new and students apparently had the most significant interactions with the program heads. Half of the students shared positive stories of their interactions with Katrina and Renee. This group thought highly of both women, felt that they cared about the students, and were comfortable approaching them if they had any problems or issues with which they needed help.

The other half of the student respondent group expressed mixed experiences with Katrina and Renee. While most recognized that both women had good intentions, these students took issue with Katrina and Renee's tough love approach. Each felt that Katrina and Renee were often too hard on students, particularly when they chose to reprimand students in public.

Though tough love approaches are not uncommon among African-American female educators, research indicates that tough love often produces less frequent protest from students than demonstrated at TAC. While students may refer to their teachers as "mean", studies find that they tend to exhibit a sense of pride in their teachers' meanness and acknowledge the warm demanders high expectations and efforts to push them towards academic achievement (Irvine and Fraser, 1998; Ware, 2006). Although several students did acknowledge Katrina and Renee's belief in them and their academic abilities, it seems that a few of the students' experiences within the program were negatively impacted by their conflictual interactions with the women.

Summary of Participant Experiences

The accounts given by these participants have provided tremendous insight into the TAC program. Their stories have helped to illustrate how participants' experience and conceptualize participation in TAC, the degree to which participants perceive participation to be beneficial or detrimental, and the manner in which TAC meets the intended goals of SES.

Each participant's account of their experiences in TAC, including students and the earlier accounts of tutors and staff, indicated that despite some challenges, all benefited in some respect from their involvement in the program. Students consistently reported

academic and personal growth, and despite some who took issue with the staff's tough love approach, all felt that they had developed valuable, supportive relationships with many of the adults with whom they interacted in the program.

As an SES provider, TAC, through its tutors and staff, was expected to provide research-based programming that effectively improved students' academic performance. According to participant accounts above, in most cases, the TAC curriculum has done just that. While some students had no need of academic assistance, those who did reported experiencing improvements in achievement levels and enhanced appreciation for the learning process.

Tutors and staff also reported experiencing personal growth during their time at TAC and some saw their participation in the program as a true learning experience. Almost all of the tutors and staff reported that they particularly valued the opportunity to interact personally with their students and get to know them beyond an academic capacity.

Overall, participant accounts indicate that the stated aims of the TAC program align with the reality of its daily operation. TAC's mission is to develop academic skills, behaviors, and attitudes in academically motivated and underserved middle school children to improve their grades, test scores, attendance, and opportunities, and ultimately to help them gain acceptance to top high school programs. Though additional data would be needed to speak to students' levels of attendance, test score and report card data, along with students' accounts of their academic improvement and focus on attending top high schools, indicate that the program has hit its mark with the other three indicators.

One of the primary factors in TAC's ability to help students meet these academic goals is their establishment of a culture of high expectations and their belief that all students are capable of achieving academically with the aid of supportive adults. In contrast to some educational environments that promote a deficit thinking paradigm when it comes to urban students, TAC furthers its culture of high expectations by touting a strong emphasis on "lifting chins" among its student population. The organizational desire to providing positive reinforcement to students is clearly evident in the way that the staff and tutors interact with the students, and the students respond positively to staff efforts to support and encourage them. Each student respondent acknowledged that despite some challenges, the tutors and staff encourage, understand, support, and have high expectations of them. All in all, TAC's endeavor to provide a positive environment for students where they can feel physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe has been successful, according to participant reports, and as far as the students are concerned, the focus on opening doors and increasing exposure is working to level the playing field for students who otherwise may have been missed out on such opportunities.

The relationships formed between students, staff, and tutors, seemed to be another important factor in the perpetuation of the programmatic culture of high expectations and the subsequent impact that this culture had on the students. Tutors and students in particular frequently acknowledged the value of the tutor-student relationships that they had formed within the program. Despite many of the tutors' status as novices when dealing with the students and lack of experience dealing with urban students in particular, with the guidance of Ms. Renee and Ms. Katrina, they proved remarkably adept at

providing a culturally responsive environment where the students that facilitated student learning.

Culturally responsive approaches to service delivery proved particularly relevant within the TAC program environment. This includes not only the teaching environment within the tutoring sessions, but also the general interactions between students, tutors and staff. The theme of cultural responsiveness emerged during students' discussions of the adults at both school and TAC with whom they felt a particular level of closeness and kinship. Though the culture or race of the adult seemed rarely to be a conscious issue for the students, the importance of their culturally response approach was depicted in students references to their ability to "understand", "support", and "relate" to them.

Several tutor and staff discussions of their interactions with students revealed their willingness to learn from the students and see value in the cultural and social capital that they brought to the classroom. The training discussed by Sue and Casey also proved particularly relevant to honing culturally responsive pedagogy within tutoring sessions.

Katrina and Renee demonstrated their cultural responsiveness in their acknowledgement of the numerous systemic obstacles that their students must face on the road to academic and personal success and their recognition of the importance of providing regular exposure to new cultural codes and experiences to aid students in their ability to code switch in situations that called for mainstream cultural capital.

The women also exhibited a level of cultural responsiveness in their frequently discussed tough love approaches to interacting with both students and adults within the program. Unfortunately, their approach was not always well-received by students, tutors, and staff, who felt that their interactions with students was at time too tough.

A number of the tutors and staff at the center also expressed discomfort, though their unease seemed to originate from a lack of familiarity with the culturally responsive nature of tough love. Accounts also revealed that several of the respondents experienced a marked reluctance to act as disciplinarians themselves, giving significant credence to Delpit's (1995) theory of the Culture of Power. As I mentioned several times in earlier sections, these individuals, who held membership to the culture of power due to their knowledge and adoption of mainstream cultural codes, felt extreme discomfort when required to explicitly exercise this power in the form of authoritarian action. Each preferred, instead, to maintain more of a friendly, peer-like relationship with the students, though some did make efforts to move beyond their discomfort to discipline the students when situations called for it.

In the chapters to follow, I will delve further into the implications of these participants' experiences. First, I will examine the relationship between participants' beliefs, values and perceptions and their participation in the program. I will begin by exploring how the belief systems participants brought with them to the program impacted their experience within the program. I will follow with a consideration of how, conversely, participants' experiences in the TAC program affected their values, perceptions, or beliefs. Secondly, keeping in mind previous considerations of program quality, I will investigate the degree to which participants' experiences in and perceptions of the TAC program align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs.

CHAPTER 5: PERCEPTIONS VS. PARTICIPATION

My interviews with and observations of TAC students, staff, and tutors revealed an obvious interaction between participation in the program and individual values and beliefs. I found incidents where pre-conceived perceptions and beliefs influenced adult or student behavior within the program, as well as occasions where participation in TAC worked to change pre-existing ideas or belief systems. This section will first examine five examples where participant values and perceptions impacted the individual experiences of both adults and students within the program. Following this examination of the impact of perceptions on experience, I will present an exploration of incidents when participant experiences within TAC changed or affected individual ideas, values, or beliefs. I will begin with three areas of growth that seemed apparent in the lives of the students with whom I spoke, and will follow with a discussion of the areas in which tutors and staff experienced personal development.

Effect of Perceptions and Values on Participation

Interviews with the students revealed one prevailing theme that impacted their experiences within the program. Among the adults, I identified four instances where adult ideologies significantly influenced the manner in which either a tutor or staff person approached their experience within the center. It is important to note that throughout my time at the center, I did not encounter tutors or staff persons who expressed negative or deficit perspectives about their students. I also found that few of the students with whom I interviewed or conversed shared any experiences where they felt their tutors had low expectations of them.

Representing the Race (Katrina)

During our conversations, Katrina commented on a few occasions that she felt her students often must act as representatives of their race. At the time she was speaking specifically about her African American students and her belief that others took their cues about race and gender from them. She believed that students' behavior reflected beyond themselves to encompass their families, friends, the program, and others of their ethnic or gender group.

Katrina explained that some of the tutors, particularly those from CU, had very little experience interacting with African-American children and were building their perceptions, in part, upon their interactions with her students. In order to counter any pre-existing views or prejudices that they may have, and hopefully to reeducate anyone with negative perceptions, Katrina insisted that students be on their best behavior with tutors.

Katrina also acknowledged the deficit perspectives and low expectations that many had of African American and Latino students in DCPS, and she strived to help students counter those perceptions. She set the bar high for them because she believed they were all capable of high achievement, and because she recognized that if TAC did not set high expectations for them, there may be few others in their academic lives who would.

It is in part Katrina's acknowledgement of these larger social realities that influences her strict standards within the program and her desire to provide frequent opportunities for positive reinforcement for the students. As with most warm demanders, Katrina took personal responsibility for her children and was determined to ensure that they have successful futures (Irvine and Fraser, 1998). Though students sometimes

responded negatively to her tough love methods, most seemed to recognize that she simply wanted the best for them.

Just the Basics (Thomas and Terri)

My interviews with both Thomas and Terri revealed that they shared similar perspectives about the need for a “back to basics” approach to educating their students. Both felt that some of their students were being disserved by the current educational system in DCPS and were lacking certain basic skills necessary for the students’ academic success. They differed slightly, however, on how this approach should be realized. Terri interpreted “back to basics” to mean ensuring that students had the necessary basic skills. Thomas, though, thought it best to focus primarily on academics, including higher order and critical thinking skills, to the exclusion of extracurricular distractions.

Terri believed strongly in the importance of taking her lessons one step at a time. It was important to her that her students comprehend everything that they read, and so she took the time to ensure that they understood all of the vocabulary and sentence structures presented in the lessons. While her efforts often entailed spending weeks on a lesson that would normally take days, it was more important to Terri to make sure the students truly grasped basic concepts than to get through the lessons in the pre-appointed time.

While Terri’s desire to ensure that her students had the basic literacy skills that they needed was notable, it is important to emphasize again the detriment of neglecting the development of students’ higher order thinking skills. As Delpit (1995) notes, this can be a danger in such “back to basics” approaches.

Thomas, conversely, seemed to understand this concept and emphasized the importance of encouraging students to think critically. Thomas, a math tutor, expressed frustration with the failure of the math curriculum in DCPS to teach students basic mathematic skills. He discussed how African American and Latino students often graduate from DCPS high schools and find themselves completely unprepared to cope with the academic rigor of college math classes. Because of a deficiency in their math instruction in secondary school, he felt many students need significant improvement in their basic math, logic, and higher order thinking skills.

As a result, Thomas felt the need for a refocus on insuring that students have the basic skills they need to be academically successful, even if it meant eliminating some enrichment and extracurricular activities. His views also influenced his approach to teaching math during his tutorial sessions. He shared that students seemed to respond positively when he uses logic or higher order thinking techniques graphing models to explain basic mathematical concepts.

Bucking the System (Kristen)

Kristen, one of the Academic Aides at Ward 4, is an interesting example of a white adult who came to TAC with a unique consciousness of how racial and social systems impact the personal and educational experiences of TAC students. My discussions with her revealed her awareness of the role of race in social and educational systems of oppression and about the myriad obstacles that racialized students must overcome in order to achieve academic and personal success. Kristen also seemed aware of what she termed her “white skin privilege” and she admitted her apprehensive about initiating discussions with students about the racism and/or discrimination that they might

face in their daily lives for fear that they may take her comments in the wrong way. She did not, however, let her apprehension stop her from trying to increase the knowledge base of the children and providing them with socially conscious literature.

Because Kristen was both aware of and able to discuss issues of race and oppression, she used her already-expanded world-view to influence the way that she interacted with and approached the program. She reported instances where she discussed with students the Black Panthers, various economic programs that historically sought to aid underserved communities and even promised to lend a student the autobiography of Asata Shakur. By overcoming her apprehension, she became one of the few adults at the center to proactively work to increase students' social consciousness and awareness of historical figures involved in influential social movements and contribute to the program's professed goal of imparting knowledge of social justice.

Reevaluating Assumptions about Gender (James)

My interviews revealed that pre-established views and perceptions were not restricted to issues of race and ethnicity, but also ventured into matters concerning gender roles. James came to TAC with a particular knowledge of and appreciation for the challenges that African American males face within various educational and social systems. As an African American adult male himself, he had battled the negative stereotypes and false characterizations to which society clings when considering men of color. This awareness led James to be particularly aware of and attentive to the one male student in his tutoring group, who was challenged by his peers' negative perceptions of intelligence and academically successful African American males. The student was often ridiculed for his achievement and had grown cautious about who he made aware of his

academic prowess and intellectual curiosity. James took special pains to have regular discussions with this student and encourage him in his academic pursuits.

Despite this awareness of the struggle of the African American male, James found himself quite unaware of many of the challenges that his African American female students faced in their day-to-day experiences. James admitted to being surprised to learn that the girls in the program also admitted to being ridiculed about their intelligence and academic achievement. As discussed in other sections, several of the TAC girls commented that they were especially appreciative of the TAC environment because they felt safe expressing their love of learning and enjoyed being around other students who had similar views about education.

James was also taken aback as he learned about some girls' decision to adopt what Dance (2002) terms "tough fronts" to protect themselves against violence and ridicule in their schools. James was particularly struck by Mary's "rough" mannerisms and her frequent threats to enact violence upon individuals that she disliked or who upset her in some way. He explained that he was "old school" and was not used to girls fighting and being tough like boys. He was shocked to learn that at Mary's school, girls were known to regularly engage in fighting, and as a result, Mary had learned to enact a "tough stance" as a defense mechanism.

By getting to know all of his students, James began to better understand the unique needs of his female students and the challenges that they face at school and in life. This knowledge can help him better engage his students and meet their individual needs during his tutorial sessions.

Eyes on the Prize (Students)

Though few of the students' experiences in TAC seemed obviously impacted by pre-existing perceptions and ideals, many students' participation in the program was affected by the value that they placed upon education and their future success. In effect, they kept their focus (eyes) on the achievement of their goals (the prize). In both my casual conversations with students and my formal interviews with selected subjects, several students expressed an appreciation for the role that academics would play in helping them to achieve their goals. Several also expressed an appreciation for learning; though in some cases, that ideal was a result of their participation in the program. I will discuss those instances later in this section.

For those students that brought an appreciation for the power of academic achievement with them into the program, however, their experiences often were marked by increased focus, hard work, improved academic achievement, positive interactions with tutors, and active participation within the program. Students did not necessarily have to be straight "A" students to appreciate the importance of achievement. In fact, I encountered very few students with such stellar grades, but all students worked hard and continued to strive towards academic excellence.

According to their comments about their student groups, the drive, focus, and innate intelligence the TAC students exhibited was apparent to several of the TAC tutors. Most tutors that I interviewed commented at some point about how impressive the students were and how open they were to the learning process, particularly considering that TAC evenings constitute 12 hours days for the students.

Eve, Nina, Shareese, Jeremiah, and Micah seemed particularly characteristic of the intellectually curious children that the program strives to attract. Both their tutors and the staff rave about their intellectual acuity, and they each seem particularly focused on their academic achievement. During Study Hall, while some of the other students are talking and avoiding their homework, these students have found a way to balance their social relationships and their work, and rarely fail to complete their assignments. They seek assistance from the program's adults to validate their answers and check their assignments, and positively influence the students around them. In addition, Eve and Shareese were both nominated for the Jack Kent Cooke program, and Micah has won the Culture Points incentive program on multiple occasions.

Kayla, Jada, Jonah, Kendra, and Mary at times exhibit an intellectual curiosity, but are more illustrative of students who demonstrate an awareness of the role that academic achievement will play in helping them to attain their personal and professional goals. Each spoke frequently about their career goals and their belief that the program has and will continue to provide them with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to meet their life objectives.

Turning Points: A Change in Perspective

Though the primary goal of the TAC program is to promote academic achievement, I found several instances where participation in the program facilitated the personal growth and development of student, tutor, and staff participants. Several students commented that their individual ideas and perceptions about different cultures, academics and education, and their own personal value systems had been positively impacted by their involvement in TAC.

Finding Our Voices: Improved Self Confidence

My interviews with students revealed several instances where the students associated participation in the TAC program to an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. Shareese, Nina, and Eve, for instance, all expressed that in various ways, the relationships that they developed and the activities in which they participated had helped them to come out of their shy shells and begin to believe in themselves, their abilities, and their own personal worth.

Shareese: I've had big self esteem growth. Like when I first came to TAC I didn't really talk to anybody at all. I was to myself. I sat alone. Then I ran for ambassador and I ended up winning with a seven minute speech.

I later asked if her life would be significantly different if she were not involved in TAC:

Shareese: Yes. I think I'd still be that girl in her shell...

Nichole: Because TAC helped to bring you out...?

Shareese: Um Hm...the people...

Nina expressed a similar sentiment:

Nina: I used to be really really shy and I didn't raise my hand or anything like that, but now I always want to do that. And so I think it's helped me to get out of my shell...

Nichole: So you feel more confident?

Nina: Um hm (Yes).

Both girls' comments show evidence of the importance of helping students to find their voice and giving them opportunities to actively participate in programming. Enabling students to be active participants in their own learning and giving them a voice in shaping the goals, norms, and activities within the learning environment helps to increase their confidence, commitment, and motivation to achieve (Learning First Alliance, 2001; Jamar and Pits, 2005).

The students' also credited the relationships they formed at TAC as a significant factor in their personal growth and development. As I mentioned earlier, the establishment of positive relationships helps to nurture feelings of connectedness to the program environment and ultimately aids in increasing levels of self-confidence and self-esteem (Protheroe, 2007; Ryan and Patrick, 2001; Wang, 2007).

These students were not the only ones in the TAC population to acknowledge this growth in student confidence. Justin mentioned other students that he had watched grow and find their confidence over the course of their time in TAC. He explained that Eve, for example, had grown significantly over the past several years and had even won first prize in a poetry contest in previous years.

Justin: Eve has blossomed a lot as well. She used to be very quiet, but she's grown a lot in her confidence in her abilities as well as her public speaking.

The relationships that these students form within TAC and the activities established to promote high self-esteem and self-worth have worked to the benefit of several of the children in the program. TAC worked to successfully alter the way that these students viewed themselves, their abilities, and their worth for the better. Each of these young women has found a new confidence that can take them far as they progress in school and in life.

Taking Pride in Academic Achievement

Students' experiences of belonging and connectedness to educational environments and the adults within those environments is linked to significant motivational and behavioral factors that are associated with school success and the development of positive academic attitudes and values (Protheroe, 2007; Benard, 1995; Wang et al; 1997). During our interviews, several students expressed that being a part of

the TAC program changed their perceptions of academics and education. Several students also expressed that through TAC, they discovered that learning could be fun. Both Nina and Jada explained that when they came to TAC, they had not yet developed a love of learning and often dreaded coming to school. Since being a part of TAC, however, they realized that learning and fun were not mutually exclusive.

In Nina's case, she grew from not enjoying learning in school or TAC to looking forward to learning in a fun environment each day:

Nina: Um... 'cause sometimes TAC can be fun and teach in a fun way and at school...they don't do that... now I actually want to come to school.

Nichole: You didn't want to come before?

Nina: Uh uh (No).

Nichole: What made the difference?

Nina: I have TAC after school.

Jada also admitted that she did not enjoy attending school before she came to TAC. Participating in the program, she explained, helped her to realize that learning could be fun, both at TAC and in the school environment:

Jada: I thought school was boring. Then when I came to TAC, they made me think that school can be fun but also learn something.

The fun, innovative programming, the culturally responsive environment, and the positive relationships students develop with tutors, staff and peers appear to have contributed to these students' new appreciation for learning. As Osterman (2002) finds, such environments tend to promote emotional well-being, motivation, commitment to school, connectedness, and achievement.

Improving Student Behavior

As I have mentioned earlier, programs that foster a culture of high expectations for all, where students can develop positive, nurturing relationships with adults also tend to promote decreases in negative student behavior (Osterman, 2002; Bernard, 1995; Osher and Fleischman, 2005). Several TAC students noted an improvement in their behavior as a result of their participation in TAC. Because the staff had such high expectations of the students and taught them to see the correlation between their behavior and their future academic and personal success, many students made significant adjustments to their behavior both within the program and in other settings. Jada and Kendra, for instance, admitted that they would be quite different people if they had not been a part of TAC for the past three years. According to the girls, without TAC's positive influence, they would have had significant behavioral issues and would have gotten into a lot more trouble.

Nina also detailed a change in her behavior since becoming a part of TAC. She explained that several of the adults from the program had commented on her temper and attitude, and as a result, she had taken pains to improve her behavior. Through guidance from tutors and staff that encouraged her to take time to think about consequences before she acted, Nina began to experience a change in her thought process and, subsequently, her behavior. Several times throughout the semester, Nina pointed out to me how she felt she was progressing and that in her eyes her attitude was improving by leaps and bounds. From what I saw of her behavior, it seemed that she had in fact been making significant improvements, learning patience and having a greater respect for herself and those around.

Kayla also mentioned a change in her behavior as a result of her participation in TAC, though she felt that she still had a ways to go. Kayla explained how the program staff taught students manners and how to behave appropriately in public. According to Kayla, she had begun to apply these lessons in her relationships with her teachers, though she admitted that she still had a ways to go before she was consistently behaving as she thought she should.

The changes in these students' behavior did not go unnoticed by the adults around them. Sue, for instance, acknowledged an improvement in Kayla's attitude and behavior over the course of the semester. Despite challenges between the two at the beginning of the term, Sue notes that her relationship with Kayla has improved significantly over the course of the last several months.

Adopting a Different View

The students were not alone in their changed ideas and perceptions as a result of their experience with TAC. Several tutors expressed that their interaction with the students, and in some cases the TAC training opportunities, had altered their perceptions on racial and cultural difference. Tutors reported gaining new understanding of and appreciation for the children and their diverse cultures and mores and learning innovative and productive ways to bridge the gap between students' home and school cultures during instructional sessions. They learned to better appreciate the students' own cultural capital and sought to show them how to code or culture switch when they entered an environment dominated by mainstream cultural codes.

While interviewing Casey, I was struck by her awareness that she had as much to learn from her students as she had to teach them. She admitted to a lack of association

with and knowledge of other cultures in her northeastern hometown, and while at TAC, developed an appreciation for her students' ability to educate her about their cultural values and mores.

Casey spoke of the fact that her role as the Ward 4 Academic Aide presented her first experience in an environment where she was a minority. During Study Hall and Enrichment Time, before the other tutors arrived, she was one of only two white individuals in the program. She took the experience in stride, however, and commented that she enjoyed the opportunity to learn from her students. She shared that she wished the program could "follow her everywhere" because it has helped her to "learn so much about life".

In addition to the lessons learned from her students, Casey expressed an intense appreciation for the training opportunities offered to her by the TAC program. She shared her experience at one training in particular where she gained new perspectives on valuing students' cultural and linguistic codes. The program taught her how to appreciate her student varying modes of communication and embrace rather than suppress their diversity. In Literature classes, for example, where "proper English" was necessary for a writing assignment, she learned not to belittle the students' modes of communication. They taught her to show the students that there is a time and a place for all forms of expression, but that the classroom often required a different form than they would use at home or in social settings. This approach introduced students to the concept of code switching instead of attempting to supplant their own personal codes with those of the mainstream culture.

Sue also admitted to the impact this training had upon her method of conceptualizing and appreciating difference. Though she was unable to stay for the entire training, the information that she learned helped her to better understand “where these students are coming from, and how they would want to be treated”, and introduced her to a more culturally responsive method of interacting with and educating her students. Her improved ability to relate to students and their circumstances was evident in the remainder of our interview and in the positive feedback I received from her students about their experiences with her.

My interview with Kristen also revealed a changing ideology as she struggled to find her place amongst a staff lead by what she termed, “strong black women”. She, Sue and Casey all expressed discomfort with Katrina and Renee’s tough love approach to dealing with the students, and disliked having to discipline “other people’s children”. As discussed in previous sections, Lisa Delpit’s (1995) book of the same name discusses this phenomenon, where liberal white educators experience discomfort with being strict and giving stern directives to children of color. As a result, they often fail to earn the respect of the children, who are commonly more comfortable with clear, firm directives from their authority figures. Delpit (1995) explains that middle class white families are often more accustomed to making requests and giving students options than imposing rigid commands.

While the students’ responses to both methods of interaction from the staff varied a bit from Delpit’s (1995) explanations (some students responded negatively to the direct imperatives), Casey’s, Sue’s, and to a larger degree Kristen’s discomfort with strictly disciplining the students speaks to feelings of guilt about their positions of cultural

power. Kristen even acknowledged her white privilege and noted a discomfort with having certain conversations with the students about race and racism because of it. Despite this uneasiness, Kristen still communicated openly with the students about important issues of race, culture, and social inequities, and continued to work to find a balance between the organizational culture of discipline and respect and her personal comfort zones.

It seemed evident from my interviews with and observations of program participants that there was interplay on several levels between participation in TAC and personal values and beliefs. Data revealed several instances where tutor and staff beliefs significantly impacted the manner in which they delivered services to students.

Katrina's belief that they students must act as representatives of their race, Terri and Thomas's varying "just the basics" ideologies, Kristen's awareness of racial systems of oppression and James's assumptions about gender all influenced the way that these adults approached their relationships with their students and colored the programmatic landscape at the Ward 4 center. Katrina's beliefs in particular seemed to have the most significant impact on the pervasiveness of the culture of high expectations at the center and, consequently, on her adoptions of such a strict tough love approach with the students.

Findings also revealed evidence that participation in TAC impacted student, tutor, and staff's preexisting ideas and perceptions. Several students reported that the pervasive culture of high expectations and the positive relationships they developed while in TAC had greatly increased levels of self-confidence, changed and/or cultivated students' perceptions and value of education and achievement, and/or resulted in improvements in

student behavior. Tutors and staff also reported gaining new perspectives on race, culture, and difference, as a result of the culturally responsive TAC environment, training opportunities offered by TAC, and their personal interactions with students.

Each of these individuals seemed to be positively impacted by their experiences within TAC and the unique environment that it cultivates for students, tutors, and staff alike. In the next section, I will continue to explore participant perceptions of this programmatic environment through the lens of the quality characteristics discussed in Chapter 2. As one of the primary goals of this study is to bring to the forefront participant voices and experiences, I will investigate how participant ideas about program quality align with the literature on quality components of ASPs.

CHAPTER 6: DEFINING QUALITY PROGRAMMING: PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE VS. LITERATURE

As we seek to understand the experiences of program participants within the context of an urban afterschool SES provider, it is helpful to compare their perceptions and ideas with what we already know about supplemental education programs. It is important to include the voices of students and youth workers in any conclusions drawn about the quality of such programs. In this section, I will explore how participants' experiences and perceptions align with the previously-discussed literature on the quality components of supplemental education programs. In the following sections, I will describe the components of TAC that participants themselves portrayed to be most important and conducive to their positive experience within the program. Throughout my interviews and observations, I found that most of the characteristics that they described closely related to what the literature had to say about quality afterschool programming.

The six quality criteria detailed in Chapter 2 included: a) adequate facilities and resources, b) a positive environment where students feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted c) supportive relationships with well-trained staff, d) customized and measurable goals for each student, e) integration of academic and enrichment activities, f) culturally responsive programming, and (Halpern, 1999, Fletcher and Padover, 2003, Beck, 1999, Cohen, 2003, Piha and Miller, 2003, Cosden et al., 2004, Fusco, 2001). For the purposes of this study, I have narrowed these characteristics down to four specific areas, combining criteria b) and c), as well as d) and e). Both of these pairs are closely related. Being able to form supportive relationships with well-trained staff is an important component of a positive programmatic environment and setting customized and measurable goals is essential to being able to determine if a program is effective

academically. As such, the four quality criteria deemed most relevant to this study include: a) adequate facilities and resources; b) a positive program environment where students feel safe, accepted, and understood; c) integration of strong academic and enrichment activities; and d) culturally relevant programming.

Respondents consistently expressed that having adequate resources, positive relationships within a supportive program environment, a balance of academics and enrichment activities, and a culturally diverse staff and culturally relevant curriculum was important to the effectiveness of the program. Below, I will explore the respondents' perspectives about each of these components.

Adequate Facilities and Resources

As explained in Chapter 2, having adequate facilities and resources greatly impacts the quality of services offered to students during afterschool programs. When organizations can provide safe, clean spaces for activities and have appropriate materials and supplies, programming can run more smoothly and as it was intended (*Making an Impact, 2000*). Over the course of the study, the facilities at Truman Public Charter proved to be sufficient for the delivery of TAC programming. Truman offers an abundance of space suitable for a variety of activities, including classrooms, auditoriums, computers labs, and band rooms. In the following sections, we will explore the TAC facilities and resources and how they may impact the daily operation of the program.

Space and Materials

The TAC Ward 4 program is housed by, but not directly affiliated with, Truman Public Charter School. The school, located in northwest DC, is an expansive brick building surrounded by plush green grass and trees in the front, and a large athletic field

and parking lot in the back. The building has four stories, with classrooms, the library, computer lab and the auditorium on the first two levels, the cafeteria and band room on the basement level, and the gymnasium on the top level. The structure is spacious and in good condition, compared with other public schools in D.C., and has adequate facilities for the TAC program. TAC primarily utilizes the cafeteria, a wing of four classrooms on the second floor, the auditorium, library, computer lab, and band room.

Throughout the study, participants rarely commented on the facilities that they shared with Truman Public Charter School. The majority of the comments the students did offer regarding the facilities only confirmed that they were sufficient:

Shareese

Shareese: Um...I dunno...yeah, we pretty much have everything like compared to other schools

Kayla

Kayla: I think it's enough.

Nichole: You have everything you need here?

Kayla: Yeah

Though the school permits TAC to use classroom space, the school staff is quite insistent that the program not utilize any of the individual teachers' classroom materials. TAC provides all necessary supplies for tutoring sessions, including dry erase boards (tutors are not to use the classroom chalk boards), pens, paper, calculators, and any other materials needed for the lessons. For enrichment activities, which are held in the classrooms, band room, or the auditorium, the instructors bring their own materials. During Study Hall in the cafeteria, students primarily use either their own materials or those provided by TAC, including dictionaries, pens, pencils, markers, rulers, calculators, protractors, books, magazines, etc.

Though participants reported being relatively satisfied with the facilities and majority of materials provided by Truman and TAC, students and staff revealed two deficiencies in the resources that the program provides for the students, including outdated and insufficient computers/technology resources and unappetizing snacks.

Computer and Technology

While students and staff are given the opportunity to use the school's computer lab on a nightly basis, the available computers are somewhat substandard and run on outdated platforms with software and hardware in need of upgrade. Only one student and one staff member made mention of these resources, and their comments were less than positive. To begin, Eve, one of the 8th grade students, felt that there were not always enough computers available to meet the needs of the students:

Eve: Well...everything...they have everything for the supplies that you need they have...like the Truman [facilities]...sometimes the computers...you run out of computers...not run out, like there won't be enough sometimes, but most of the time we do...and we have to be careful...cause it's not our stuff...And in the classrooms you have to put everything exactly like it was...Other than that it's good...

Kristen, one of the Academic Aides, also weighed in on the technological resources.

According to Kristen, the software and operating systems of the lab's computers were outdated and slow:

Kristen: I think that I wish that they had...more access to better technology...reliable computers that were running XP...The computers never work the way they're supposed to. This one won't print. So the technology is kind of holding us back...

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, it is not uncommon for urban schools to have to make do with subpar technological equipment and other materials due insufficient resources (Franklin, 2002; Agron, 1998; Norman et al., 2001; Katz, 2000). In the case of the TAC program, students do not seem to have been detrimentally affected, but in many

cases, such inadequate resources can lead to decreases in academic performance (Franklin, 2002; Katz, 2000; Norman et al., 2001).

Snack Time

Throughout my five month observation of the Ward 4 center, students consistently complained about the food provided during Snack Time. They protested to the staff and tutors and grumbled amongst their peers about their dissatisfaction with the daily fare. As stated earlier in the discussion of the program components, their meals during snack time primarily consisted of a rotation of either a cold sandwich (bologna, turkey, or tuna salad) chicken taco, or turkey pita. Apparently, the students were unhappy with the snacks last year, and the program subsequently contracted with a new provider. I noticed some discrepancy amongst the students opinions about which was worse, this year's menu or last. Several students expressed their opinion about the food selection during our interviews:

Jada and Kendra

Kendra: We don't have no good food here...Last year was so much better.

Jada: We have more stuff this year but it's worse than last year.. It's like bad but - last year was bad but this year is worse.

Kayla

Kayla (discussing the schedule at TAC): ...and from 4:30 to um 5:00, that is like our snack time, and sometimes I think the snacks are nasty. Like the tacos, they have no flavor to 'em...

Jeremiah

Jeremiah: The only thing I might change is the snacks we have. That's it.

Nina

Nina: They could get better food. Everybody wants better food.

In my interviews with the students, half of them mentioned their dissatisfaction with the food. I also noted student responses to the food selection during my general observations at the center. Most often the students were unhappy or uninspired by the selection...:

At 4:30 it was time for snack. The menu was tuna fish sandwiches, milk, and a mixed cup of carrots, pineapple, and raisins. Many of the students were not happy about the menu and complained. "Crappy food again!" Nina grumbled. Many students opted for carrot sticks instead of the established menu. Many who did take the sandwich took one look at the carrot mix cups, turned up their noses, and decided not to take one. Katrina explained that they had a new caterer that started today.

...but occasionally, they were more enthusiastic...:

At 4:20, Renee and Katrina prepared the snack for today. Katrina announced that they would be having chicken tacos, carrots, vanilla pudding and milk. The students seemed excited about today's menu - much more so than Tuesday's meal of tuna fish sandwiches (see above). The students rushed to get into line. They talked excitedly as they waited. They all seemed to enjoy the meal as they ate and most ate all of what they were given.

As I discussed earlier, at the beginning of the second term, the staff met with all of the students during one of the T-Time to ask them what they would do to improve the program. This practice was consistent with their continued efforts to value student voices and provide opportunities for them to actively participate in the programmatic process. The students expressed an overwhelming desire for better food. While it was difficult to change their contractor mid-year, TAC did put forth the effort to address the students' concerns. A few weeks after the students made their request, the program implemented a system in all program sites where once per month they bring in a special hot meal (pizza, fried chicken, etc.) so that students can have a break from the food that is usually served.

Outside of technology issue, mentioned by only two of the 25 respondents, and the concern about the snacks, which the staff has begun to address, most participants either failed to mention or seemed content with both the facilities and resources available

to the TAC program and its students. It would appear that for the most part, students appear to have everything that they need for the duration of their time at the Ward 4 site.

A Safe and Nurturing Environment

As I detailed several times earlier, the provision of a safe, nurturing program environment is very important to the positive growth and development of students. TAC easily provides a physically safe setting, as it is located in a school building that is secured at the end of the school day. Only the front door is left open, and visitors must stop by the main office before they can access the rest of the school. There are security guards at the entrances, and one is specifically dedicated to the TAC program.

TAC staff and tutors played a large role in the establishment and perpetuation of an emotionally safe and supportive program environment. During my time at the Ward 4 site, I consistently observed the center's adults taking an active role in the lives of student participants. They seemed to understand the many factors that went into ensuring that student were ready and willing to learn, and they took pains to make sure that students had the support and attention that they needed to be able concentrate on their school work.

In the every day operation of the TAC centers, the staff made it clear that they are aware of their role in establishing a positive environment for their students. Observations and interviews revealed that they worked to infuse opportunities for positive reinforcement in almost every aspect of the program, and took pains to foster an environment of high expectations that inspired the students to want to succeed academically and behaviorally.

Most of the student respondents recognized and appreciated the staff's efforts, and made note of the safe and supportive environment that they experience within the program. While participants may have conceptualized the idea of this particular component differently than the literature on quality ASPs, they still clearly valued its importance. From the participants' perspective, the safe, supportive, and nurturing environment that they experienced at TAC was exhibited in their feelings of emotional and intellectual safety, in the support they felt from the staff that served them, in their perceptions that they could be "intellectually curious" in the environment without ridicule, and in the positive relationships that the staff fostered amongst themselves, the students, and tutors.

Emotional Safety

I have noted several times literature that speaks to the importance of providing an emotionally safe, supportive programmatic environment for students. It is important that programs operate within physically safe environments where students do not face any threat of violence (McLaughlin, 1994; Beck, 1999; Fletcher and Padover, 2003). Jonah, Mary, Jada and Kendra all demonstrated the negative environments that such threats from students and adults can foster. While physical safety did not register on the conversational radar of the students, tutors, or staff that I interviewed, some of their answers did touch on the importance of students feeling emotionally safe and accepted, and having opportunities to explore feelings and ideas, and find avenues for empowerment, autonomy, responsibility, and self-expression.

As I have noted previously, participants frequently responded that TAC provides an environment that is emotionally safe and supportive for students, and conducive to learning:

Nina

Nichole: Ok. Do you feel like this is an environment where you feel safe? Like emotionally and physically to be yourself and to grow and to learn and all that stuff

Nina: Yeah...Mostly because if something bad does happen there is always someone there...

And later...

Nina: Yeah. Like all the [tutors] support us...They make sure we're ok. Like if we have a face that looks mad. They're like are you ok? I think that's what I like about TAC. The tutors and everybody here is like...they care...

Despite intermittent remarks on areas for improvement in some aspects of the program, students consistently commented that they felt the overall program environment was a positive one, and that they were better for being a part of it. They all recognized the role that the program has played in their academic and personal development, and the impact that their relationships with program staff and tutors have had on their continued academic and personal success.

The tutors also expressed their opinions about the supportive environment that TAC provided for its students and acknowledged their role in perpetuating that environment:

Sue

Sue: I feel like it's very, very supportive....Everyone is always encouraging you.

Jeff (discussing his role as a tutor in the program)

Jeff: Doing more than just teaching them... But showing them there's someone who cares about them, someone who can be a role model to show them other possibilities in life;

As Jeremiah, Nina, and Mary indicated above, the tutors and staff at TAC seem to understand the many factors that impact whether students are mentally and emotionally ready and willing to learn. A number of the tutors and staff take pains to ensure that each student has the attention, support, and understanding that he or she needs to be able to concentrate on their academic work.

Intellectual Safety

Several students mentioned that TAC had helped them to understand that it was okay to be smart. As Micah mentioned in his interview, in his experience, students are often ridiculed for their intelligence and academic success within the traditional school environment

Micah: It's a good thing that you're smart. Some people think it's a bad thing

Nichole: Some people think it's a bad thing to be smart?

Micah: Yeah...at school...think getting all A's is a good...is a bad thing. They call people geeks and nerds...

The struggle to find acceptance of academic achievement can be a challenge for the students of color, whose peers may tend to ridicule them for "acting white" when they are successful in school and begin to develop a scholar identity (Ogbu and Fordham, 1986; Whiting, 2006). The students expressed that TAC created a safe haven where they could be around other students who openly wanted to be successful academically, and where they were supported in those efforts by TAC staff and tutors.

Shareese described the situation eloquently during our first interview:

Shareese: It's like...a program where you can be yourself freely. Like you don't have to worry about what people think like in terms of academics. Like some places you may feel that you have to dumb yourself down to fit in and stuff, but at TAC you're around a whole bunch of other people who are at the same level of intelligence as you, so you get to express yourself and you get to be smart. You don't have to act dumb like some other people....TAC taught me not to be ashamed of being smart.

The tutors also took note of the impact that TAC has on students' ability to find comfort developing a scholar identity. The positive reinforcement they receive, along with the continued high expectations of tutors and staff, encourages them in their efforts to achieve academic success. Mr. James, Mr. Kyle, and Mr. Justin each pointed to this particular program characteristic in their descriptions of TAC. The effort that the tutors and staff put into lifting chairs and providing ongoing positive reinforcement and recognition of the students' academic initiative all work together to instill a sense of pride in achievement within the students.

As mentioned in the previous section, one particular theme that arose frequently during participant discussions of TAC's benefits was the program's perpetuation of an environment where children feel "safe" being interested and engaged in the learning process. According to several students, TAC provides a place where it is okay to be smart, and where students who want to succeed academically can thrive.

Supportive Relationships with Caring Adults

When discussing the benefits of their participation in the TAC program, students frequently mentioned the importance of their relationships with supportive, caring adults who understood and could relate to them. Several students noted that it was those relationships that inspired in them personal growth and development, including increased confidence and self-esteem. The significance placed upon these relationships aligns with previously cited literature's emphasis on building positive relationships with the adults in ASPs. It is important to note, however, that unlike the literature, none of the students mentioned the level of training or experience their tutors or the TAC staff brought to the program. Three of the tutors, however, did place significant value upon one or more of

the trainings that were offered to them by the program to help improve their interactions with and instruction of student participants. One could also infer that the organization placed value upon training from the number of workshop opportunities that they provided for tutors.

In each of the student interviews, I asked subjects to think about favorable interactions they had with TAC tutors, and describe the characteristics that would comprise the “perfect tutor”. Aside from making learning “fun”, a recurring theme that I will discuss further in later sections, their most frequent responses included reference to tutors being caring, understanding, and someone to whom they could relate. Nina provides an example:

Nina

Nina: Someone who can relate to you...who knows how you feel and cares and I guess...teaches you good, but at the same time, knows how to have fun...it isn't boring.

Nichole: And do you think that you have that in the tutors you have now?

Nina: Yeah

According to students, regardless of gender or race, good tutors understood students and could relate to their feelings and experiences. As I mentioned before, these characteristics are consistent with culturally responsive educators who, regardless of their background, make a concerted effort to value and students' cultural capital and integrate their cultural and social norms into the learning environment. Like Nina, most students felt that their current tutors possessed these qualities of their “perfect” tutor.

Throughout my observations and conversations with the students, Jada and Kendra stood out because they consistently had issues and conflicts with staff and tutors. Jada in particular had difficulty developing positive relationships with the adults around

her, but she and Kendra mentioned one tutor who had made an impression on them:

Jada and Kendra

Kendra: She was different from the other tutors.

Jada: Because she made the lessons fun even though they was boring as who knows how...It's like she can relate- not she can relate to us but -

Jada: It's like - she doesn't make us bored... She tries to figure out what we think is fun.

Nina, Jada, and Kendra all describe adults adept at interacting with students in a positive, fun, supportive and culturally responsive manner.

Several of the students also expressed that they had closer relationships with their tutor than with their teachers at school. It would seem that the small group sizes for the tutoring sessions help to facilitate communication and the building of relationships between tutors and students. Almost half of the student respondents mentioned the impact that smaller class sizes had on both developing closer relationships with, being "heard" by, and getting more attention from their tutors:

Shareese

Shareese: It's sort of like school but it's more interactive than school. It's a smaller teacher-student ratio. So you get more one on one time with your tutors.

Nina

Nina: Here at TAC there's not many students so there's more teachers and less students so they get to talk more. In school, the teachers are always busy and they don't have time...like when you need them they're there, but just to be there they're not ...there.

While most students expressed having positive experiences with both tutors and staff, a few students described what they deemed negative interactions with Renee and Katrina. Both women have what I earlier described as a "tough love" approach to dealing with the students. They established rules and expectations, and they fully expected students to follow those rules. Students who did not often were reprimanded by one or both of the women. Unfortunately, this approach sometimes caused them to clash with

the older youth. The students who took issue seemed particularly displeased with the moments where either woman yelled at or disciplined them in front of their peers. Kayla and Shareese explained:

Kayla

Kayla: I think that my teachers at school are better, because like...they don't yell at us and all that, and you know, Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee...[My teachers at school] just give you warning, and if you still do it then they'll just write you up.

Nichole: What could they do differently, to make you see them as less mean?

Kayla: Just have a small talk with them about your behavior...instead of yelling atchu...

Shareese

Shareese: Like my teachers...sometimes they're more open to me than the people at TAC, they're like mean sometimes. They walk away when you're talking to them, and I don't appreciate that. And like...they get loud and they'll blame it on you...

Despite the tension that may exist between the head staff and the students, each subject that expressed displeasure with Katrina and Renee's occasionally stern approach later admitted that they felt supported and encouraged by both women and recognized that they cared and wanted them to be successful:

Shareese: You get to talk to the people at TAC. Like the TAC staff. If you're having problems, you can talk to them.

Nichole: And do you feel like um, they're really...they really care about you and they're really understanding about your situation?

Shareese: Umm Hmm (Yes)

Though students consistently had positive experiences with their tutors within the program, their experiences with Katrina and Renee often varied. Some students had only positive comments about their interactions with the two women, while others, particularly 8th graders, resented Katrina and Renee's strict management of the center and the high expectations that they had of students. The students seemed to still recognize, however,

that the head staff had good intentions, wanted students to excel, and cared about their wellbeing. Garot and Joniak (2004) do note however, that tough love does not always have the desired affect on students and can exacerbate already tenuous relationships.

Despite their variant responses, students were clear that their relationships with the tutors and staff significantly impacted their experiences within the program, for better or for worse. With the majority of the students, however, these relationships not only contributed to positive experiences within the program, but also aided in their individual growth and development.

Integration of Academics and Enrichment

As indicated in Chapter 2, the literature on afterschool programs notes that having a combination of academic and enrichment activities is important in efforts to provide “quality” afterschool services to students (Piha and Miller, 2003; Fletcher and Padover, 2003). The TAC program offers a unique, research-based academic component alongside a wide-ranging enrichment piece. Both pieces commonly include some reference to the organizations social justice themes. The TAC staff strongly supports the provision of a balanced environment for their students, who spend approximately 12 hours a day, three days per week dedicated primarily to academic pursuits. As most of the staff recognized, participation in TAC equated to exceptionally long days and a significant time commitment for students, especially considering that students ideally participated for a period of four years. Enrichment activities gave students a break from the intense academic rigor of their 12 hour days. In addition to providing exposure to new activities, skills, and knowledge, TAC’s enrichment component provided for students an

opportunity to focus their attention on lighter pursuits, so they could be more effective and productive when they must turn their attention back to their academic work.

While students, tutors, and staff all seemed to comment on the importance of the program's academic component, the students had less to say than the tutors and staff about the enrichment activities they experienced at TAC. Their primary focus appeared to be an appreciation for receiving homework help, the improvement of their grades, and of being able to stay ahead of their classmates in school academically. The TAC tutors and staff, however, noted the importance of providing a balance for the students between the rigorous academic focus and the fun and developmentally advantageous enrichment component.

Academic Improvement and Homework Help

Receiving assistance with their homework and with test preparation seemed to be a major asset of the program from the perspective of the students. With the exception of a few students who had no need of academic assistance, each commented at some point about the role that TAC played in improving and maintaining their grades and acted as an incentive for their participation in the program. Eve explained how the prospect of receiving consistent homework help drew her to the TAC program:

Eve: I wanted...to participate 'cause it would help me throughout school. I mean I don't have like five other people in my house helping me...while I work...I was excited like I wouldn't have to worry about who would help me...

The TAC curriculum has resulted in significant academic improvement in students' grades, test scores, and attendance, tardiness, and high school choice, TAC's five academic indicators. TAC tracks students' annual progress in the five indicators of academic improvement, and compiles the information in a database at the administrative

office. During the 2005-2006 school year, the organization served 400 students, and achieved the following results:

- Report Cards
 - 66% of students with C's or below improved by at least one letter grade in math (59% in reading)
 - 77 % of students improved or maintained As and Bs in reading (65% in math)
- Standardized Test Scores
 - 61% of student increased test scores in reading by an average of 4.7%. (55% in math)
- Attendance
 - 56% of students improved attendance by an average of 7 days.
- Tardiness
 - 42% of students improved tardiness by an average of 9 days.
- High School Placement
 - 81% of students were placed in top high schools, including Banneker Academic High School, Georgetown Day School, Sidwell Friends School, School Without Walls, and McKinley Tech.

This May, over 60 8th graders from sites across the District graduated from the TAC program in May. 83% of these graduates will continue on to their top choice high school, including Banneker, School Without Walls, McKinley Tech, Gonzaga, Madeira School, and Edmund Burke. Overall, the graduating class of 2007 increased their average 2.3 GPA to 3.8.

At the Ward 4 site specifically, I had some difficulty obtaining data on all of the academic indicators due to computer malfunction. While I was able to obtain data on grades and test scores, the TAC staff was unable to provide me with information on attendance and tardiness, and at the end of my study students were still in the midst of the high school application process. I was also able to review only the data on the 10 students

who had completed consent forms for the project. The rest of the students' data was confidential.

The data I received on Ward 4 student test scores was from the years 2003-2005, and provided inconclusive data about the students' progress. While some students maintained their scores throughout the time with TAC, others improved slightly. Still others saw a decline in their scores. Jada, Kendra, Shareese, and Kayla demonstrated what appeared to be the most significant improvements in test scores, while Eve and Nina's performance declined a bit once they moved from elementary to middle school. Jeremiah maintained his scores, and there was no data for comparison for Micah, Thomas, or Mary (See Appendix S).

Student grades provided clearer evidence of the positive impact of the program on academic achievement. In the data supplied, students' grades were tracked in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies for every quarter of each year the student participated in TAC. Each student experienced some improvement in at least one of the subjects indicated, many in multiple subjects. While Eve experienced a significant improvement in Reading, Writing, and Science over the last two years, Jada demonstrated an increased proficiency in all of her subjects. Out of the whole subject group, only two students saw any significant decline, while one, Jeremiah, maintained his grades throughout the years in question (See Appendix T).

At the end of the first term, the students supplied me with their grades for the semester:

Table 4: Student Grades								
	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	PE	Foreign Language	Computers	Other
Kendra	B	C	D	C		Spanish - C	B	Art - B
Jada	A	A	C-	B		Spanish -C	A	Art - B
Jeremiah	A	A	A	A	A			
Eve	A	A	A	A	A	Spanish - A		
Jonah*								
Shareese	A	A	A	B	B	Latin - B		
Nina	B	A	A	A	A	Spanish - A		
Micah	A	A	B	B	B			B
Mary	B	B	B	C			B	Band - C Art - B
Kayla**	B	B	B	C				Band - B

*Jonah was not able to remember his grades, but let me know that he received mostly 2's and 3's on a grading scale of 1-3 (3 being the highest).

** Kayla was my first interview and had not yet received her semester grades. She gave me instead the grades from her latest progress report.

Getting Ahead in School

As mentioned several times throughout the previous sections, getting ahead of their classroom curriculum at school was considered by students to be a major benefit of the TAC program. They enjoyed having prior knowledge when their teachers introduced a new topic area to their class, and that knowledge also helped them to improve their grades:

Mary

Mary: How to write...a essay...or how to do the math...'cause you already learnt it and when they do it in the classroom you can be like oh! I know this stuff and you're just gonna be like speeding through it.

Jonah

Jonah: I learned about decimals....and negatives and positives....in my school, they haven't taught us about negatives and positives...

Jeremiah

Jeremiah: [TAC} helps me learn and know more stuff before I'm able to learn it at school, so I get a heads up on what I'm learning...

I noticed that the younger students were more apt to experience this phenomenon than the 8th grade students. According to them, by the time they reached the 8th grade, the curriculum was usually at the same pace as their classroom instruction. The fact that classes in the higher grades are more specialized may influence this finding.

The Importance of Balance

Throughout my exploration of the program, the staff consistently expressed their opinions about the importance of integrating enrichment activities into the programmatic structure of TAC. They stressed the importance of providing a break for students from the academic intensity of their long, 12-hour days. During my interview with Renee, she discussed the importance of enrichment in the lives of children:

Renee: [Enrichment is important] because academics aren't the only thing that exists, and schools don't just look at academics as much as we want. They wanna balanced individual and [the enrichment activities are] a way to try to create some type of balance. We don't want a student to just worry about their grades and not have a social life and not be able to get involved in the community or have certain skills to function outside of what's on a piece of paper and [enrichment activities] enhance other skills like communication and presentations and creativity. Those things are valuable especially in the work world.

Observations of TAC's Enrichment Time revealed a wealth of interesting activities, including art, dance, architecture, photography, sex education, and an

interesting course entitled “Songs for Social Change” which introduced the children to songs that were representative of various campaigns like the Farm Workers and Civil Rights Movements.

It is clear to see that the TAC program places significant value on the integration of a quality, research-based academic component, with both fun and socially relevant enrichment activities. These two elements work together to foster well-rounded students who are bright, confident, and academically focused, and hold a basic knowledge of a variety of artistic pursuits. As Renee indicated, the breadth of skills and knowledge they gain in the program should serve them well as they continue on in their academic, and eventually, their professional endeavors.

Making Learning Fun

In addition to providing diverse learning opportunities that include both strictly academic and enrichment opportunities, the literature, and to a much greater extent the students, place significant emphasis on the importance of making learning fun. Fletcher and Padover (2003) find that when afterschool programming is aligned with school instruction and presented in fun and engaging activities, student achievement can increase two to three times more than statewide estimates indicate. TAC students would agree. A large majority of participants felt it of utmost importance that their tutors take pains to deliver creative and engaging lessons. In fact, one of the most prevailing themes throughout the study was the students’ desire for TAC staff and tutors, and their teachers at school, to make learning fun and interesting. The word “fun” appeared 126 times in interviews and observations throughout the study. Students made 88 remarks about having “fun” in educational settings, while tutors and staff made 38 comments. In most

cases, respondents were not referring to non-academic activities and play, but instead were expressing particular enjoyment of those instructors that sought to make lessons engaging, hands-on, and in relative to students' lives.

Kayla: They have to...like teach us in a fun way and then let us have fun after that.

Mary: They...teach us the stuff but they take it in a fun way...

When describing their favorite or "perfect" tutors, students spoke about adults that "made learning fun" by relating to the students and making the lessons interesting and unique.

Nina: Someone who can relate to you...who knows how you feel and cares and I guess...teaches you good, but at the same time, knows how to have fun...it isn't boring.

Mary: Fun. Make learning fun. Just fun!

As indicated above, engaging and interesting lessons are particularly important in the case of TAC, where 3 days of the week, students are in some sort of academic setting for 12 hours each day. Many students are tired and mentally drained by Tutoring and excite the students as opposed to blandly delivering the lesson.

The students were not alone in recognizing the importance of fun, engaging lessons. Several tutors also remarked on how they strove to ensure their lessons were interesting and appealing to the students and recognized that students had very long days on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Sue: We can mix it up, make it fun, make...exciting to the kids...

Kyle: You know I try to do things that they consider fun, like I kind of redesigned one of the lessons that we got to shoot these little rockets in the auditorium... They also understand that what we're doing is fun but there's kind of a learning element too...

Andrea: It's a long evening -- giving up so much of their freedom to play video games, just all fun things. I really want to take them outside one day and just

have one a day when you're like, "We're not having any Tutoring Time, we just have a day for you all to just chill and keep the peace and have fun.

Their recognition of this reality seems to make the long day a little less arduous for the students and injects a little extra fun into their time at the center.

Culturally Responsive Programming

Several studies on culturally responsive pedagogy detail the importance of providing afterschool programming that incorporates and is compatible with students' diverse cultures (Fusco, 2001; Gordon, 2005; Piha and Miller, 2003; Beck, 1999).

According to the literature, providing "culturally consistent" environments idyllically entails the creations of a space where students' culture and that of the mainstream can coexist within the curriculum (Beck, 1999; Halpern, 2000). In these environments, the staff teaches children to bridge the gap between the two cultures to find personal and academic success within the dominant cultural environment (Gordon, 2005). In such culturally responsive arenas, students can interpret the environment more effectively and see that their culture is accepted and valued (Beck, 1999, 108).

Previous discussions of participant experiences demonstrated the various ways in which TAC strives to present culturally responsive programming to students. The organization itself considered this component to be an integral part of their program structure, and tried to integrate culturally responsive topics into their Tutoring Time, T-Time, and Enrichment Time activities through their social justice themes of Freedom, Voice, Solidarity, and Justice. Though the TAC staff was in agreement about the importance of these components, a few admitted that there was room for improvement. Fortunately, the staff was in the process of finding new ways of integrating the social justice themes more deeply into the curricular and programmatic structure

Diverse Tutor Population (Renee and Katrina)

Beyond cultural responsive programming and curriculum, Piha and Miller (2003) note the importance of having a diverse pool of program staff and volunteers. Afterschool programs often recruit youth workers from a variety of sources, including teachers, paraprofessionals, college students, and community members. This array of sources often provides access to a diverse pool of adults who can serve as teachers and role models for students (Piha and Miller, 2003, 3). Programs that offer a diverse staff tend to have more cultural competency in a variety of areas, including parental relationships, effective and engaging programming, and community partnerships (Piha and Miller, 2003, 4).

Over the course of the study, both Katrina and Renee noted the importance of ensuring students had exposure to a diverse population of tutors. When I first arrived at the site, I was very aware of the lack of diversity in the pool of tutors and concerned about their ability to adequately provide culturally responsive instruction to the students. Shortly into the term, however, Renee's efforts to diversify the tutor pool proved successful and the racial and cultural mix of tutors began to reflect more of a balance.

As Volunteer Coordinator, Renee was primarily in charge of tutor recruitment at Ward 4. During our interview, Renee shared that she saw it as a primary function of her role as Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that students were exposed to a diverse tutor population:

Renee: A lot of D.C. students have a very narrow perspective of what life is really about, and culturally, they're under-exposed. It's important for everybody to be exposed to different ethnicities, because that's the way the world is and primarily D.C. is a very diverse and you don't wanna set them up...because if they get into a top college or a top high school like Burke or Sidwell Friends, they're gonna be the minority there and if they can't handle that racial tension there then they might not succeed as well as they would have if they knew how to handle that.

I've also been specifically recruiting African American tutors or, you know, Latino tutors, because we need that diversity. We don't just need people helping them who don't look like them...who can't relate to them on certain levels. They just need a full spectrum...and them not just be people giving back who don't look like they're making it seem like their own race does not care.

Katrina also shared why she thought it important to have diversity in the tutor pool:

Katrina: We try to expose the kids through different perspectives and ideas through the tutors. That's why we always encourage the tutors to participate during T-Time just to give the kids a different perspective because there is such wide array of ages and generations just within our community...

Both women believed that it was important to provide students exposure to a variety of cultures, ideas, and perceptions through a diverse tutor population. In addition to becoming familiar with unique beliefs and value systems, both women thought it prudent that students developed a comfort level in the presence of individuals with backgrounds different from their own. They also agreed on the value of ensuring that the tutor population contained a good number of individuals that reflected the cultures of the students, so that they know people who look like them are concerned about their success and well-being.

Skills Students Can Use

In their discussions of afterschool organizations, Gordon (2005) and Piha and Miller (2003) note the importance of providing programming that appeals to students and skills that are useful and relevant to their lives. Student comments indicated that TAC worked to make students aware of the ways the skills and behaviors they acquired within the program could be applied in their efforts to meet their academic and professional goals. Students, conversely, seemed to appreciate being able to see the connection between the lessons learned in TAC and their lives, present and future, outside of the program.

Kayla, in particular, commented several times about link between participating in TAC and succeeded in school and subsequently in her professional life:

Kayla: With TAC, I can learn new things and then pass all my grades and then they'll help me go on to high school and then college and get a good job!

Eve also seemed very aware of the various ways that she could use the skills, confidence, and assistance that she had gained through her participation in TAC:

Eve: Applying to TAC and actually getting in...shows that I can think that I can get into other things that I want to do...

According to respondents, providing culturally responsive programming in a diverse environment that provided exposure to unique opportunities was very important. The data above indicates that individuals at each level of participation value both the varied perspectives provided by diverse populations and welcome the opportunity to learn from people different from themselves. The staff in particular, Katrina and Renee specifically, also feel it important for students to see adults with similar racial and cultural backgrounds who are interested in their success and well-being.

The TAC program seems to place significance on providing opportunities for students to become more socially and culturally aware and try to incorporate socially and culturally relevant material into the regular curriculum and enrichment activities. Several students also acknowledged and showed appreciation for the relevance of the TAC program to their every day lives, and noted their ability to actively apply the lessons, skills, and habits that they learned within the program.

The Question of Quality Part II

It would seem that for the most part, the literature on quality afterschool programs aligns well with participant perceptions of and experiences within the TAC program. Student, staff, and tutor ideas and opinions about the important aspects of "quality"

afterschool programming support previous research on the subject. While participants often conceptualized the quality components differently than the literature, their general focus was the same as they expressed the value of adequate facilities and resources, a positive environment where students feel emotionally and physically safe, supported and accepted, the integration of academic and enrichment activities, and the delivery of socially and culturally responsive programming.

CHAPTER 7: EXPLORING SES IN DCPS

The participant accounts above lead to the conclusion that the TAC program provides beneficial academic and personal experiences for students, tutors, and staff alike. While there is obvious room for improvement, most students reported experiencing a positive, nurturing environment where they felt they could learn and grow while comfortably being themselves. Having ascertained that this program is of significant academic and personal benefit to the students it serves; one can also surmise that it also would be an asset to the pool of SES providers made available to DCPS families. It consequently becomes important to examine how well this particularly SES provider has been served by the SES provision in its current form and the implementation of said provision by DCPS.

In this section, I examine the experiences of TAC participants with the SES process in the DCPS. As SES students within the program receive the exact same services as those who do not receive SES funding, and site staff indicated that they were also largely unaffected; the participants primarily impacted by the SES process were the staff at the administrative office, principally Allison and Justin.

TAC and SES

Allison and Justin served as my primary sources of information about TAC's experiences with the SES process in DCPS. While Allison was the SES coordinator for the program during its first year as an SES provider, this year Justin shared much of the responsibility. Over the course of four interviews throughout my time at the site, Justin and Allison shared with me the challenging course of events that eventually lead the organization to withdraw itself from offering SES services for the District.

Allison

Allison was a white female in her mid-to-late 30's, who worked at TAC's administrative office. Her involvement with TAC began several years ago, where she began volunteering as a Literature tutor with the organization. She so believed in the mission of the program, that she joined the staff professionally. At the time of the study, she served as Communications Director, and also managed grants and contracts. As mentioned above, Allison worked with Justin on the management of the SES program, and was my primary contact with the organization.

Justin (Part 2)

Justin was significant to this study not only as a tutor and former Ward 4 Site Coordinator, but also in his role as a primary contact for the SES component of the program. My first interview with Justin took place at the end of October, when the TAC program, along with the SES process, was just gearing up for the school year. Our second interview took place months later, at the end of January. By then, much had taken place with the organization and the SES process.

I utilized Justin's and Allison's accounts of the SES process to ascertain the story of TAC's experience with SES in DCPS over the past two years. In the following sections, I will examine their rationale for becoming an SES provider, their experience with the SES process in DC, the challenges that they faced as a provider, and the events that led them to withdraw the organization from the pool of SES providers.

Why SES?

During my informational interview with Allison, she described the organization's rationale for initially applying to become an SES provider. According to Allison, their

reasoning was twofold. First, TAC was looking for a means to diversify their funding sources and the federal resources from SES seemed like a great opportunity for the organization. Second, because of TAC's strong focus on academics, use of a research-based curriculum, and proven results in academic improvement, the organization's administration felt that the program would be an excellent fit as an SES provider:

Allison: Organizationally we are trying to find more sustainable revenue... We saw SES as a potential more sustainable revenue source because ...it's just good for us to have more diversity in our funding... We are a very good fit for SES because we are a very academic program... and we have lots of evidence that shows our students make academic gains.

We have got that internal capacity to measure and evaluate and are being recognized for our outcomes. So it's a natural connection that we become an SES provider.... The main goal for us was to try and get our current scholars paid for through SES... because they are from failing schools and they are... low income...

The SES Process

According to the SES providers that I have spoken to in the District of Columbia, DCPS often struggled with disorganization and miscommunication in its SES process. Though the state and local staff had begun to implement measures to address these challenges, according to participants, the current system was still a work in progress.

The SES Provider Application

TAC's experience with SES in DCPS began with the Provider application. According to Allison, the application to become an SES process was quite extensive. Comprehensive application processes are to be expected, however, when applying for federal funding. Fortunately, after being initially accepted as a provider, programs do not have to apply for approval again for two years.

As part of the application process, TAC had to establish their tuition reimbursement rate structure for SES (the amount DCPS would reimburse them for

services rendered to SES students) and subsequently was approved by DCPS for the number of students they could serve under the SES provision. Only a limited amount of TAC services would be covered by SES funds, because costs had to remain below a certain cap for each student:

Allison: We ended up getting approved for three hours a day even though the students are with us for five hours a day...There was a dollar amount cap and we didn't get anywhere near that because we started so late...But we have so many hours...many more than most of the other providers...that if we had actually started in October we would have reached the cap early...

While some Providers received most of their operating funds from SES, TAC had supplemental funding sources and provided services (primarily through scholarships) for most of its students, regardless of their SES status, and sought to find reimbursement for the students they were already serving.

AYP Listings

Once programs were approved as SES providers, they then waited for the LEA to distribute the district's listing of schools who had not met AYP before they could begin contacting students. This part of the process posed quite a challenge for DCPS and providers. According to Allison and Justin, for both years that TAC served as a provider, the listings were received late in the school year, and were often inaccurate:

Justin: We didn't receive a list of schools until about a week in a half ago [mid-October]. And then the list of schools we received wasn't correct...About a day later they said, "*Please disregard the list that we sent until you received notification from us.*" We received notification from one of the departments that there is inconsistencies with the lists, but she never sent us back a list...The deadline is this Friday, so it really only gave us about a week and a half.

SES Parent Application Process

Once the AYP list was distributed, DCPS issued the SES application for parents, which listed all available SES providers in the District. Allison explained that during their two years of participation with SES, the initial provider lists developed by the LEA had

been incorrect and either omitted providers or provided erroneous information about the organizations. During TAC's first year, their program, along with several others, was left off of the list of providers:

Allison: When they put out the list of the providers and the application...it was the previous year's list of providers, instead of the one's who'd been approved for this year. So we weren't on there and there were like 10 other providers who were approved for this year that weren't on there...Then it took...probably two months to get a fixed application out to schools and families...

Once parents completed their application, they submitted it to their home school. Principals then decided the priorities for their individual schools and determined which students will be approved for SES services. In TAC's case, several of their eligible students did not meet the priorities of their schools' principals and were not approved receive SES funding:

Allison: Families can fill out the form and then submit it back to the school. The principal then figures out what are the priorities for that school. So if they want to prioritize English language learners... severe learning disabilities, or just everybody in the school...So a lot of the students... that we were currently serving didn't meet the priorities of the principal.

After the principals decided which students would be eligible for SES services from their schools, they submitted a list of the approved students to the LEA. Student names were then entered into the SES database, the WebStar system, where providers could access student contact information. As Justin described his experience utilizing WebStar, he described the database as user-friendly, but noted some issues with accuracy they had with the system. He was hopeful that as DCPS upgraded the system this year, they would address some of these challenges:

Justin: I logged in and it's actually less complicated than our system...But the thing is that...We're only listed as four through eight. We were receiving kindergarten applications and ninth grade applications. And they were being approved...because they had no way of filtering it out.

Once providers had access to the students through WebStar, they still had to go through their own admission and intake processes. During TAC's first year as a provider, they were not able to begin meeting with students until the end of December and they did not begin serving students as an SES provider until February. After they went through the entire process, however, they ended up serving only a nominal number of students through SES:

Allison: Eleven ...Last year, we served 300 citywide and so only 11 were through SES...Where we would think that probably 250 would be eligible... given their school status and their income.

According to Allison, it was because of the lengthy and somewhat unorganized process that several eligible students were not able to take advantage of SES services. The children who did receive services had to wait until February to be officially brought on board as SES students.

Setting Student Goals

According to SES statutes, program staff must establish a set of academic goals for the students that were approved by the LEA:

Allison: We look for report cards and their test scores and their interview process and we figure out what their strengths are and what their weaknesses are, and then usually what we do is send a letter home with their acceptance and we say these are some things we're going to work on...and so we just kind of bolstered that letter and called it...whatever you call it...the ISSP ...individual student service program

We had to send a copy to the parents, and to the LEA and then we kept one for ourselves...Our program was actually really compatible with SES so there were just a couple things that we had to change...like our sign in sheets were not formatted in quite the way that SES wanted so we needed to send a hard copy of the sign in sheets...

Over the course of my time at the site, DCPS established a new requirement that SES providers must develop Individual Service Learning Plans for each SES student.

Fortunately, this fell in line with the process that TAC had already established:

Justin: We have to come up with an Individual Service Learning Plan for every student once they're approved...We already have our own for the kids...So it's just a combination of the same but just tailored a little bit differently and just formerly stating that this is a SES thing. And this is going to be what their plan is and what we're looking to work on...

Nichole: Do the teachers, the local education agencies, do they have any input in that at all or do you – is that totally left up to you?

Justin: No, that's up to us because once they're approved we have to put it together...Every year kids apply for a scholarship...that covers the cost of our program. And part of the scholarship is awarded partially on financial need and partially on academic merit. So if a child needs to make improvements in certain areas like improving their Math grades from all 2's to all 3's or whatever it might be, I put provisions on the scholarship for specific things...Those same things are what we created our individual service learning plans because those were the areas that they needed to work on anyways.

SES statutes dictate that parents, teachers, and SEAs must have some input in establishing academic goals and measures for approved students. According to Justin, however, this was not a guideline enforced by the LEA or SEA.

SES at TAC

Allison and Justin explained that little adjustment had to be made at the site level for students receiving SES services. One of the larger challenges, however, was accommodating students entering the program mid-year. Justin explained how they dealt with the challenge:

Justin: Once we get a green light from them we can start offering services. But we would never bring our kids in just as they get approved. We would always just set one start date and all the kids will start it that day...If all the kids are starting one day all those kids are getting tested at the same time with approved tests. And then we're recruiting volunteers to start them on the same time that they are to work with them. That way it just works a lot smoother.

The largest challenge with admitting SES students mid-year appeared to be that they missed out on months of academic support due to the extensive application and assignment process. Students who ideally could have begun seeing improvement in

academic performance during the first semester had to wait until well into the second term to begin receiving services.

Reporting and Evaluation

In theory, once the students begin officially receiving SES, the provider ideally began the process of reporting the students' progress back to the LEA. The SES provision of NCLB places significant emphasis on reporting and evaluation to ensure that students are receiving the academic help that they need to boost their grades. Allison explained, however, that during TAC's first year as a provider, there was no formal reporting or evaluative process in place with DCPS. Another method through which the SES provision promised to monitor providers is through regular site visits. As far as Allison knew, site visits by the LEA and SEA also were promised but never conducted:

Allison: (laughter) I don't know actually if we've ever reported back to them...At one point I asked [the DCPS SES Representative]... [but she] got really overwhelmed in the spring. I don't think she ever got back to me, because I thought, "What are our reporting requirements?" We send them the ISSP's and we send them the attendance reports. Then the LEA's can come out for spot checks to make sure we're doing what we said we were going to do....I never heard from any of our program staff that someone arrived...

Justin confirmed that the site visits did not take place, though he predicted that things may be different this year:

Justin: Last year they said they were going to do visits, but we were never visited. This year both the federal office and DC had both said that they are going to be doing visits... But this year they seem to be a little more together than last year. So I think we might receive at least one visit where they come and they check the program out to make sure that every thing is working as it should.

Because of the myriad challenges they had experienced as an organization with SES, Justin was unsure about the true benefits of participating in the federal program:

Justin: In its current form? I wouldn't want to do it for much longer, because it's frustrating...It slows you down. So, we still recruit our own students. We still get students into the program. We'd like to make our services available to more, but

if you're going to constantly year after year have to deal with disorganization then – and having to wait and wait...after a certain while, no.

Justin's comment foreshadowed events that would eventually lead the organization to rethink its participation as an SES provider, as I will detail below.

Challenges

Literature on NCLB's SES provision has noted a number of challenges faced by SES administrators and providers when implementing the policy option. As discussed in Chapter 2, the most frequently cited issues include insufficient funding, poor communication, and insufficient evaluation of SES providers (Sunderman and Kim, 2004; Olson, 2005; Belfield and d'Entremont, 2005). While TAC's experience with SES implementation in DC included issues with poor communication and a lack of proper evaluation, they also faced additional challenges.

Despite the initial promise of becoming an SES provider held for TAC, their experiences were fraught with challenges, the most significant being poor timing and communication and unrealistic expectations. According to Allison and Justin, these challenges compounded over the course of their two years of SES participation and led the TAC administration to the decision to end their participation as an SES provider.

Poor Timing and Communication

Poor timing and communication were the most significant issues that Allison and Justin faced with the SES process in DCPS. The District frequently sent erroneous information to providers and parents and consequently delayed the SES process. During TAC's first year as an SES provider, the District's process for disseminating information prevented the program from serving students under SES until February. This year, the process seemed to have a similar timeline, and by October, providers had still not

received an accurate list of schools that had not met AYP. In my initial conversation with Justin in October, he held out hope that they would be able to begin providing services by December. Unfortunately, at the time of my second interview with Justin at the end of January, they still had not had the opportunity to begin serving students under SES.

In addition to improved timing of the AYP list distribution, Justin felt DCPS should have the SES process structured and in place well before the beginning of the school year. The fact that they were still making changes to requirements and reporting practices in January played a tremendous role in TAC's decision to withdraw as a provider:

Justin: If it were to be done earlier...I understand that they have to be really stringent on the amount of reporting that has to be done because the state is coming down on them, but they should have had that in September.

Justin explained further how the timing impacted TAC's ability to provide SES services to students:

Justin: It's just a matter of them getting their stuff organized, and them getting a letter out to all the families...All that needs to be set up in August, so that recruitment can be done in September when the kids are back in school. So that service can start in October... 'Cause last year, we didn't start providing services until about February. So you lose about half a year....

Allison echoed this point during our second interview in February:

Allison: ...When you have recruiting for SES starting in like October and November, we're already running our program, and we can't hold slots for SES students. Because then you're taking that opportunity away from another student who wants to be in the program, you know?

Unrealistic Expectations

Allison detailed a few other requirements mandated for SES providers by DCPS that she felt to be excessive and taxing on TAC both financially and logistically. She

explained that TAC found themselves \$10,000 in the red because of their efforts to meet the school systems expectations:

Allison: There was a challenge with some of the requirements for SES with certain types of background checks for anyone that comes into contact with the kids...And we have always done an FBI background check...The background check that they wanted us to do for SES was gonna to cost like 30 dollars a person, and we have a pool of like 300 tutors and they're volunteers...We negotiated down just for the volunteers who worked with those [SES] kids...So we had to do organized fingerprinting days at the different sites...

The other thing was the security vendors at the schools...Through SES it had to be through [one security company], and it was 30,000 dollars additional per year, instead of 9000 or something that we were paying... And we're making only 20,000 from being in SES, so in the end we went into the red about 10,000 dollars because of that security costs and that's not including the cost of the fingerprinting...

It looks good for our organization to be part of a federal government program so we are stay with it. We're going to give it another try. But if it doesn't go any better....if we don't get more than 11 kids this year.... It doesn't make economic sense for us...

Like Justin's comment earlier, this last remark also foreshadowed TAC's decision to withdraw from the pool of SES providers due to an inability to meet the increasingly stringent requirements and expectations.

TAC's Decision Not to Participate

Two weeks following the center's reopening after winter break, Justin approached me to ask if we could meet regarding SES. During our meeting, he informed me that TAC had made the decision to withdraw as an SES provider due to newly imposed reporting requirements that the TAC administration felt were unfair and unrealistic. He explained that DCPS had been reprimanded by the state for lack of academic improvement, and the aftermath had trickled down to affect the SES Providers in the form of more stringent expectations imposed mid-year.

The new requirements called for SES Providers to develop reports for each student after every eight hours of service. For programs like TAC that provide comprehensive services 12 hours per week, that constituted a significant amount of man hours and resources that the administration felt should be dedicated towards providing services to children:

Justin: As of Friday –we’re no longer providing services... We actually never even started... The majority of organizations were supposed to start providing services... January 5th ...I think there was only like one or two that actually had already started...but the vast majority hadn’t, because there was paperwork that was still outstanding...

We attended a meeting the week before we went on break. At that meeting, they just brought up a whole bunch of new policies... I guess the one that sent us over the top was...for every eight hours we’re supposed to provide a written report of the child’s progress... Eight hours, for our program purposes, would mean that we would be having to sending over an update every week for every single child...

So our director felt that it just wasn’t worth it. I mean, the amount of time that we were gonna be putting in for the amount of kids that we were serving. It wasn’t gonna be worth it for us to do it... ‘Cause...it was gonna be about 425 [man] hours...

Allison also provided insight into the chain of events that led to TAC’s withdrawal from the SES program. According to her, the new requirements failed to consider the needs of either the providers or the students:

Allison: When you do a cost-benefit analysis, it’s just not feasible for us to [report for every] eight hours of service. That’s about every day and a half for TAC. I understand that for other providers that are once a week—one-hour online course—it’s a different scene... And I think that begs the question, “What are they really providing the students if they’re meeting less than an hour a week?”

I’m happy to provide accountability...quarterly reports...even monthly reports, if that’s what they want. But every eight hours per student was not possible for us. We’d have to hire a whole other staff person just to do those reports. And that doesn’t make sense.

The particular changes that DCPS implemented to hold providers more accountable began to transform the SES process into one that increasingly worked to

more the benefit of large national chains that offer hour-long programming once per week than smaller, community-based programs that offer frequent comprehensive academic and enrichment services. These requirements have the potential to put well-rounded, community-based programs like TAC at a significant disadvantage when trying to meet SES requirements, despite their programmatic compatibility with the statute.

Research shows that historically underserved and racially minoritized students are more likely to benefit academically and developmentally from programs that provide more comprehensive enrichment activities (Goldbaum, 2001; Halpern, 2002; Gordon, 2005). If their access to such programs is restricted by the structure of current SES policy, then they may be less likely to see academic and developmental gains from program participation.

As Allison stated, it may be more beneficial to students and programs to if the District focused less of its evaluative initiatives on increasing reporting requirements mid-year and more on other efforts to evaluate and improving the quality of the programs that were serving students:

Allison: They are spending their time on the enforcement and the reporting, and not paying attention to the program quality, in my opinion...so many reports that I can't imagine that the team of people at DCPS or the SEO would actually be able to go through them and look at the progress per student...

If you were gonna have more time put into this, I would rather have it be spent on evaluating the effectiveness of the program and having more site visits so people could see what was going on and sharing best practices...It seems like they just would accumulate the reports to say, "We have them."

Since TAC made the decision to withdraw as an SES provider, they have met with significant resistance from State and District representatives. According to Allison, the SEA has threatened to blackball future grant applications if they refuse to continue as an SES provider:

Allison...And now they're really trying to get us back into SES because it doesn't look good for them to not have us in there...They're threatening because we are going to apply to be a 21st Century Learning Center (21stCCLC)...They said, "Well, I know that you're applying for a 21stCLCC, and please know that your inability to meet these [SES] requirements is going to affect your ability to be approved as a 21stCLCC."

It's really disturbing to me, because...we are doing what they need us to do...If you were gonna create a classic community-based program for SES, it would be very similar to what we do...

As an organization, you have to make a decision when you weigh the cost and benefit of each new partnership that you start. And if we had known the new requirements for SES before the contractual phase for year two, we wouldn't have signed it...

Considering their experiences, Allison speculated on changes in District policy that would make participation with SES more feasible for TAC. She felt it would be helpful if DCPS made efforts to see SES providers as partners in the process of serving students and to better accommodate programs that were trying to deliver quality, comprehensive services to DCPS students.

Allison: The main thing is really to try and see the providers as partners in this process... I think what I would like is for some kind of forum, where DCPS—it's DCPS, it's not the SEO that's creating the [new requirements]—for DCPS to really talk with the different providers and learn more about what they're actually providing. And then have a discussion about how can we address accountability. And then together, come up with mutually agreeable requirements.

It doesn't seem like the people who are running the program know anything about the programs that are being delivered...So some kind of discussion among folks and really learn more about their programs and see what makes sense...

As with Justin, Allison believed that the schedule of the SES process should be adjusted to ensure that students receive services for a greater part of the year:

Allison: The meetings with the providers should have started a lot earlier in the year because SES is supposed to be a year-round program. It's best to provide the services starting when school starts...This meeting should have happened in September; and instead, it happened December 20th...

Allison also felt that eligibility for SES should be less prescriptive, instead allowing all students in need to access the services. As the process now stands, principals can choose not to offer services to eligible students who are not in their school's "priority group":

Allison: I sort of feel like if it was less prescriptive on who can get an SES service...For students who are in the hundred some-odd schools that did not make AYP last year [DCPS should say] "You're eligible for SES". Then you can start earlier, and there's more time to get to those students who really need it. You run the risk of...I was gonna say running out of money; but DCPS has under spent their [SES] resources for the last couple years.

It seems that SES in DCPS has yet to live up to the promise and potential of the policy's inception. My exploration of the TAC program revealed an example of an SES Provider that promotes positive academic growth and personal development in student participants. TAC's withdrawal from the SES Provider pool, however, raises concerns about the degree to which DCPS's SES policies and practices adequately serve state-approved providers. As we look toward the future and the reauthorization of NCLB, it may be useful to apply some of the lessons learned from this particular case to the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Policymakers and educational leaders have long been challenged to implement education reform initiatives that will alleviate persistent inequalities in urban schools across the country (Bell, 2004; Oakes, 1985, Garcia et al., 2004; Valencia, 1999). Urban schools often are challenged with insufficient resources and their student populations regularly struggle with low academic performance and despondency about the schooling experience (Katz, 2000; Argon, 1998; Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Norman et al., 2001). For a number of years, supplemental education programs have served as a viable aid in promoting increased academic achievement and personal development for urban students (Halpern, 2002; Posner and Vandell, 1994, 1999). These programs, studies show, often have the flexibility that schools do not to provide more culturally enriched and accepting learning environments for urban youth that result in positive social and educational development (Gordon, 2005, Halpern, 2002; Bridglall, 2005).

With the No Child Left Behind Act's SES provision, policymakers are looking to supplemental education programs to successfully augment the instruction that students receive within the traditional school environment and help bring failing schools up to state standards (No Child Left Behind, 2002; Sunderman and Kim, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). Unfortunately, there is little data this far on the effectiveness of this particular policy model, and the data that exists omits the voices of the students, program staff, and volunteers on the ground level that are most impacted by this policy and its tenets.

Discussion

In an effort to add to the knowledge base on SES policy and programming, this study sought to investigate an SES Provider in the District of Columbia and explore the experiences of program experiences both internally within the programmatic environment and externally with the state and district's implementation of the SES provision. Using Critical Race Theory as my guiding framework, I sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do participants (students, staff, and tutors) describe, understand and explain their experiences within the program?
- 2) What is the relationship between (student, staff, and tutor) participation in the program and individual values and beliefs?
- 3) In what ways do participants (students, staff, and tutors) experiences and perceptions align with the literature on quality components of supplemental education programs?

Student, staff, and tutor accounts revealed an interesting story of a program that, despite its challenges, was considered by participants to be of significant benefit to all involved. Students described primarily positive experiences within the program that lead to improved or maintained academic performance, admittance to a "top" high school, increased levels of personal growth and development, establishment of positive relationships with program adults and peers, and a healthy feeling of communal contribution. Admitted challenges with their participation primarily revolved around their level of comfort (or discomfort) with Katrina and Renee's strict approach to running the center. For some students this represented only a negligible issue, while other found their experience within TAC significantly impacted by regular conflict with the program leaders. Other issues included dislike of Snack Time meals and a need for an upgrade in

the school's technological resources. Even with these challenges, however, each of the students reported experienced one or more of the aforementioned advantages of participation in TAC.

Staff and tutors also reported positive experiences within the TAC program. Most noted their appreciation of the relationships that they had formed with the students and the overall feeling that they were making a difference in the lives of the children. They consistently expressed the opinion that TAC worked to the benefit of students and helped to increase their exposure to new opportunities, prepare them for admittance to a “top” high school, encourage the development of self-confidence, give them frequent opportunities to find and exercise their voice within the program environment and beyond. As with the students, some individuals among the staff and tutor populations took issue with Katrina and Renee's strict, structured operation of the Ward 4 program, and any expectation that they too may be expected to act in the role of disciplinarian. Despite this criticism, however, they recognized that both Renee and Katrina cared for the students and had proven adept at managing the program to their benefit.

As I discussed earlier, individual accounts also revealed the frequent intersection between participation in TAC and individual values and beliefs. The experiences of students, staff, and tutors revealed that some individuals came to the program with ideas and perceptions that impacted their operation within the program. Though none of the participants openly admitted to any deficit perspectives, subjects did convey beliefs that students must act as representatives of their race, adoption of “just the basics” ideologies, an awareness of racial systems of oppression and assumptions about gender. Each of

these beliefs influenced the way that these individuals approached their relationships with their students and colored the programmatic landscape at the Ward 4 center.

Participant narratives also revealed evidence that participation in TAC had significant impact on student, tutor, and staff's preexisting ideas and perceptions. Several students reported that the pervasive culture of high expectations and the positive relationships they developed while in TAC helped to increase their self-confidence, change and/or cultivate students' perceptions and value of education and achievement, and/or improve student behavior. Tutors and staff also reported gaining new perspectives on race, culture, and difference, as a result of the culturally responsive TAC environment, training opportunities offered by TAC, and their personal interactions with students.

TAC participants described a number of benefits to being a part of program and generally had positive experiences within the program environment. Their experiences may have been impacted by the program's adherence to components deemed essential to the provision of quality services within afterschool program environments. Participant descriptions of the aspects of the program they deemed important to their positive experiences within the program aligned consistently with the quality components discussed earlier, including the value of 1) adequate facilities and resources, 2) a positive environment where students feel emotionally and physically safe, supported and accepted, 3) the integration of academic and enrichment activities, and 4) the delivery of socially and culturally responsive programming.

As participants revealed their stories, six consistent themes emerged that spoke to their experiences within the TAC program. As I explained earlier, these six themes included:

1. Culturally Responsive Programming
2. A Culture of High Expectations
3. The Tough Love Approach
4. The Culture of Power
5. The Value of Student Voices
6. Importance of Relationships

Each of these themes, or conceptual frameworks, reappeared throughout each level of participant accounts, and seemed to integrate themselves into the experiences of students, tutors, and staff within the program.

Culturally Responsive Programming

Within the TAC environment, program staff placed significant emphasis on the importance of culturally relevant programming and instruction. Curriculum during Tutoring Time discussed subjects like the Civil Rights Movement, dealing with gangs, and economic inequity between low-income and high-income neighborhoods; Enrichment Activities included options for stepping, hip hop dance classes; and smaller components like the T-Time “Shout Outs” took their cues from the students’ culture and social lives. As I have shown with student, staff, and tutor accounts, such culturally responsive programming has the potential to strengthen students’ connections within academic environments, improve behavior, and enhance the overall learning so that students are more invested in the learning process (Bazron et al., 2005; Kalyanpur, 2003).

Cultural responsiveness also proved particularly important in the interactions between the adults and students within the TAC program environment. Students consistently reported enjoying their relationships with tutors who accepted, understood,

and “related to” them. These descriptions are indicative of supportive, culturally responsive interactions with the tutors at TAC that, according to students, occurred regardless of the race of the tutors. Though few of the students had more than one (if that) tutor of color, those they had, according to the students, did an exceptional job of connecting to the students, valuing their cultural capital, and being open to learning new and better ways of communicating and interacting with the students. The tutors’ culturally responsive approach may have been in part to training opportunities offered by TAC that emphasized the importance of integrating and accepting students’ cultural capital within the program environment.

By stressing this key point both through trainings, the pre-established curriculum, and by their own example, the TAC staff helped to convey the message that the knowledge, ideals and mores of the students were valued as much as, or even more than that of the mainstream culture. Instead of trying to supplant students’ knowledge and culture with that of the mainstream, they taught students to “code switch” and become adept at alternating between mainstream and their own cultural codes when necessary (Irvine, 1990, 2003; Koch, 2000; Hughes et al., 2006). By helping students to better navigate the mainstream cultural of the traditional classroom, TAC prepares them to be increasingly successful within the academic environment.

A Culture of High Expectations

One of the most exceptional aspects of the TAC program was the transparent manner in which they incorporated a culture of high expectations into almost every aspect of the program. Every evening, as the students, tutors and staff recited the Culture Constitution (see page 95), they acknowledged and renewed their commitment to the

high behavioral and academic expectations held for both children and adults. The Constitution effectively held students, tutors, and staff accountable to each other. The culture of high expectations was also evidenced in the daily interactions between Katrina and the students during T-Time, as she encouraged them to think beyond obvious answers and employ their higher order and critical thinking skills to find more complex answers to questions.

TAC's culture of high expectations was evidenced by the narratives of respondents at each level of participation. Tutors and staff spoke often of their belief that all students were capable of academic achievement and of the environment of high expectations that Katrina and Renee fostered within the program. Students also commented regularly that Katrina, Renee, and the other adults at the center expected them to do well and perform to the best of their ability behaviorally and academically. While some of the 8th grade students at times felt burdened by Katrina's high expectations of them, they admitted that they benefited from her encouragement and belief in their ability to be successful.

Research on fostering resilience in children indicates that educational organizations that establish high expectations for all students, and provide the encouragement and assistance needed to achieve those expectations, are likely to improve academic performance, promote positive behaviors, and foster a positive and supportive learning environment where students believe in their ability to succeed (Bernard, 1995, Lee et al., 1999, Learning First Alliance, 2001). These results are evident in students' accounts of improvements in grades and attitudes about education and the development of positive self-conceptions and increased self-confidence.

A Tough Love Approach

For Katrina, Renee, and the tutor, Terri, high expectations were often exhibited through a tough love approach to interacting with students. Each of these African-American women were what Irvine and Fraser (1998) term warm demanders, culturally responsive educators who foster a no-nonsense, structured and disciplined programmatic environment for students. These educators take a personal interest in the success of their students and strongly believe that Students of Color can and must learn (Ware, 2006; Irvine and Fraser, 1998). In the cases of Katrina, Renee, and Terri, each felt an intense commitment to and responsibility for their students and utilized their tough love approach to motivate students to be successful.

While their approach was appreciated and/or accepted and understood by some of the students, others took offense to their strict style of interaction. Nearly half of the student respondents felt that the women's tough love was a negative attribute of the program and desired a less stringent mode of interaction. As I have mentioned earlier, Garot and Joniak (2004) have noted the possibility of negative responses to tough love and find that the no-nonsense approach can often exacerbate already tenuous relationships.

Despite their issues with their occasionally conflictual relationships with Katrina and Renee, however, each of the students who took issue with their tough love approach acknowledged the women's care and concern for them, and their desire that the students succeed academically and personally. Some even acknowledged that they were better off because of their relationships with the women.

The students were not the only ones to make note of Katrina and Renee's tough love approach. Several tutor and staff respondents also commented on the women's strict interaction style and strong emphasis on giving and receiving respect within the TAC environment. While some recognized some benefit to Katrina and Renee's approach, others expressed discomfort with their stern natures and with any expectation that they too must take on the role of strict disciplinarian.

The Culture of Power

As mentioned above, several white (and one Asian) tutors and staff participants expressed uneasiness with the expectation that they explicitly exercise authority over the students in their care. While some tutors and staff like Casey, Kristen, Sue, and Kyle directly admitted to this discomfort, others, like Greg and Jeff, exhibited this distress by the lack of effort to correct students who were disrupting tutoring sessions. As testimonies in previous chapters have shown, many believed it was not their place to discipline other people's children or felt it went against their nature to be stern with the students.

As discussed earlier, their stances are evidence of Delpit's (1995) theory regarding the culture of power, where liberal individuals who are a part of the culture of power perpetuated in traditional educational settings often feel uncomfortable acknowledging their position of power and tend to shy from occasions that call for them to exert their authority over students they believe to hold less power. As tutor and staff respondents indicated, they prefer, instead to establish friendly, peer-like relationships with the students and to gently correct direct students instead of sternly admonishing them or giving them firm directives.

Delpit (1995) posits that when educators working with Students of Color fail to overtly express their authority, acting as a peer instead of an authority figure; students tend to react accordingly. Students may consequently respond to that adult as a peer instead of a teacher and feel less impetus to obey any vague directives or indirect commands.

At TAC, staff and tutor discomfort exhibiting power through strict discipline had varying impacts on students and their experiences. Sue, for instance, was able to overcome her discomfort to some degree to ensure some level of control and focus during her sessions with the students. The students respected her and all reported enjoying her lessons. Others, like Kyle and Greg were able to develop positive relationships with their students, but often were challenged to maintain control over their student groups. Students had only positive comments about Kyle and Greg, but I observed them struggling to maintain a role of authority within their sessions. The students saw them more as peers than adults in positions of authority.

Casey and Kristen experienced mixed results among the students. While the younger students appeared to enjoy their interactions with the two women and respect them as adults, the older students seemed to pick up on their unease and had negative responses to their efforts to exert authority. Many of the older students reported they did not like either woman because they felt they did not “know them well enough” to strictly discipline them. Though the impact of staff and tutor discomfort with firmly disciplining students had mixed results with students, in most cases students did exhibit a tendency to relate to these individuals more as “buddies” and less as authority figures whose direction they were to strictly follow.

Delpit (1995) also notes that a more passive approach to instruction can do Students of Color a disservice, particularly when educators fail to acknowledge the need for students to learn and understand the linguistic and behavior codes of the culture of power. Educators who insist that students are well versed in mainstream cultural codes, however, provide students with valuable tools that will aid them in successfully operating within the traditional school environment (Delpit, 1995).

TAC worked to give students access to the culture of power that operates within schools and other social institutions. As I mentioned above, through their efforts to provide students with a culturally responsive learning environment that encouraged them to become comfortable with mainstream values and mores, they effectively gave students the skills to bridge the cultural gaps between their home or social lives and school. Helping the students navigate comfortably within the culture of power facilitated the leveling of the academic playing field and increased opportunities for them to find success within the school environment.

The Importance of Relationships

One of the more pervasive themes that emerged during this study was the value that respondents at all levels of participation placed upon the relationships they formed while in TAC. This strong emphasis on the importance of these relationships aligns with the literature on the development of positive relationships within educational environments. The students, for instance, consistently commented on their appreciation of their relationships with tutors and/or staff and the role that these relationships played in their enjoyment of the program, their academic progress, and their personal and social development. Research on nurturing resilience in children and establishing positive

learning environments supports this finding and indicates that these supportive relationships with adults within education settings have the potential to foster in students higher levels of social engagement, positive attitudes toward learning, increased responsibility, and the belief in their individual ability to be successful (Protheroe, 2007; Ryan and Patrick, 2001; Wang et al., 1997).

Teachers and staff also consistently acknowledged both their enjoyment of the relationships they formed with the students and the important role that these relationships played in the students' academic and personal development. Several of the tutors expressed a desire to extend their relationships with students beyond the instructional tutoring interactions to become more of a mentor, or surrogate sibling in the case of the CU students. A few even mentioned a desire to continue this mentoring relationship beyond the scope of the TAC program, conceivably taking students to museums and cultural events to expand upon what they learned within the tutoring environment.

A number of the tutors recognized that these relationships fostered a supportive, culturally responsive learning environment for the students and helped to ensure that students were emotionally and mentally ready to learn. Several commented that this process often entailed inquiring about the students' personal lives and paying attention to any cues that indicated the student was having a challenging day. Dealing with any issues the student may have been facing before the session started helped to better prepare the student for instruction and cultivated in the student a sense of connectedness and a stronger commitment to the learning process.

The Value of Student Voices

The value of student voices and the narratives of their lived experiences has been an integral component of this study. Dixon (2005) stresses the importance of the voices and experiential knowledge of people of color, and defines the essence of “voice” as “the assertion and acknowledgement of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of colour as sources of knowledge” (10). She and other CRT scholars value the use of personal narratives, stories and experiences as valid sources of evidence (Dixon, 2005; Yosso, 2002; Solorzano, 1997). The voices and lived experiences of students, tutors, and staff have proved integral to understanding the operation of an SES Provider in DC and the implementation of SES policy in the DCPS system. As such, I have constructed this inquiry around the narratives of the students, tutors, and staff that actually experience the true impact of both afterschool program and SES policies and procedures.

TAC also seemed to place significant value upon the inclusion of student voices and respecting the knowledge and experiences that students contributed to the program. Staff provided daily opportunities for students to express their voices and become comfortable with speaking out about issues that were important to them. When situations arose that the students felt were unjust or unfair, the staff encouraged them to not only voice their opposition, but to develop viable solutions to the problem at hand. As I mentioned earlier, in one such instance, the students were able to bring about district-wide change in the Snack Time menu for all of the TAC sites. Students also had a say in establishing the rules and expectations for the center and helped the staff to document these guidelines in the Culture Constitution, which was recited each evening by students,

tutors and staff. The document held both students and adults accountable to each other, and students were encouraged to speak up when they felt a tutor or staff person was not meeting these pre-established expectations.

By teaching students to find and become comfortable using their voice, TAC worked to empower students to deal with the injustice they faced outside of the program walls. Students were afforded opportunities to speak about important social issues to politicians and policymakers during the program's annual oratorical contest. Last year the students spoke on gentrification in DC neighborhoods, and this year would be addressing the takeover of DCPS by District mayor, Adrian Fenty. Providing students these valuable opportunities to exercise their voice and build their confidence was an important step in helping them to see that the social, educational, and personal problems that they faced were not immutable and that they had the power to influence these and other issues that impacted their lives.

Gains and Losses

While it is clear that participation in the TAC program proved to be beneficial to students in numerous ways, it is important to acknowledge here the sacrifices that many of the students had to make to take advantage of the academic, social, and personal gains they experienced within the program. Participation in the TAC program represented a minimum 12 hour commitment each week in addition to the students' regular school hours, which equated to at least 4 additional hours devoted to academic pursuits 3 days per week. On the days the students participated in TAC, they essentially spent 12 hours, from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. within structured educational environments.

Although many may laud the benefits this extended learning time may provide for these urban students, we must recognize the losses the students incurred as well (Pittman et al., 2004; Yohalem et al., 2004). Research on children's free play emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for unscheduled, unstructured free time (Broughton, 2006; Drew, 2007). Such opportunities provide for students the opportunity to develop valuable creative and decision-making skills, and too little unstructured time, some studies show; can lead to increased stress levels (Schroeder, 2007; Drew, 2007).

As one student described, on the nights he left TAC, he had to go home and go straight to bed with no time for unstructured free play time. Other students made the choice to sacrifice participation in other activities and programs so they could be fully committed to TAC. While several 7th and 8th graders did participate in athletic activities (cheerleading, basketball, soccer), they often arrived at TAC late, missing out on homework assistance during Study Hall and participation in Enrichment Time. Many of them were also tired and sluggish after practice and struggled to remain fully alert during the learning process. While students obviously benefit from the extended learning time and programmatic structure afforded by TAC, it is important to weigh these gains against the losses they may experience when determining the true value of such extended learning programs.

The implementation of NCLB's SES provision calls for extended learning opportunities for children in schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress in the hope that extra academic help will help boost test scores. As we continue to investigate this option, it may be important to stress the value of balance in the lives of students and

the provision of opportunities for them to take a break from academic rigor and experience free play time.

Through a Critical Race Lens

When I selected the TAC program as my study site, I was admittedly impressed with the professed programmatic goals, structure, and emphasis on social justice. I was interested, however, to determine whether the site staff adequately implemented the organizational mission professed at the administrative level in the daily operation of the program. Because this study was informed by Critical Race Theory, I was open to the possibility that the espoused goals of the TAC program may not align with operation at the site level. Despite these doubts, however, my interviews of the program's participants, paired with observations of program operation and adult-student interactions and review of program documents, revealed that though challenges existed, the TAC program was relatively successful in meeting its organizational goals and offering a program that worked to the benefit of its participants on a number of levels.

In addition to meeting programmatic and organizational goals, through a commitment promoting social justice; increased opportunities for historically underserved students; and strong emphasis on fostering a culturally responsive environment of high expectations and positive reinforcement, the TAC program and its staff worked to deny the racist logic commonly espoused in mainstream educational circles. In fact, observations and interviews revealed that TAC adhered to four of the six tenets of Critical Race Theory detailed in Chapter 2.

As I have previously explained, the TAC program espoused a strong commitment to social justice and based their programming and curriculum upon four social justice

themes: Freedom, Solidarity, Justice, and Voice. These themes were most evident in the tutoring curriculum delivered during Tutoring Time, but also could be found in the staff's choice of Enrichment Activities, Monthly themes, and in the Words, Quotes, and Math Problems of the Week. Though the incorporation of the first three of the four themes could be more transparent in the day to day operation of the program, as I have mentioned several times, a strong emphasis on valuing students' voices and lived experiences was quite apparent in numerous aspects of the program.

In their efforts to provide culturally responsive programming and instruction to students, program staff also refuted commonly held beliefs that white values and mores should be the norm within the educational environment. Staff chose instead to incorporate the norms of their ethnically diverse student population into the everyday operation of the program and created an environment where students felt accepted, supported, and understood.

TAC staff also challenged meritocratic notions by acknowledging the numerous social and economic obstacles its students must overcome on the road to academic and personal success. Several staff respondents noted the daunting challenges that racially and ethnically diverse students faced and recognized that students would often have to work harder and longer to gain entrée to the privileges that came more easily to white students with access to mainstream cultural power. The staff sought to facilitate this process by helping students become well-versed in mainstream cultural capital while still valuing the values and mores of students' own culture.

TAC is a useful example of the positive impact that the refutation of racist ideologies can have on the academic and personal development of historically

underserved students within an afterschool environment. The exploration of this program and the experiences of its participants reveal a number of implications that may prove useful in informing future discussions of afterschool policy and practice and may aid program leaders in developing and providing services that help to truly level the academic playing field for marginalized students.

Implications for Afterschool Program Policy and Practice

Providing quality afterschool programming to underserved students is an increasingly important priority for parents, community leaders, advocates, and policymakers (Gayl, 2004; Bridglall, 2005). As program leaders and policymakers continue to examine policy and practice that have proven effective in promoting students' academic, social, and personal growth and development, student voices and experiences must become an integral component of discussions and decision-making processes. This examination into the experiences of program participants within a program provider in the District of Columbia has revealed several factors that proved integral to the growth and development of student participants. Their experiences within and opinions about the strengths of the TAC program can help to inform discussions about afterschool policy and practice and the factors that contribute to positive experiences for children and youth within these programs.

Establishing Strong Leadership

Katrina's leadership played a significant role in the successful operation of the Ward 4 center. Ward 4 served as a model of sorts for the other program sites, and often served as a test site for new programming because of TAC administration's confidence in Katrina's leadership abilities. It was Katrina who took the overarching program goals of

TAC and used them to develop a program environment that fostered a sense of community, valued student voices and cultural capital, established high expectations for students, and encouraged the continued personal and professional development of tutors and staff.

When establishing quality programs, it is important to ensure that program leaders are truly capable of understanding the needs of the students they serve and of establishing and carrying out program goals that meet those needs. Careful hiring processes are necessary to screen for individuals that have the education, experience, and innate skill to establish and/or sustain a program that truly works to the benefit of all participants.

Encouraging a Sense of Community

Participant experiences within the TAC program demonstrate the important role that relationships play in the positive growth and development of students within afterschool programs. As demonstrated by the TAC example, these positive interactions with both adults and peers foster a sense of connectedness and belonging, and help to engage students in the learning process. The sense of community fostered by these relationships, establishes an environment that students find welcoming and conducive to gaining new academic and social skills.

As afterschool leaders seek to develop programs that engage students and facilitate increases in academic performance and personal development, it is important that they seek to foster a sense of community that facilitates the formation of positive peer and student/adult relationships. Leaders can begin to establish this communal culture by encouraging the rejection of any deficit and/or racist ideologies; actively promoting the expectation among staff and volunteers that all students are capable of high

achievement; encouraging an environment of mutual respect and consideration; providing frequent opportunities for students and adults to interact both academically and personally; and creating cooperative teambuilding activities like TAC's T-Time Challenge.

Including Student Voices

An important component to establishing a communal culture where students feel connected and engaged is the frequent inclusion of student voices within the programmatic structure and operation. As we learned from participant accounts of their experiences in TAC, encouraging students to voice their ideas and opinions aids in building their self-esteem and increasing their confidence in situations that call for them to speak up in support or opposition to various situations. When developing program activities and curriculum, it may be useful for afterschool leaders to offer regular opportunities for students to lend their voices to program operation and to include their thoughts and opinions in decisions that may impact their experiences within the program.

Providing Culturally Responsive Programming

As I have mentioned earlier, a number of studies indicate the importance of providing culturally responsive programming and instruction to culturally diverse student populations (Fusco, 2001; Beck, 1999; Halpern, 2000; Gordon, 2005; Piha and Miller, 2003). Data from this study reinforced these findings and demonstrated the value of providing activities and lessons that relate to students' lives outside of the classroom. Afterschool leaders should seek to provide a curriculum that incorporates students' culture and interests. Within such culturally familiar learning environments, students can more effectively interpret the setting and have increasing opportunities to be

academically, socially, and personally successful without the loss of their cultural identity (Fusco, 2001; Beck, 1999).

Remembering the Importance of Unstructured Time

As I discussed earlier in the section on Gains and Losses, though students benefited greatly from their participation in program, they often were challenged by the 12 hours they spent involved in academic pursuits on the evenings they attended TAC. While TAC offered students opportunities to participate in a variety of Enrichment Time activities each evening, these options lasted for only an hour and technically still represented “structured” programming.

It may prove beneficial to students during such extended learning periods to provide intermittent opportunities for free play or unstructured time, where they can socialize with friends and receive some relief from the academic rigor of the day. These breaks may help to reduce student stress levels and increase opportunities for independent thought and creativity (Schroeder, 2007; Drew, 2007).

Providing Regular Training Opportunities

This study also revealed that students were not the only ones who benefited from their involvement in TAC program. As I explained earlier, members of the program and tutoring staff reported experiencing a change in their understanding and appreciation of cultural difference. While this was due in part to their interactions with TAC students, they also attributed part of this growth to their involvement in a TAC training opportunity that explained the value in including and valuing students’ cultural capital within the learning environment. As program leaders seek to foster culturally responsive programming for students, it may be helpful to provide regular training opportunities to

educate program staff and volunteers about how do best interact with and teach racially and ethnically diverse student populations.

These recommendations for afterschool policy and practice are less a presentation of new and innovative ideas than they are a confirmation of what much of the literature has found to be effective in afterschool programming. TAC participant experiences indicate that these factors do in fact contribute to positive experiences within the afterschool environment. While these recommendations in no way represent the totality of beneficial afterschool program components, the experiences of TAC participants show that the inclusion of these elements promotes academic and personal development among diverse student populations.

ASPs have historically shown the potential to positively impact urban students in a number of ways (Halpern, 1999). As the needs of urban students evolve along with ever-changing urban populations, we must continuously reexamine the policies and practices that prove effective in promoting the positive development of historically underserved students. NCLB's SES provision brings an increased urgency to the need for closer examination of afterschool programs and the manner in which SES may impact the afterschool policy landscape.

TAC as an SES Provider

SES providers exist in a wide variety of forms, ranging from for-profit national organizations like Achieve 3000 and Sylvan, to smaller community-based nonprofit organizations like TAC or Lauren's House. Providers also vary widely in their target clientele, method and frequency of service delivery, and academic focus. Some programs offer only academic tutoring in particular subjects, while others offer comprehensive

enrichment programming in addition to academic assistance and instruction in several subject areas.

As described in previous sections, the TAC program provides both research-based academic instruction and enrichment activity components to student participants 12 hours per week. TAC also offers full-time programming during the summer. TAC's curriculum includes lessons in Literature, Math, and Technology, and its enrichment programming spans a wide range of activities. TAC is unique in that it appears to be a good fit for the academic requirements of SES while still offering to students valuable enrichment components that speak to their developmental needs. Despite this theoretical programmatic compatibility, however, TAC's actual experience with SES policy implementation in DCPS indicated that the current SES practices and procedures may not be conducive to the participation of smaller community based organizations that offer students more comprehensive programming.

DCPS, SES and Community-Based Provider Programs

I began this study during the 2005-2006 school year in DCPS. During that year, the state approved 37 SES providers to deliver services to students attending qualifying schools. Of those 37 providers, only 15 remain in the 2006-2007 school year, with 4 new additions. Interestingly, the majority of the returning providers were either larger national organizations, or smaller ones like TAC and Lauren's House that were reconsidering the viability of their participation. This mass exodus of service providers, along with my conversations with staff from TAC, Lauren's House, and two other providers, support the conjecture that comprehensive, community-based programs may not be well-served by current SES policy in DCPS.

As stated above, programs like TAC ideally are well-suited to the SES provision. TAC's research-based curriculum, proven results, and comprehensive programming are a good fit for the SES process in theory. The reality on the ground level, however, proves that organizations like TAC seemed to be poorly served by the SES process in DCPS. On a systemic level, current SES policy and procedure in DCPS make it difficult for programs like TAC to participate as SES providers. Policies like the new increased reporting requirement, instituted mid-year, establish SES as one more suitable to large, national programs that provide infrequent instruction one or two hours per week without addressing personal, social, or cultural issues that may prevent students from excelling academically. Subsequently, students may miss out on gaining the very skills that may enable them to adopt the cultural and social capital they need to be successful in various academic settings. From this perspective, SES policy in DCPS could work to perpetuate rather than assuage persistent inequities within the system.

Data also indicates that SES policy in its current form works to prevent smaller, community-based programs like TAC from accessing federal funds from SES/NCLB moneys. In fact, Allison reported that when they withdrew as an SES Provider, the SEA threatened to bar them from receiving federal funds from other unrelated programs like 21stCCLC.

By rethinking the current structure of the SES policy provision in DCPS and finding ways to better accommodate programs that have proven to benefit traditionally underserved students, DCPS, through its SES programming, could offer students more opportunities to participate in programs that encourage the increased academic

achievement, confidence, and voice needed to overcome system obstacles and find academic, social, and personal success.

It is important for educators and policymakers to consider the voices and experiences of program participants with the SES process in their discussions of SES policy. Rarely is policy development colored by the lived experiences of the people most impacted by them. It is important, then, that we begin to bring forward the voices of the individuals typically ignored and historically oppressed by during important policy discussions. By including the stories of program participants in the decision-making process, we may begin to see policies that increasingly speak to the needs of the individuals they were designed to serve.

The reauthorization of NCLB provides an excellent opportunity for policymakers to address some of the challenges that all participants, including students, parents, program providers, LEAs, SEAs, in DC and other districts and states, currently face in the implementation of the SES process. It is these individuals who can best inform SES policy discussions to ensure that decisions made ensure students receive services that promote both academic and personal growth and development.

Implications for SES Policy

The TAC's staff's account of their experience with the SES in DCPS revealed three primary issues with the current policy implementation process. From those issues, one can derive three key policy recommendations for the improvement of the SES process in DCPS that may very well speak to execution of NCLB's SES provision on a larger scale – improved timing and communication, clear and consistent expectations, and closer attention to program quality.

Improved Timing and Communication

One of the primary complaints expressed by Allison and Justin was the timing of the SES process in DCPS. During their first year as a provider, TAC was so mired in the SES process that they were unable to begin officially serving SES students until February. This year was shaping up to be more of the same. Providers and families did not receive accurate lists of schools that failed to meet AYP until October, and the district did not provide lists of eligible students until after the winter break. As a result, students in need of academic assistant missed out on an entire semester of services.

Reworking the timing of the SES process would vastly improve both the experiences of providers and the delivery of services to eligible students. By distributing the list of schools failing to meet AYP to parents and providers by early August instead of October, parents will be made aware of their students' eligibility earlier and have longer to research, select, and apply to a suitable provider. Providers will also be able to begin their recruitment process earlier so that they can begin providing services to students as soon as possible. Ensuring that the distribution of approved student lists occurs by the end of September will also help to speed up the entire process. Ultimately, this change in scheduling will allow more time for planning for parents and providers, and will facilitate the provision of services to students for a longer period of time during the school year.

The accuracy of information communicated to parents and providers also presented a significant issue for TAC staff during the SES process. During both years of TAC's participation as an SES provider, DCPS provided erroneous information in their initial parent letters and provider lists. Several providers were omitted from the list last

year, and this year the list had inaccurate contact information. This year, they also distributed an incorrect list of schools failing to meet AYP and had to ask all who received it to ignore the first document and wait for the next incarnation, which did not appear until late October. TAC also faced challenges as they received their approved student lists, as a large portion of the students allotted to their program did not fit the parameters of the student population they served. Though their application clearly stated they only served students in grades 4-8, TAC received lists containing students in K- 3 and 9-12. Unfortunately, by the time TAC reached those students to let them know of the error, they were well into the second term of the school year.

Organization and accuracy of information are essential to the effective implementation of the SES provision. As we have seen in the experiences of TAC, these frequent errors only serve to postpone the delivery of vital services to students in need of academic assistance. By placing more emphasis on the delivery of timely and accurate information to parents and providers, LEA's can facilitate the SES application process for all involved, thus increasing the likelihood that students will receive the services they need before the end of the first semester.

Clear, Consistent, and Reasonable Expectations

TAC's experience with SES in DCPS, and their subsequent decision to withdraw as a provider was due as much to what they deemed unrealistic and inconsistent District expectations as it was to poor timing and communication. For TAC's decision to discontinue participation with the SES program came with the institution of a new programmatic requirement mid-year, which mandated strenuous reporting requirements.

The belated timing of this new mandate to report on every eight hours of service was as much an issue for TAC as the requirement itself.

As DCPS and other LEA's move forward with the implementation of SES policy, it is important that they consider the best ways to attract and retain quality Service Providers as they establish and structure new policy. In order for organizations to best serve students, they too must be well-served by the SES process. Establishing clear, consistent and reasonable expectations of providers and explicitly sharing these expectations in the initial stages of the SES process is a good first step to establishing clear lines of communication. Any mid-year adjustments should be minimal and should not require significant programmatic modifications on the part of Providers unless an organization demonstrates it is not adequately serving students.

Reporting requirements are an integral part of the SES process, but these requirements should be established and shared before the beginning of the school year, so that providers can make sure they have adequate measures in place to collect all necessary data. Having a pre-established plan of policy implementation and clearly communicating this plan to Providers during the application/contractual process and before the beginning of each school year can help to reduce the occurrence of miscommunications and confusion between involved parties.

Attention to Program Quality

In my conversations with Allison, she expressed concern that DCPS seemed to be directing more time and energy on establishing new reporting requirements than focusing on program quality on the front end of the process. Her comments along with the reported lack of site visits and interviews during the application process and beyond, suggest the

need for more investigation into each potential provider in the initial phase of program approval. Further exploration into program structure and quality, along with site visits during both the application process and service delivery phases, may forego some of the challenges both district and providers face in the midst of the academic terms.

Opportunities for Future Research

This study has revealed a number of opportunities for future research around SES policy and implementation. First, it would be interesting to determine whether the components found to positively impact participants in the TAC program would have a similar effect on students in other programs. Determining the answer to this question would help to shed new light on afterschool program quality from participants' perspectives and could significantly contribute to discussions regarding policy and practice for afterschool programs.

The question of quality addressed in this inquiry also is important in understanding the impact NCLB's SES Provider programs have on participants. It is important to investigate the types of programs (curriculum, activities, program goals, program culture, etc.) that gain approval from the state, to discover whether these are in fact the programs that will prove beneficial to students.

This study also reveals the need for a more in depth exploration of the experiences of SES providers on a systemic level. A multi-site case study of urban SES Providers district-wide would reveal whether other programs are having experiences similar to those experienced by TAC, Lauren's House, and the other organizations mentioned in this case. By better understanding the experiences of Providers on a systemic level,

policymakers can begin to develop policy that attracts and retains quality Providers that truly effect positive change in the lives of urban students.

Conclusions

The implementation of the SES provision of NCLB is still in its relatively early stages, and states and school districts understandably have met with a number of challenges. Unfortunately, these challenges often filter down to SES providers and students and can work to prevent the goals of SES from being achieved on the ground level. By establishing implementation processes that can accommodate beneficial programs like TAC, policymakers can better ensure that students receive the wide range of supplemental educational services they need to be successful academically and personally. By facilitating the participation of programs like TAC that help to foster both personal development and academic achievement in urban students and bridge any social and cultural gaps between their home and school environment, policymakers can help to level the academic, social, and professional playing field for historically underserved students.

Glossary

Critical Race Theory - a discourse of race and racism that looks beyond the micro-level of individual racist incidents and encouraged a new macro-level vision of racism in America; a growing movement aimed at drawing connections between current inequalities and historical practices of overt racism and racial exclusion.

Cultural Capital - the knowledge of linguistic and behavioral codes that are valued and defined as legitimate culture by the “dominant” social/racial class. These codes are commonly aligned with white middle/upper class culture and are transmitted over generations through familial relationships.

Culturally Responsive Programming – programming that incorporates and is compatible with students’ diverse cultures.

Culture of Power – linguistic forms, communicative strategies...ways of talking, writing, dressing, and interacting, the acquisition of which largely determines ones success within social institutions (Delpit, 1995, 25).

Deficit Thinking - the process of assigning culpability to an individual or group for a particular issue or problem, while ignoring the social structures that perpetuate the oppression of “the victim” and create breeding grounds for social, economic and educational inequality

High Expectations – the opposite of deficit perspectives; a belief that students are fully capable of being successful both academically and personally; setting high standards of personal and academic performance for students.

Marginalized - systemically consigned to an inferior or powerless status within a society or group

Minoritized – economically and socially isolated and made to feel as an outsider because of racial, ethnic, social and/or economic qualities that differ from that of mainstream society.

Positive Reinforcement – the process of encouraging a particular behavior by presenting a reward for said behavior in the form of a positive action, object, or event such as praise

SES “Supplemental Educational Services” – A component of NCLB that provides funding for educational services outside of the regular school day for low-income students who attend schools that have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress for at least three years.

Social Capital – the relationships and social ties that provide access to a greater pool of resources and facilitate action

TAC – The Afterschool Community Program

Tough Love – strict disciplinary measures and expectations often used as a means of fostering responsibility and expressing care or concern

Appendices

Appendix A – Observation Protocol
Appendix B – Interview Protocol 1 – Student
Appendix C – Interview Protocol 2 – Student
Appendix D – Interview Protocol - Program Staff
Appendix E – Interview Protocol – Parent
Appendix F - Letter to Accompany Parent Consent Form
Appendix G - T-Time Challenge Sheet
Appendix H – Enrichment Activity Selection Form
Appendix I – Culture Constitution
Appendix J – T-Time Sheet 1
Appendix K – T-Time Sheet 2
Appendix L – T-Time Sheet 3
Appendix M – T-Time Sheet 4
Appendix N – T-Time Sheet 5
Appendix O – T-Time Sheet 6
Appendix P – T-Time Sheet 7
Appendix Q – T-Time Sheet 8
Appendix R – 8th Grade Tutorial Lesson
Appendix S – Ambassador Topic List
Appendix T – Political Cartoon from Terri’s Group

Appendix A

Observation Protocols

Date of Observation: _____

Time of Observation: _____

Location: _____

Observer Name: _____

Activity/Event: _____

Description of physical setting (physical environment/who is present):

Description of activity (what are the goals of the activity/ what does the activity entail?):

Description of interactions between staff/students and staff/parents and staff/staff and school rep:

Analysis of interactions, goals, and outcomes:

Description and analysis of documents and artifacts:

Appendix B
Interview Protocol 1– Student

Date of Interview:

Location: Paul Public Charter School- Library

Interviewer: Nichole

Time of Interview:

Subject Name:

Part I - Biographical

- 1) Tell me three words that describe you
- 2) Where do you live?
- 3) Tell me about your family
- 4) Do you have a computer at home?
- 5) Tell me about your neighborhood
- 6) Where do you go to school? Please describe.
- 7) Tell me about your teachers? Do you feel supported and understood?
- 8) Do you have a favorite subject?
- 9) Do you do well in school? How so? How were your grades?
- 10) Is there anything you would want to change about your school? Your teachers?

Part II - Programmatic

- 11) Have you ever been in a program like this before? If so, tell me about it.
- 12) Tell me about the Higher Achievement Program
- 13) Why did you want to participate?
- 14) Do you think there are any benefits to being in the Higher Achievement program?
- 15) What have you learned so far?
- 16) Describe the HAP “Culture”. What do you think of the Culture Constitution?

- 17) Tell me about Ms. Aishah and Ms. Andrea? What kind of expectations do they have?
- 18) Tell me about your tutors? Do you feel that they and the staff are supportive?
- 19) Describe the perfect tutor
- 20) Do you think that gender makes a difference? What about race?
- 21) Do you know what you want to do when you get older? Future goals/plans?

Appendix C
Interview Protocol 2 – Student

Date of Interview: _____ Time of Interview: _____
Location: _____ Subject Name: _____
Interviewer: _____

Part I - General

- 1) Has TASC affected the way you view your education? If so, How?
- 2) Has TASC changed the way you view your future? If so, How?
- 3) Does TASC prepare you at all to deal with injustice or unfairness that you experience in school and in the world? If so how?
- 4) Would your life be any different if you were not in TASC?
- 5) How is TASC helping you to prepare for life after Middle School?

Part II – Critical Components of ASP

- 6) Tell me about the facilities here at Paul
- 7) How involved are your parents in the program?
- 8) Tell me what you think about the lessons in your tutoring session

Part II – Individual

- 9) In our first interview, I got the impression that you have better relationships with the tutors and staff at TASC than you teachers at school.
Is that true? Can you explain how or why?
- 10) Give me a specific example when you felt understood by the 1) TASC staff, 2) a tutor
- 11) How do Ms. Katrina and Ms. Renee compare to your teachers at school?

Appendix D
Interview Protocol
Center Staff

Date of Interview: _____
Time of Interview: _____
Location: _____
Subject Name: _____
Interviewer: _____

Biographical Questions

- 1) What is your professional background?
- 2) How would you describe your role in the program?

Programmatic Questions

- 3) How would you describe the overall goal of the program?
- 4) Can you describe for me the services that you offer during the school day?
- 5) How do you establish individual goals for the children? How are those goals measured?
- 6) How do you group scholars? By age? Skill level? Grade?
- 7) How are students recruited and assigned to individual centers each year?
- 8) You speak a lot of the culture of the organization and of your center – Are they one in the same? How would you describe that culture? How do you convey it to the scholars? What role does it play in their experience in your program?
- 9) How is the Ward 4 culture different from other Wards?
- 10) Tell me about the studios... What are some that you have had in the past that the scholars have really enjoyed? Were there any that they didn't respond to?
- 11) Higher Achievement espouses an underlying theme of social justice within its programming. How is that conveyed to the students? What do you think they take away from that? How can they apply it to their everyday lives?

Scholar Questions

- 12) Tell me about the scholar application and interview process

- 13) What are the demographics of your students?
- 14) What are some of the challenges that you face working with this population?
- 15) What do you enjoy most about working with this population?
- 16) What do you mean when you refer to the students as “intellectually curious”?
- 17) Do you find that most of the children are open and willing to learn?
- 18) What do you find your students are struggling with the most, if anything?
- 19) What do you think is leading these children to seek Supplemental Educational Services?
- 20) Do the students have any difficulties in school? Do you ever talk to the children about why they are having difficulty in school?
- 21) How important are external factors in their ability to succeed academically?
- 22) What kind of relationship do you have with the students’ home school/teachers?
- 23) What kind of relationship do you have with the students’ parents?
- 24) Do the parents actively participate?
- 25) What role do you feel that parents play in a child’s success?
- 26) How do you empower students to believe in their ability to succeed?
- 27) What percentage of students stay for the entire evening? How many leave after homework help? Come just for tutoring?

Tutor Questions

- 28) What are the goals of the Tutor Orientation?
- 29) How are tutors recruited?
- 30) Do you have a selection process? Criteria?
- 31) What is the tutor interview like?
- 32) How many tutors do you have?

- 33) How many applied and how many were accepted?
- 34) How many more do you need?
- 35) How is your tutor retention? (percentage)
- 36) Are there any challenges that you face with tutors? Please explain
- 37) What do you think about the fact that there are no African American tutors?
- 38) Do you think that affects the experiences of the scholars at all? If so, how?

SES Questions

- 39) How has your job been affected by becoming an SES provider?
- 40) How have the children been affected?
- 41) Are there any benefits to being an SES provider? For the program or the children?

Appendix E
Interview Protocol
Tutors

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Location:

Subject Name:

Interviewer:

- 1) What is your professional background? Have you worked with children before? What age group?
- 2) What made you decide to volunteer with Higher Achievement?
- 3) How would you describe the overall goals of the program?
- 4) Tell me about the Higher Achievement “culture”. What is the Culture Constitution?
- 5) What is your role within the program?
- 6) What do you think you contribute to the program? To the lives of the children?
- 7) Tell about the training opportunities with Higher Achievement.
- 8) Tell me about the Higher Achievement staff.
- 9) Tell me about your scholars.
- 10) What are some of the challenges that you face working with your scholars?
- 11) What do you enjoy most about working with your scholars?
- 12) Do you find that most of the children are open and willing to learn?
- 13) What do you find your students are struggling with the most?
- 14) What do you think is leading these children to seek Supplemental Educational Services?
- 15) Are your scholars having trouble in school? Do you ever talk to the children about why they are having difficulty in school?

- 16) How important are external factors in students' ability to succeed academically?
- 17) What role do you feel that parents play in a child's success?
- 18) How do you think you can empower your students to want to succeed academically and personally?
- 19) What do you feel you have in common with your scholars?

Appendix F
Consent Form Letter

8649 Cipriano Springs Court
Lanham, MD 20706
[REDACTED]

November 3, 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Nichole Stewart, and I am a graduate student at the University of Maryland at College Park. I am conducting a research project on the experiences of program participants within a Supplemental Educational Services program in the District of Columbia. I believe that it is very important to understand the experiences, opinions, and feelings of the individuals participating in SES programs, and would very much like to include the input of both you and your student in this research as participants in the Higher Achievement Program.

Attached you will find 1) a Parental Permission Form for your student's participation in the study (Marked A), 2) an Assent Form for your student to sign to participate (Marked B), and 3) a Consent Form for your participation in the study (Marked C). These forms will provide you with more detailed information about what would be asked of you and your student if you choose to take part in this study. All student interviews will take place at Paul Public Charter School during the hours of the Higher Achievement Program unless other arrangements are made with you beforehand.

Please review these documents carefully and return them signed (and initialed at the top of the page) in the enclosed envelope by Thursday, November 9, 2006. Also, please complete the contact information form so that I may get in touch with you to set up a meeting either by phone or in person. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your time and consideration, and I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Nichole Stewart
Doctoral Candidate
University of Maryland at College Park
Department of Education Policy and Leadership

Appendix G T-Time Challenge Sheet

T-Time

Ward 4 [REDACTED] Challenge

Every Thursday, scholars will have the opportunity to show their solidarity as they work as a team during the [REDACTED] Challenge. The [REDACTED] Challenge is designed to meet several objectives:

First, scholars and mentors will have the opportunity to think and discuss further the quote and word of the week. This is a time when everyone can really delve into the meaning, importance and origin of the quote and truly understand the word (part of speech, meaning, use and root origin).

Second, scholars and mentors will have the opportunity to work through the math problems of the week getting feedback and assistance from their peers.

Lastly, **TEAMWORK, UNITY, and HEALTHY COMPETITION!!** Working together is key in achieving any goal and a great opportunity to bond as a Center.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT:

1. Groups will consist of one or two mentors and four or five scholars varying in grades.
2. Questions pertaining to the word, quote and math problems will be asked by the moderator (Ms. Aishah or Ms. Andrea). The point value of the question will be announced before the question is read.
3. Some questions may be specifically designated for only a certain grade to answer.
4. Points range from 10 to 50 and a star will be placed on the team's score sheet after each appropriate response representing points earned.
5. Scholars and mentors must raise their hands to answer a question and only quiet patient hands will be acknowledged.
6. By the end of the evening, points will be tallied and a winning team will be announced.
7. **The winning team will then receive their special prize during Gathering Time!**

****POINTS BONUS-** Teams showing outstanding teamwork and sportsmanship will be able to receive special culture points worth 25 points each!

Appendix H

Ward 4 Elective Activity Selection Form

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>
Step Class Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step Fundamentals - History of Step - Historically black colleges (as well as insight on some scholarships) Create: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A three part or more step routine to perform in May! 	Concerned Black Men Life Lessons	An Actor Prepares... Musicians have musical instruments, painters have brushes and canvases, and actors have themselves! Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic Acting skills by using the entire body as an instrument - Proper relaxation, breathing, and vocal techniques Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in theatre games and ensemble-building exercises - Explore how to access truth and emotion onstage by relying on your own experiences and applying them to both original and well-known texts.
Plan, Build, Design Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the basic elements of architecture and design - What goes into making a building, how to use the tools that architects and designers use everyday, hat happens during construction, and how to design a space inside and out Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at the work of real-life architects, designers, and artists and discover how they do what they do Produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose one of these projects: design furniture, learn how to draw and sketch like an architect/designer, build models, and design a building from the ground up. 	Creative Writing For good writers, bad writers, those who like writing, and those who don't like to write at all! Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be a better and more interesting writers by reading things from great writers and also terrible ones. - To use your own unique voice and create a style that is all your own. Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading, writing short writing exercises, discussion Produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several short pieces to be proud of - A new love for writing! 	Mixed Media Art Learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fundamentals of art - Basic design principals and craftsmanship through drawing, textile, squelcher, painting, and photography Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects that are based on scholarships, practical life art and recycle art (rescaled work). Produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discipline, patience, entice your imagination and will give you scholarship opportunities along with learning a craft to add to your everyday life portfolio
	Renee 7th Grade Leadership Plan and prepare for your 8 th grade year. For example, we will work together to redefine your leadership role at Center	Katrina 8th Grade Leadership Wrap up your 8 th grade year on a high note! Learn how to leave your legacy as the class o 2007.

Appendix I

Introducing the Ward 4 Culture Constitution!

We Are...

1. Independent thinkers who think beyond the obvious answers. (We provide our students with questions that push them further.)
2. Proud and confident in our abilities. (We lift students' chins & encourage participation.)
3. Respectful to tutors, staff, and students.~ (We respect students and their opinions.)
4. Pro-active leaders. (We empower students to assume leadership roles within the Center.)
5. Goal-setters who think about our future and work hard to make our dreams come true. (We encourage students to think about their futures & develop plans for getting there.)
6. Always prepared to learn and to do our best. (We come prepared with the necessary teaching & learning materials.)

...We are the Ward 4 TASC Center!!

During Wrap Up, everyone has the opportunity to give students "Culture Shout Outs." In order to receive a Culture Shout-Out, the students must show throughout the entire night that they are great role models of TASC Culture. A scholar can receive 1 Shout-Out for each theme per night. After the Shout-Out and a specific example of the student's actions are given, the students will receive a sticker to put on the Culture Board. Every two weeks, we will tally everyone's stickers and the top culture role models from each grade will be announced and rewarded! Remember: we only award consistent positive behavior.

We are independent thinkers who think beyond the obvious answer.

- We think of additional points rather than repeat what others say.
- We expand on our answers by giving details and examples.
- We are open-minded to the opinions of others.
- We are critical thinkers who look for strengths and weaknesses in our arguments.
- We look past what is written on the Community Meeting sheet and analyze the information.

We are proud and confident in our abilities.

- We stand up straight and tall when speaking.
- We speak loudly, clearly, and with our heads held high.
- We trust that we can succeed.
- We set high expectations for ourselves.
- We share our pride and confidence with others by giving shout-outs.
- We actively and positively participate during T-Time Meeting and Wrap Up.

We are respectful to scholars, mentors, and staff.

- We silently listen to others and wait until called on by staff.
- We wait until others are finished speaking before we speak.
- We say "Hello", "How are you?" and "please" and "thank you."
- We help and support others; even when not asked to
- We are respectful of others' time and don't waste time during Center hours.
- We address mentors and staff as "Mr." or "Ms."
- We clean up after ourselves at Center.
- We encourage and support our fellow scholars by saying "Good job."
- We turn off our cell phones during Center (except Ms. Aishah & Ms. Andrea).
- Mentors are prepared with their lessons.

We are pro-active leaders.

- We follow only the positive behaviors of others.
- We build unity and solidarity at Center.
- We lead by example: by always following the rules.
- We acknowledge visitors at Center by greeting them, introducing ourselves and telling them about the Program.
- We do our school and Center assignments without being asked.
- We are active in our community.

We are goal-setters who think about our future and work hard to make our dreams come true.

- We have short-term and long-term goals and strive to attain them
- We never give up nor become discouraged.
- We take advantage of opportunities & resources that can help us achieve our educational goals.
- We work hard (Do extra work after our homework, study and read in our spare time)

We are always prepared to learn and to do our best.

- We come with all necessary supplies: We always carry our binder, pens, pencils, and paper to Center and have a book.
- We ALWAYS have a positive attitude.
- We are willing to try new things to further advance ourselves.
- We seek out and apply ourselves to challenges.
- We motivate ourselves and our fellow scholars.
- We set high standards and expectations for ourselves and each other.

Appendix J

Weekly T-Time Sheet

heet- Week of October 2, 2006

Theme: Higher Achievement

Quote of the Week:

The most splendid achievement of all is the constant striving to surpass yourself and to be worthy of your own approval.
--Denis Waitley

Word of the Week:

to **strive** *verb*: [Anglo-French *estriver*: to quarrel] to devote serious effort or energy

Francie wasn't sure she would succeed, but she strived to earn all A's on her report card.

Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: How many addition signs should be put between digits of the number 987654321 and where should we put them to get a total of 99?

6th grade: Uncle Henry was driving to Halifax when he spotted a big green gorilla on the side of the road. He screeched to a stop, jumped out of his car. He saw the outline of a number on the gorilla. He couldn't quite see the number, but he knew it was a 4 digit number. And:

- 1) He remembered seeing a number 1.
 - 2) In the hundred's place he remembers the number is 3 times the number in the thousand's place.
 - 3) He said the number in the one's place is 4 times the number in the ten's place.
 - 4) Finally he said the number 2 is sitting in the thousand's place.
- What is the number?

7th grade: Three ducks and two ducklings weigh 32 kg. Four ducks and three ducklings weigh 44kg. All ducks weigh the same and all ducklings weigh the same. What is the weight of two ducks and one duckling?

8th grade: The Adams family was going to buy a car for \$5800. The car dealer offered the Adams family two options for buying the car. They could pay the full amount in cash, or they could pay \$1000.00 down and \$230.00 a month for 24 months on the installment plan. How much more would they pay for the car on the installment plan?

A Little Information on the Author:

Dr. Denis Waitley is recognized as a world authority on high-level achievement and personal excellence. With over 10 million of his motivational audiotapes sold in 14 languages, he is the most-listened-to voice on personal and professional development. He is, perhaps, best known as the author/narrator of "The Psychology of Winning," the all-time best-selling, non-musical program. This tape series has generated nearly \$100 million in sales since its initial release in 1978. Waitley has also authored ten nonfiction books on self-management, including two national bestsellers: "The Seeds of Greatness" and "Being the Best." Dr. Waitley's newest book is entitled "Empires of the Mind" and was published by William Morrow in February of 1995. One of the most sought-after keynote speakers in America by corporations, associations, and institutions, Waitley is conducting 180 half-day seminars throughout the nation in 1995-96. Business schools and major universities sponsor these seminars for audiences of all levels of an organization. The series, titled "Lessons in Leadership," also features Stephen Covey and Tom Peters. Recently, the Sales and Marketing Executives' Association named Waitley "Outstanding Platform Speaker of the Year". He was also recently inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame in St. Louis, Missouri.

Waitley was the founding director of the National Council on Self-Esteem and the President's Council on Vocational Education, in 1991. He received the "Youth Flame Award" from the National Council on Youth Leadership for his outstanding contribution to high school youth leadership. During the 1980's, Waitley was appointed by William Simon, president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, to serve as the first non-physician on the Committee's Sport's Medicine Council. As Chairman of Psychology, he was responsible for creating the mental training program to enhance the performance of all U.S. Olympic athletes. Additionally, Waitley was a visiting scholar at the University of Southern California during this decade. In the 1970s, Waitley served as president of the International Society for Advanced Education, a non-profit foundation inspired by Dr. Jonas Salk and other leading health scientists. He also studied and counseled returning U.S. POWs from Vietnam. While completing his graduate studies, during the 1960s, Waitley served as Consultant to the President, of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California. Also during this period he conducted simulation and stress management seminars for NASA's Apollo astronauts. A former Navy pilot, Waitley is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. He received his Ph.D. in human behavior from La Jolla University in 1970. He and his wife, Susan, reside in Rancho Santa Fe, California. They have seven adult children.

Appendix K

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Sheet- Week of October 10, 2006

Theme: Higher Achievement

Quote of the Week:

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own". —Cesar Chavez

Word of the Week:

aspiration noun: [Latin aspirare: to breathe] a strong desire to achieve something high or great, or the object of such desire. *Jackson's greatest aspiration was to be the first in his family to go to college.*

Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: A man has to be at work by 9:00 a.m. and it takes him 15 minutes to get dressed, 20 minutes to eat and 35 minutes to walk to work. What time should he get up?

6th grade: Jenny bought 7 t-shirts, one for each of her seven brothers, for \$9.95 each. The cashier charged her an additional \$13.07 in sales tax. She left the store with \$7.28. How much money did Jenny start with?

7th grade: In 1969 the price of 5 kilograms of flour was \$0.75. In 1970 the price was increased 15 percent. In 1971, the 1970 price was decreased by 5 percent. What was the price of 5 kilograms of flour in 1971?

8th grade: Jenna Watkins was the best runner in the eighth grade. One day she ran 100m in 40 seconds, 200m in 1 minute and 10 seconds, and 200m over low hurdles in one and a half minutes. How many more seconds did it take her to run the 200m over low hurdles than it did to run the 200m dash?

A Little Information on the Author:

Cesar Estrada Chavez was born March 31, 1927 near Yuma, Arizona. Chavez was named after his grandfather, who escaped from slavery on a Mexican ranch and arrived in Arizona during the 1880s. Chavez' grandparents homesteaded more than one hundred acres in the Gila Valley and raised 14 children. Chavez' father, Librado, started his family in 1924 when he married Juana Estrada. Cesar was the second of their six children. Librado worked on the family ranch and owned a store in the Gila Valley. The family lived in an apartment above the store. Chavez began school at age 7, but he found it difficult because his family spoke only Spanish. Chavez preferred to learn from his uncles and grandparents, who would read to him in Spanish. In addition, Chavez learned many things from his mother. She believed violence and selfishness were wrong, and she taught these lessons to her children. In the 1930s, Chavez' father lost his business because of the Great Depression, and the family moved back to the ranch. However in 1937, a severe drought forced the family to give up the ranch. The next year, Chavez and his family packed their belongings and headed to California in search of work. In California, the Chavez family became part of the migrant community, traveling from farm to farm to pick fruits and vegetables during the harvest. They lived in numerous migrant camps and often were forced to sleep in their car. Chavez sporadically attended more than 30 elementary schools, often encountering cruel discrimination. Once Chavez completed the eighth grade, he quit school and worked full-time in the vineyards. His family was able to rent a small cottage in San Jose and make it their home. Then in 1944, Chavez joined the navy and served in World War II. After completing his duty two years later, Chavez returned to California. He married Helen Fabela in 1948, and they moved into a one-room shack in Delano. Chavez again worked in the fields, but he began to fight for change. That same year, Chavez took part in his first strike in protest of low wages and poor working conditions. However, within several days the workers were forced back to the fields.

In 1952, Chavez met Fred Ross, who was part of a group called the Community Service Organization (CSO) formed by Saul Alinsky. Chavez became part of the organization and began urging Mexican-Americans to register and vote. Chavez traveled throughout California and made speeches in support of workers' rights. He became general director of CSO in 1958. Four years later, however, Chavez left CSO to form his own organization, which he called the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). The name was later changed to the United Farm Workers (UFW). In 1965, Chavez and the NFWA led a strike of California grape-pickers to demand higher wages. In addition to the strike, they encouraged all Americans to boycott table grapes as a show of support. The strike lasted five years and attracted national attention. When the U.S. Senate Subcommittee looked into the situation, Robert Kennedy gave Chavez his total support. In 1968, Chavez began a fast to call attention to the migrant workers' cause. Although his dramatic act did little to solve the immediate problems, it increased public awareness of the problem. In the late 1960s, the Teamsters attempted to take power from the UFW. After many battles, an agreement was finally reached in 1977. It gave the UFW sole right to organize field workers. In the early 1970s, the UFW organized strikes and boycotts to get higher wages from grape and lettuce growers. During the 1980s, Chavez led a boycott to protest the use of toxic pesticides on grapes. He again fasted to draw public attention. These strikes and boycotts generally ended with the signing of bargaining agreements. Cesar Chavez died on April 23, 1993.

Appendix L

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Quote of the Week:

People seldom see the halting and painful steps by which the most insignificant success is achieved. --Annie Sullivan

Word of the Week:

to delude verb: [Latin *ludere*: to play] to mislead the mind or judgment of

Don't delude yourself: Astronomy may sound like an easy A but it is a tough class.

Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: In the first year of production a play sells 1572 tickets, in its second year it sells 1753 tickets, in its third year it sells 152 less than in its second year. How many tickets are sold in 3 years?

6th grade: The average monthly rainfall for 6 months was 28.5 mm. If it had rained 1mm more each month what would the average have been? By how much would the total have been increased in six months and by how much would the average have been increased per month?

7th grade: Mary has \$50.00. She goes to the mall and buys lipstick and then she buys shampoo, which is half the price of the lipstick. She then spends half of what she has left on a purse, leaving her with \$15.00. How much did the shampoo cost? How much did the lipstick cost?

8th grade: George, Sam, Andrew and Brandon each had four dates to four different Parish Center Dances with four different girls, named Cher, Connie, Melissa and Kendra. On the second date, George dated Connie and Brandon dated Kendra. On the third date Andrew went out with Melissa and Sam went out with Connie. Melissa went out with George and Cher went out with Sam on the fourth date. What couples went out together on the first date if no pairs went out more than once?

A Little Information on the Author:

Annie Sullivan or Johanna Mansfield Sullivan Macy, (April 14, 1866 – October 20, 1936) was a teacher best known as the tutor of Helen Keller. Sullivan was born in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts. Her parents, Thomas Sullivan and Alice Clohessy, were poor Irish farmers who left Ireland in 1847 because of the Irish Potato Famine. Sullivan's father was an alcoholic and sometimes abused her, but he also passed on to her Irish tradition and folklore. Her mother, suffering from tuberculosis, died when she was eight, and when she was ten, her father deserted her and her siblings, leaving them at the Massachusetts State Infirmary in Tewksbury. Sullivan spent all her time with her younger, crippled brother (who, like his mother, suffered from tuberculosis) in hopes that they would never be separated; however, Jimmie soon died in the infirmary. When Sullivan was three she began having trouble with her eyesight; at age five, she contracted the eye disease trachoma, a bacterial disease that affects the eye and can often lead to blindness, because of the scar tissue it creates. Sullivan underwent a long string of operations in attempts to fix her eyesight, all of which were failures. Her vision remained blurry and unchanged.

After four years in Tewksbury, in 1880, she entered the Perkins School for the Blind where she underwent surgery and regained some of her sight. After regaining her eyesight and graduating as class valedictorian in 1886, the director of the Perkins School for the Blind, Michael Anagnos, recommended her to teach Helen Keller. She taught Keller the names of things with the sign language alphabet signed into Keller's palm. In 1888, they went to the Perkins Institution together, then New York City's Wright-Humason School, then the Cambridge School for Young Ladies, and finally to Radcliffe College. Keller graduated from Radcliffe in 1904 and after that, they moved together to Wrentham, Massachusetts and lived on a benefactor's farm. In 1905, Sullivan married a Harvard University professor, John A. Macy, who had helped Keller with her autobiography. Within a few years, their marriage began to disintegrate. By 1914 they separated, though they never officially divorced. Sullivan stayed with Keller at her home and joined her on tours. In 1935, she became completely blind. She died in Forest Hills, New York, on October 20, 1936.

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix M

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Sheet- Week of November 6, 2006

Theme: Native American Heritage

Quote of the Week:

"We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."
--Chief Seattle

Word of the Week:

merely *adverb*: [Latin *merus*: pure, unmixed; complete] nothing more nor better than; simply
I didn't mean to be nosy; I was merely asking what your plans were for today.

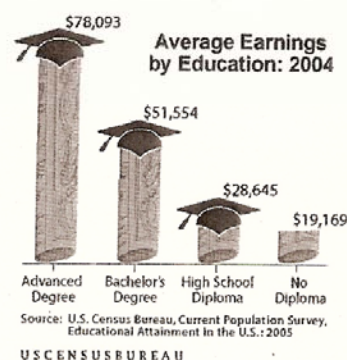
Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: According to this graph, how much more money will someone with a bachelor's degree earn than someone with a high school diploma? How much more will someone with an advanced degree earn than someone with no diploma?

6th grade: "We need more boys in the club," said Maryanne. "Why?" asked Patty. "Well, we have 32 members now, and only 1/4 are boys," Maryanne explained. "That's not too good," Patty admitted. "You're right," said Maryanne. "We have to get some more boys to join. At least 1/3 of the members must be boys." "That would be a more balanced club," Patty agreed. How many more boys would they need if no more girls joined their club?

7th grade: According to the graph, what percent more do people with a bachelor's degree earn than people with a high school diploma?

8th grade: What is the 99th letter in the pattern ABBCCDDDD . . . ?



A Little Information on the Author:

Chief Seattle (also Sealth, Seathl or See-ahth) (c.1786 – June 7, 1866) was a leader of the Suquamish and Duwamish Native American tribes in what is now the U.S. state of Washington. Chief Seattle was born around 1786 on Blake Island, Washington, and died June 7, 1866, on the Suquamish reservation at Port Madison, Washington (north of Bainbridge Island and east of Poulsbo). His father, Schweabe, was a leader of the Suquamish tribe, and his mother was Scholitz of the Duwamish. Seattle earned his reputation at a young age as a leader and a warrior, ambushing and defeating groups of enemy raiders coming up the Green River from the Cascade foothills, and attacking the Chemakum and the S'Klallam, tribes living on the Olympic Peninsula. He was also known as an orator, and his voice is said to have carried half a mile or more when he addressed an audience.

Culture of the Suquamish people:

Respect for the land and waters, the abundant natural resources and a deep understanding of the delicate supportive relationships of the natural systems were central themes in all Northwest Indian cultures. This is still true for the Suquamish people. The Suquamish people have inhabited this area for thousands of years. The culture of the Suquamish centered upon respect for the bountiful natural environment, especially the salmon and shellfish, the cedar, and the abundant waters. Through deliberate destruction by the invading culture, and through age and neglect, many important sites and features of the area have been lost. The speech "Chief" Seattle recited during treaty negotiations in the 1850s is regarded as one of the greatest statements ever made concerning the relationship between a people and the earth. The Suquamish Tribe were and are good stewards, managing, honoring and enhancing the resources, and guarding habitat and wildlife. Despite encroachments, the Suquamish people are still committed to steadfastly protecting areas of cultural and traditional resource significance. The Tribe does maintain an extensive cultural program. Tribal singers, dancers, storytellers, and the youth canoe club, with on-site canoe carving, help maintain the cultural heritage of this water-dependent Tribe.

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix N

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Sheet- Week of December 4, 2006

Theme: Peace

Quote of the Week:

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." --John F. Kennedy

Word of the Week:

inevitable *adjective*: [Latin: *in-* + *evitabilis* evitable] incapable of being avoided

It was inevitable that Shawn would fail U.S. History since he rarely studied and never passed any of the quizzes.

Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: When a square piece of paper is folded in half vertically, the resulting rectangle has a perimeter of 39 cm. In square centimeters, find the area of the original square sheet of paper.

6th grade: Sue's older brother lost the results of his calculation multiplying 0.416×2.03 . From his notes, he knows that it is one of 0.84448, 8.21218, 0.88444, or 0.04848. Sue immediately tells him the answer, without calculating. Which number is the answer? How did she know?

7th grade: How many guests were present at a Mexican fiesta if every 2 guests shared fajitas, every 3 guests shared a plate of nachos, every 4 guests shared a bowl of refried beans, and there were 65 dishes all together?

8th grade: For the month of January, Sam's teacher, Mr. Honeycutt, has made a deal with the class. He said that for every homework assignment that each student completes perfectly, he will allow that student to skip the next three assignments for credit. If Mr. Honeycutt plans 31 assignments for January, how many assignments would Sam have to complete perfectly to have the least amount of homework for the month?

A Little Information on the Author:

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (May 29, 1917 – November 22, 1963), also referred to as John F. Kennedy, JFK, John Kennedy or Jack Kennedy, was the 35th President of the United States. He served from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. His leadership during the ramming of his USS PT-109 during World War II led to being cited for bravery and heroism in the South Pacific. Kennedy represented Massachusetts during 1947–1960, as both a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. He was elected President in 1960 in one of the closest elections in American history. He is, to date, the only Roman Catholic to be elected President of the United States. Major events during his presidency included the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the building of the Berlin Wall, the Space Race, early events of the Vietnam War, and the American Civil Rights Movement. John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. The Warren Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the president, although later the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that a conspiracy may have been involved in the assassination, and the subject remains controversial. Kennedy's assassination is considered to be a defining moment in U.S. history due to its traumatic impact on the nation as well as on the political history of the ensuing decades, his subsequent branding as an icon for a new generation of Americans and American aspirations, and for the mystery and conspiracy allegations which surround it.

Kennedy called his domestic program the "New Frontier". It ambitiously promised federal funding for education, medical care for the elderly, and government intervention to halt the recession. Kennedy also promised an end to racial discrimination. In 1963, he proposed a tax reform which included income tax cuts, but this was not passed by Congress until 1964, after his death. Few of Kennedy's major programs passed Congress during his lifetime, although, under his successor Lyndon Johnson, Congress did vote them through in 1964–65. As President, Kennedy oversaw the last pre-Furman federal execution, and last, to date, military execution. In both cases he refused ask for commutation the death sentences (Iowa Governor Harold Hughes personally contacted Kennedy to request clemency for Victor Feguer who was sentenced to death under federal law in Iowa and executed on March 15, 1963).

FOR THE COMPLETE VERSION OF THIS INFORMATION ON JOHN F. KENNEDY GO TO
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix O

Weekly T-Time Sheet

1/22/07

Community Meeting Sheet Week of January 22, 2007

Theme: Latin American History

Quote of the Week:

"In order to attain the impossible, one must attempt the absurd." --Miguel de Cervantes

Word of the Week:

plausible adjective: [Latin: *plausibilis* worthy of applause] possibly true, showing good reasons to be believed

I thought her explanation was completely plausible.

Math Problems of the Week:

5th grade: What was the last prime year? When will the next prime year occur?

6th grade: An end-of-season sale for winter clothes advertises 30% to 45% off the original price. What was the highest original price of a jersey that is now on sale for \$12.99? What was the lowest original price?

7th grade: According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, Americans eat 148 more calories per day now than they did 20 years ago. If Americans are not changing any other habits, and if it takes 3500 calories to gain a pound, how many pounds might a person gain in a year at this rate?

8th grade: At a convenience store, the frozen drinks (slushies) are priced as follows: the 12-ounce drink is \$0.75, the 14-ounce size is \$0.90, and the 32-ounce drink is \$1.00. Which is the best deal? The worst deal? Explain.

A Little Information on the Author:

Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) was a Spanish novelist, playwright, and poet, the creator of Don Quixote, the most famous figure in Spanish literature. Although Cervantes' reputation rests almost entirely on his portrait of Don Quixote, his literary production was considerable.

Cervantes was born in Alcalá de Henares, a town near Madrid, into a family of the minor nobility. His father was a doctor and much of his childhood Cervantes spent moving from town to town while his father sought work. He studied in Madrid (1568-69), where his teacher was the humanist Juan López de Hoyos. In 1570 he became a soldier and took part in the sea battle at Lepanto (1571), during which he received a wound that permanently maimed his left hand. In 1575 he set out with his brother Rodrigo on the galley *El Sol* for Spain. The ship was captured by the Turks and the brothers were taken to Algiers as slaves. Cervantes spent five years as a slave until his family could raise enough money to pay his ransom. Cervantes was released in 1580, and after the return to Madrid he held several temporary administrative posts. Cervantes started his literary career in Andalusia in 1580. His first major work was the *Galatea* (1588), a pastoral romance. It received little contemporary notice and Cervantes never wrote the continuation of it, which he repeatedly promised. In his play *El Trato De Argel*, printed in 1784, he dealt with the life of Christian slaves in Algiers. Aside from his plays, his most ambitious work in verse was *Viaje Del Parnaso* (1614).

Tradition maintains, that he wrote Don Quixote in prison at Argamasilla in La Mancha. Cervantes' idea was to give a picture of real life and manners and to express himself in clear language. The reading public acclaimed the intrusion of everyday speech into a literary context. The author stayed poor until 1605, when the first part of Don Quixote appeared. Although it did not make Cervantes rich, it brought him international appreciation as a man of letters. Cervantes also wrote many plays, only two of which have survived, short novels, and the second part of Don Quixote (1615). Between the years 1596 and 1600 he lived primarily in Seville. In 1606 Cervantes settled permanently in Madrid, where he remained the rest of his life. He died on April 23, 1616.

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix P

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Meeting Sheet- Week of February 12, 2007

Theme: Black History Month

Quote of the Week:

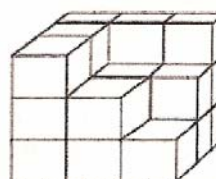
"There is no negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their own constitution..." (Frederick Douglass)

Word of the Week:

patriotism *noun*: love for or devotion to one's country
Flying the flag outside of his house showed John's sense of patriotism.

Math problems of the Week:

5th grade: How many unit cubes are needed to build this solid figure?



6th grade: The total bus fare was \$2.10. What was the distance traveled when the fare is \$0.90 for the first $\frac{1}{3}$ km and \$0.10 for each $\frac{1}{8}$ additional kilometer?

7th grade: Shawn bought a car for \$5600.00. He sold it to Rachel for $\frac{5}{6}$ the price he paid for it. Rachel sold it to Raelene for $\frac{1}{5}$ less than she paid. Raelene sold it to Rick for $\frac{3}{4}$ what she paid. What did Rick pay for the car?

8th grade: Four men were shipwrecked on an island. Having no food, they went to work gathering pineapples. After gathering pineapples, they were tired and all fell asleep. After another while, one of the men awoke and was very hungry so he ate $\frac{1}{3}$ of the pineapples - more than his proper share. He then went back to sleep. The second man awoke and being hungry, ate $\frac{1}{3}$ of the remaining pineapples and went back to sleep. The third man did the same. When the fourth man awoke, he took only his rightful share of the remaining pineapples. Then there were 6 pineapples left. How many pineapples did the men gather?

A Little Information on the Author: ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick Douglass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass))

Frederick Douglass (February 14, 1818 – February 20, 1895) was an American abolitionist, editor, orator, author, statesman and reformer. Called "The Sage of Anacostia" and "The Lion of Anacostia," Douglass was one of the most prominent figures of African American history during his time, and one of the most influential lecturers and authors in American history. Douglass was a firm believer in the equality of all people, whether black, female, or recent immigrant. He spent his life advocating the brotherhood of all humankind. One of his favorite quotations is: "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong." Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, who later became known as Frederick Douglass, was born a slave in Talbot County, Maryland near Hillsboro. He was separated from his mother, Harriet Bailey, when he was still an infant. She died when Douglass was about 7.

Early education

When Douglass was about 12, Hugh Auld's wife, Sophia, broke the law by teaching him some letters of the alphabet. Thereafter, as detailed in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (published in 1845), Douglass succeeded in learning to read from white children in the neighborhood in which he lived, and by observing the writings of the men with whom he worked. When Mr. Auld discovered this, he strongly disapproved, saying that if a slave learns to read, he would become dissatisfied with his condition and desire freedom; Frederick later referred to this as the first anti-abolitionist speech he had ever heard. Douglass escaped slavery on September 3, 1838, boarding a train to Havre de Grace, Maryland dressed in a sailor's uniform and carrying identification papers provided by a free black seaman.

Abolitionist activities

Douglass joined various organizations in New Bedford, Massachusetts, including a black church, and regularly attended Abolitionist meetings. He subscribed to William Lloyd Garrison's weekly journal, *The Liberator*, and in 1841, he heard Garrison speak at the Bristol Anti-Slavery Society's annual meeting. Douglass was inspired by Garrison, later stating, "no face and form ever impressed me with such sentiments (the hatred of slavery) as did those of William

Lloyd Garrison." Garrison was likewise impressed with Douglass, and mentioned him in the 'Liberator'. Several days later, Douglass gave his first speech at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's annual convention in Nantucket. Twenty-three years old at the time, Douglass later said that his legs were shaking. He conquered his nervousness and gave an eloquent speech about his rough life as a slave. In 1843, Douglass participated in the American Anti-Slavery Society's Hundred Conventions project, a six month tour of meeting halls throughout the east and middle west of the United States. He participated in the Seneca Falls Convention, the birthplace of the American feminist movement, and was a signatory of its Declaration of Sentiments. Douglass later became the publisher of a series of newspapers: *North Star*, *Frederick Douglass Weekly*, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, *Douglass' Monthly* and *New National Era*. The motto of *The North Star* was "Right is of no sex—Truth is of no color—God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren". Douglass' work spanned the years prior to and during the Civil War. Douglass conferred with President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 on the treatment of black soldiers, and with President Andrew Johnson on the subject of black suffrage. His early collaborators were the white abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips.

Reconstruction era

After the Civil War, Douglass held several important political positions. He served as President of the Reconstruction-era Freedman's Savings Bank; as marshal of the District of Columbia; as minister-resident and consul-general to the Republic of Haiti (1889–1891); and as chargé d'affaires for Saint Domingue. After two years, he resigned from his ambassadorship because of disagreements with U.S. government policy. In 1872, he moved to Washington, D.C.. In 1868, Douglass supported the presidential campaign of Ulysses S. Grant. The Klan Act and the Enforcement Act were signed into law by President Grant. Grant used their provisions vigorously, suspending habeas corpus in South Carolina and sending troops there and into other states; under his leadership, over 5,000 arrests were made and the Ku Klux Klan was dealt a serious blow. Grant's vigor in disrupting the Klan made him unpopular among many whites, but Frederick Douglass praised him. An associate of Douglass wrote of Grant that African Americans "will ever cherish a grateful remembrance of his name, fame and great services." In 1872, he became the first African American to receive a nomination for Vice President of the United States, having been nominated to be Victoria Woodhull's running mate on the Equal Rights Party ticket without his knowledge. During the campaign, he neither campaigned for the ticket nor even acknowledged that he had been nominated.

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix Q

Weekly T-Time Sheet

Week of February 20, 2007

Theme: Black History Month

Quote of the Week:

"Race prejudice can't be talked down, it must be lived down." --Frances J. Grimke

Word of the Week:

to mesmerize verb: hypnotize, fascinate

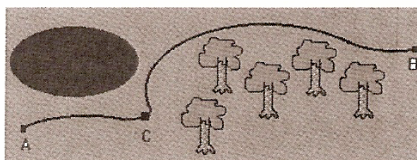
The audience was mesmerized by the performance of the circus acrobats on the trapeze.

Math problems of the Week:

5th grade: The record for the greatest number of consecutive jumping jacks is 14500 in 5 hours and 35 minutes. If Joe does 55 jumping jacks per minute, how long will it take Joe to tie the record?

6th grade: The magician said, "The average of seven numbers is 49. If 1 is added to the first number, 2 is added to the second number, 3 is added to the third number and so on up to the seventh number", what is the new average?

7th grade:



Points A and B on a map are 12km apart if you follow the path. A troop of boy scouts leaves point A at 11:00 a.m.. They are all carrying packs and travel 3km/hr until they reach point C at 12:45. If they want to reach point B by 2:00, how fast will they have to go?

8th grade: The Earth is about 1.49×10^8 kilometers from the sun and about 3.84×10^5 km away from the moon. The Distance from the Earth to the sun is about how many times as great as the distance from the Earth to the moon?

A Little Information on the Author:

Francis James Grimké (November 4, 1852- October 11, 1937) was a Presbyterian minister that was also active in the Niagara Movement and the NAACP. Grimké was the second of three sons born to Henry Grimké and his slave, a woman named Nancy Weston. Henry Grimké was the brother of Sarah and Angelina Grimke who were abolitionists. Grimké's other brothers were named Archibald and John. Grimké graduated from Lincoln University, PA in 1870, along with his older brother Archibald, who was also a member of the class of 1870. In December 1878, Grimké married abolitionist and diarist Charlotte Forten. She was 41 at the time and he was about 13 years her junior. In 1880, they had one daughter, Theodora Cornelia, who died as an infant. Grimké's elder brother, Archibald Grimké, served as consul to the Dominican Republic from 1894-1898. Archibald's daughter, Angelina Weld Grimke, became a prominent writer and abolitionist in her own right. She stayed with Grimké and his wife during the period of her father's service to the Dominican Republic. Grimké began his ministry at the 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. and except for a brief sojourn to preach at a church in Jacksonville, Florida, he would remain at the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. until 1928. Grimké died in 1937. Had his wife lived, she would have been 100 that year.

****Don't forget to write your input on the quote, use the word in a sentence, and complete the math problem on the back of the community meeting sheet for extra Community Meeting Challenge points!****

Appendix R

8th Grade Math Lesson

Tax Troubles

A politician is arguing that his district, District 3 needs to lower the tax rates for taxpayers making \$100,000 or more. There are two neighborhoods in District 3: Acton Park, which has wealthier citizens, and Renfrew Heights, which has less wealthy citizens. The politician claims that the average income in District 3 is \$130,000, so the tax cuts will benefit the district. Renfrew Heights doesn't agree with this number. The politician sends the data he used to make the calculation, it is shown below.

Survey of household incomes in District 3 by blocks

Block	Neighborhood	Income	Number of households on block
1	Acton Park	\$330,000	2
2	Acton Park	\$320,000	3
3	Acton Park	\$115,000	1
4	Acton Park	\$85,500	4
5	Acton Park	\$76,500	3
6	Renfrew Heights	\$45,500	6
7	Renfrew Heights	\$32,000	10
8	Renfrew Heights	\$130,000	2
9	Renfrew Heights	\$67,500	7
10	Renfrew Heights	\$98,000	2

Find the average income in District 3. Is it what the politician claims?

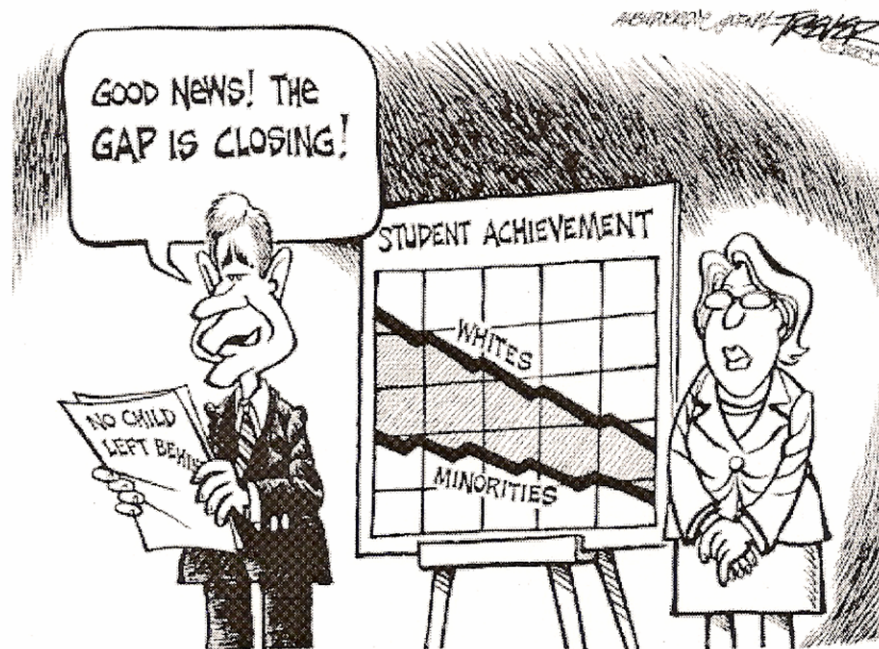
Do you think his claim is fair or unfair? Explain why.

Appendix S
Oratorical Contest Topic List

- 1) Newly elected DC mayor Adrian Fenty has announced that the DC government may take control of underperforming schools away from the school board and superintendent and place them under the direct supervision of the mayor's office. Should the city government take over underperforming schools?
- 2) Some schools require that English be spoken at all times in the classroom. Others teach using a mix of English and students' native languages. Should American classrooms be English-only?
- 3) President Bush announced last week that he will ask Congress to send more troops to Iraq to continue the effort to stabilize the country. Should the U.S. send more troops to Iraq?

Appendix T
Political Cartoon from Terri's Tutoring Session

Satire Cartoons



Bibliography

- Agger, B. (1991) Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance. In W. Scott and J. Blake (Ed.) *Annual Review of Sociology*. (Vol. 17, 105-131) Paolo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Amalane, W. (2004). No Child Left Behind: Flowers Don't Grow in the Desert. *Race and Society*. 7(1), 35-62.
- Anderson, L., Laguarda, K. (2005). Case Studies of Supplemental Services Under the NCLB Act: Findings from 2003-2004. Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of Education.
- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Educational Reform*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- Archer, J. (2004). Study Rekindles Debate on Value of After-School Programs. *Education Week*. 24(7), 25.
- Agron, J. (1998). The Urban Challenge. *American School and University*. 70(11), 18.
- Bazron, B., Osher, D., Fleischman, S. (2005). Research Matters: Creating Culturally Responsive Schools. *Educational Leadership*. 63(1).
- Beck, E. (1999) Prevention and Intervention Programming: Lessons from an After-school Program. *Urban Review*. 31, 107-124.
- Belfield, C., Levin, H. (2002). The Effects of Competition between Schools on Educational Outcomes: A Review for the United States. *Review of Educational Research*. 72(2), 279-341.
- Belfield, C., d'Entremont, C. (2005). Privatization: Will Disadvantaged Students Benefit from a Free Market in Supplemental Education Services. *American School Board Journal*. 28-31
- Bell, D. (2004). *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Benard, B. (1995). Fostering Resilience in Children. Urbana, IL. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED386327).

- Blanchett, W. (2006, August). Disproportionate Representation of African American Students in Special Education: Acknowledging the Role of White Privilege and Racism. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 24-28.
- Blanton, C. (2000, December). 'They Cannot Master Abstractions, but They Can Often Be Made Efficient Workers': Race and Class in the Intelligence Testing of Mexican Americans and African Americans in Texas during the 1920s. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(4), 1014-1026.
- Bolick, C. (2003). School Choice. *American Enterprise*. 14(3), 30-33.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction. In Karabel, J. & Halsey, A., *Power and Ideology in Education*. (487-511). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Boutte, G., Hill, E. (2006) African American Communities: Implications for Culturally Relevant Teaching. *The New Educator*. 2, 311-329.
- Bowles, S. (1977). Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Divisions of Labor. In Karabel, J. & Halsey, A., *Power and Ideology in Education*. (137-153). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bowles, S., Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bradley, A. (2004). D.C. Charter Schools Are Unfair to Poor Students, Lawsuit Says. *Education Week*. 24 (3). 4.
- Branscombe, N., Schmitt, M., & Schiffhauer, K. (2007, March). Racial Attitudes in Response to Thoughts of White Privilege. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 37(2), 203-215.
- Bridglall, B. (2005). After-school Programs, Youth Development, and Other Forms of Supplementary Education. In E.W. Gordon, B. Bridglall, and A. Meroe (Eds.) *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (35-62).
- Brignall, T. (2006). No Child Left Behind and Urban Education: The Purpose and Funding of Public Education. In J. Kicincheloe, K. Hayes, K. Rose, and P. Anderson (Eds.) *The Praeger Handbook of Urban Education: Volume 1*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1-11.
- Brooks, J. (2006). Strengthening Resilience in Children and Youths: Maximizing Opportunities through the Schools. *Children and Schools*. 28(2), 69-76.

- Brown, M., Carnoy, M., Currie, E., Duster, T., Oppenheimer, D., Sultz, M., Wellman, D. (2003). *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of the Colorblind Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Buraway, M. (1991). The Extended Case Method. In M. Buraway (Ed.), *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. (271-287). Berkley, CA: University of California Press
- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, W. (1994). Consultation on Afterschool Programs. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED383470).
- Casserly, M. (2006) *No Child Left Behind in America's Great City Schools: Five Years and Counting*. Washington, D.C.: Council of Great City Schools.
- Casserly, M. (2004). *Beating the Odds: A City-By-City Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments. Results from the 2002-2003 School Year*. Washington, D.C.: The Council of Great City Schools.
- Cave, G., Andrews, J., Lai, A. (2002). "Youth Development Needs and Capacities in the District of Columbia." Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Chantler, K. (2005). From Disconnection to Connection. Race, Gender and the Politics of Therapy. *British Journal of Guidance and Counseling*. 33(2), 239-256.
- Chung, A., Hillsman, E. (2005). Evaluating After-School Programs. *School Administrator*. 62(5), 18-21.
- Cicchinelli, L., Gaddy, B., Lefkowitz, L., Miller, K. (2003). No Child Left Behind: Realizing the Vision. Policy Brief. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
- Cohen, J. (2003). Supplemental Education: 6 Essential Components. *Principal*. 82(5), 34-37.
- Cohen, M. (2002). An Anthropologist Looks at "Race" and IQ Testing. In J. Fish (Ed.) *Race and Intelligence: Separating Science from Myth*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Comstock, D. (1982). A Method for Critical Research. From Bredo, E. & Feindberg, W. *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Cookson, P. & Shroff, S. (1997). *School Choice and Urban School Reform*. (Report No. RR93002016). Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED416271)

- Cosden, M., Morrison, G., Gutierrez, L., Brown, M. (2004). The Effects of Homework Programs and After-School Activities on School Success. *Theory Into Practice*. 43(3), 220-226.
- Crenshaw, K. (2002). The First Decade: Critical Reflections, or “A Foot in the Closing Door”. In F. Valdes, J. McCristal Culp, and A. Harris (Eds.) *Crossroads, Directions, and a New Critical Race Theory* 9-31. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Current Enrollment*. (n.d.) D.C. Public Charter School Board. Downloaded on October 19, 2007 from <http://www.dcpubliccharter.com/home/generalinfo.html>.
- Curricula. (n.d.) The After School Center. Downloaded on October 22, 2006 from http://www.higherachievement.org/?section_group_id=14§ion_id=24.
- Dallas, C. (2005). *District of Columbia Public Schools*. FD.C.H Congressional Testimony: Statement made to the Committee on House Government Reform.
- Dance, L. (2002). *Tough Fronts*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). Evaluating No Child Left Behind. *Nation*. 284(20), 11-18.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). What Happens to a Dream Deferred? : The Continuing Quest for Equal Educational Opportunity. In J. Banks and C. McGee-Banks (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 607-630.
- Davis, T. (2005). *District of Columbia Public Schools*. FD.C.H Congressional Testimony: Statement made to the Committee on House Government Reform.
- DeAngelis, T. (2001). What Makes a Good Afterschool Program. *Monitor on Psychology*, 32(3), 60-62.
- DeCuir, J., Dixon, A. (2004). “So When It Comes Out, They Aren’t Surprised That It Is There”: Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism in Education. *Educational Researcher*. 33(5), 26-31.
- DeJong, W., & Council of Educational Facility Planners, I. (2004, July 1). *Urban School Facilities: An A-Z Primer. IssueTrak: A CEFPI Brief on Educational Facility*

Issues. Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED488775).

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other People's Children*. New York: The New Press.

Denevi, E., & Pastan, N. (2006, Winter). Helping Whites Develop Anti-Racist Identities: Overcoming Their Resistance to Fighting Racism. *Multicultural Education*, 14(2), 70-73.

Dixson, A., Rousseau, C. (2005). And We Are Still Not Saved: Critical Race Theory in Education Ten Years Later. *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 8(1), 7-27.

Downey, D., Moody, J., & Bobbitt-Zeher, D. (2005). Academic Success and Popularity Among Black Adolescents: Do They Face the Burden of "Acting White?" *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association*.

Drew, W. (2007). make way for PLaY. *Scholastic Parent & Child*, 14(8), 40-47.

Dupper, D., & Meyer-Adams, N. (2002, May). Low-Level Violence: A Neglected Aspect of School Culture. *Urban Education*. 37(3), 350.

Duncan-Andrade, J. (2005). An Examination of the Sociopolitical History of Chicanos and its Relationship to School Performance. *Urban Education*. 40(6), 576-605.

Easley, J. (2005). The Political Tension of Education as a Public Good: The Voice of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar. *Education and Urban Society*. 37(4), 490-505.

Eddine, M., Sanchez, R. (2006). Toward an Anticolonial Education. In J. Kinchelow, K. Hayes, K. Rose, and P. Anderson (Eds.) *The Praeger Handbook of Urban Education: Volume 2*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 350-357.

ESEA: Myths versus Realities. (n.d.) The Education Trust. Washington, D.C. Downloaded on September 27, 2007 from <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/D90C064A-C788-466C-992F-DD588C073B25/0/ESEAMyths.pdf>.

Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools. (2001). The Learning First Alliance. Washington, DC. Downloaded on 9/22/2007 from <http://www.learningfirst.org/lfa-web/rp?pa=doc&docId=61>.

Every Kid Counts In the District of Columbia: 13th Annual Fact Book (2006). Washington, D.C.: D.C. Kids Count Collaborative.

Every Kid Counts In the District of Columbia: 12th Annual Fact Book (2005). Washington, D.C.: D.C. Kids Count Collaborative.

Fact Sheet. (n.d.). DC Public Charter School Board. Downloaded on October 19, 2007 from <http://www.dcpubliccharter.com/home/factsheet.html#school>.

Finkelstein, B. (1984). Education and the Retreat from Democracy in the United States, 1979-1984. *Teachers College Record*. 86(2), 275-282.

Flaws and Failings: A Preliminary Look at the Problems Already Encountered in the Implementation of the District of Columbia's New Federally Mandated School Voucher Program. (2005). People for the American Way. Washington: D.C. July 2005. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED484341).

Fletcher, A., Padover, W. (2003) After School Programs: An Investment That Pays Off. *Leadership*. 31-33.

Foley, D. (1999) Deficit Thinking Models Based on Culture: The Anthropological Protest. In R. Valencia (Ed.) *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. London: The Falmer Press.

Fordham, S., Ogbu, J. (1986) Black Students' School Success: Coping with the Burden of 'Acting White'” *The Urban Review*. 18(3), 176-206.

Franklin, A., Benedict, A. (1943). *Play Centers for School Children: A Guide to Their Establishment and Operation*. New York: William Morrow.

Freire, P. (1978). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum

Fuller, B. (1996). Is School Choice Working? *Educational Leadership*, 54(2), 37-40.

Fusarelli, L. (2004). The Potential Impact of No Child Left Behind on Equity and Diversity in American Education. *Educational Policy*. 18(1), 71-95.

Fusco D. (2001). *The Developmental Opportunities Provided by After School*. Paper presented to the Robert Browne Foundation Participatory Evaluation Group. New York, NY, December 2001. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED462507).

Garcia, S., Guerra, P. (2004). Deconstructing Deficit Thinking: Working with Educators to Create More Equitable Learning Environments. *Education and Urban Society*. 36(2), 150-168

Garcia-Goldbaum, T. (2001, February). An Epidemiological Study of Perceived Support, Stress and High-risk Behavior among Poor Urban Middle School Youth. Retrieved September 25, 2007, from PsycINFO database.

- Gay, G. (2002). *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gayl, C., & Progressive Policy Inst., W. (2004, July 1). After-School Programs: Expanding Access and Ensuring Quality. PPI Policy Report. *Progressive Policy Institute*, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED491206)
- Garot, R., & Joniak, E. (2004). Ideologies and Contradictions in Managing Youth at an Alternative High School and a Homeless Drop-In Shelter. *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association*.
- Gillborn, D. (2005). Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory, and Education Reforms. *Journal of Education Policy*. 20(4), 485-505.
- Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J., Noguera, P. (2005). Youth, Social Justice, and Communities: Towards a Theory of Urban Youth Policy. *Social Justice*. 32(3), 24-40.
- Goldberg, D. (2002). *The Racial State*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Gordon, E.W., Bridglall, B., Meroe, A. (2005) *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Gordon, E. T., Bridglall, B. (2005). The Challenge, Context, and Pre-Conditions of Academic Development at High Levels. In E.W. Gordon, B. Bridglall, and A. Meroe (Eds.). *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (10-34).
- Green, J. (2001). *High School Graduation Rates in the United States*. New York: The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. Downloaded on April 28, 2006 from http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm.
- Halpern, R. (1992). The Role of After-School Programs in the Lives of Inner-City Children. A Study of the "Urban Youth Network." *Child Welfare*, 71 (), 215-230.
- Halpern, R. (1999). After School Programs for Low-Income Children: Promises and Challenges. *The Future of Children: When School is Out*. 9(2), 81-95.
- Halpern, R. (2000). The Promise of After-School Programs for Low-Income Children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 15(2), 185-214.

- Halpern, R. (2002). A Different Kind of Child Development Institution: The History of After-School Programs for Low-Income Children. *Teachers College Record*. 104 (2), 178-211.
- Hamovitch, B. (1996). Socialization without a Voice: An Ideology of Hope for At-risk Students. *Teacher College Record*. 98(2), 286-306.
- Hamovitch, B. (1999). More Failure for the Disadvantaged: Contradictory African-American Student Reactions to Compensatory Education and Urban Schooling. *The Urban Review*. 31(1), 55 – 77.
- Hecht, D., Fusco, D. (1996). *Student Perceptions of the Opportunities Available from Participating in Service Learning*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, 1996, New York, NY.
- Hendrie, C. (2004). In U.S. Schools, Race Still Counts. *Education Week*. 23(19). P. 1, 16-19.
- Hess, B. (2007). Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythology. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 30(4), 643-663.
- Hoff, D. (2007). State Tests Show Gains since NCLB. *Education Week*. 26(39), 1-20.
- Howard, E. (2003). *Does Private School Competition Affect Public School Achievement?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2003. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED478261).
- Hughes, C., Shaunessy, E., Brice, A., Ratliff, M., & McHatton, P. (2006, Fall). Code Switching Among Bilingual and Limited English Proficient Students: Possible Indicators of Giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 30(1), 7-28.
- Hunter R., Bartee, R. (2003). The Achievement Gap: Issues of Competition, Class, and Race. *Education and Urban Society*. 35(2), 151-160.
- Hurlbut, R. (1981). *District of Columbia Public Schools: A Brief History*. Downloaded on 4/27/06 from <http://www.k12.D.C..us/DCPS/offices/DCPSHistory.html>.
- Irvine, J. (2003). *Educating teachers for diversity: Seeing with a cultural eye*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Irvine, J. (1998). Warm Demanders. *Education Week*. 17(35), 56-57.
- Irvine, J. (1990) *Black students and school failure*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Jamar, I., Pits, V. (2005). High Expectations: A “How” of Achieving Equitable Mathematics Classrooms. *Negro Educational Review*. 56(2/3), 127-134.
- Jay, M. (2003). Critical Race Theory, Multicultural Education and the Hidden Curriculum of Hegemony. *Multicultural Perspectives*. 5(4), 3-9.
- Kafer, K. (2004). School Choice in 2003: An Old Concept Gains New Life. *Legal Memorandum*. Retrieved on March 29, 2005 from <http://www.heritage.org/research/education/lm9.cfm> on March 29, 2005.
- Kalyanpur, M. (2003). A Challenge to Professionals: Developing Cultural Reciprocity with Culturally Diverse Families. *Focal Point*. 17(1), 1-6.
- Katz, B. (2004). *Neighborhoods of Choice and Connection: The Evolution of American Neighborhood Policy and What it Means for the United Kingdom*. Retrieved September 10, 2004 from http://brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20040713_katz.pdf.
- Keegan, S., Chaplin, D. (2002). *Creating a Seamless Web of Services for Youth: The D.C. Children and Youth Investment Partnership*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Kelder, S., Hoelscher, D., Barroso, C., Walker, J., Cribb, P., & Hu, S. (2005). The CATCH Kids Club: A Pilot After-school Study for Improving Elementary Students' Nutrition and Physical Activity. *Public Health Nutrition*, 8(2), 133-140.
- Kernahan, C., & Davis, T. (2007, December). Changing Perspective: How Learning about Racism Influences Student Awareness and Emotion. *Teaching of Psychology*, 34(1), 49-52
- Koch, L. (2000, June). Attitudes towards Black English and Code-switching: A Variable in Intraracial Perception. Retrieved September 23, 2007.
- Kobayashi, A., Peake, L. (2000). Racism out of Place: Thoughts on Whiteness and an Antiracist Geography in the New Millennium. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 90(29), 392-403.
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage Inequalities*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Kozol, J. (2000). *Ordinary Resurrections*. New York: Crown Books.
- Kozol, J. (2005). *The Shame of a Nation*. New York: Crown Books.
- Ladson-Billing, G., Tate, W. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record*. 97(1), 47-68.

- Lee, V., Smith, J., Perry, T., Smylie, M. (1999). *Social Support, Academic Press, and Student Achievement: A View from the Middle Grades in Chicago*. Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved on 9/22/2007 from <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/p0e01.pdf>.
- Lincoln, Y. (1993). I and Thou: Method, voice, and roles in research with the silenced. In D. McLaughlin and W. Tierney (Eds.) *Naming Silenced Lives* (2-47). Oston: Routledge Kegan Paul.
- Lynn, M., Parker, L. (2006). Critical Race Studies in Education: Examining a Decade of Research on U.S. Schools Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 38(4) 257-290.
- Mahoney, J., Lord, H., Carryl, E. (2005). An Ecological Analysis of After-School Program Participation and the Development of Academic Performance and Motivational Attributes for Disadvantaged Children. *Child Development*. 76(4), 811-825.
- Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs Engaged in After School, Summer, and Weekend Activities for Young People*. (2000). National Institute on Out-of-School Time for the Corporation for National Service.
- Maasoumi, E., Millimet, D., & Rangaprasad, V. (2005). Class Size and Educational Policy: Who Benefits from Smaller Classes? *Econometric Reviews*, 24(4), 333-368.
- Meier, D., Kohn, A., Darling-Hammond, L.,Sizer, T., Wood, G. (2004). *Many Children Left Behind: How the No Child Left Behind Act is Damaging Our Children*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Menchaca, M. (1999). Early Racist Discourse: Roots of Deficit Thinking. In R. Valencia (Ed.) *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th Edition. (2003). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.
- Matsuda, M., Lawrence, C., Delgado, R., Crenshaw, K. (1993). *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.
- McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School*, 49(2), 31-35.

- McLaughlin, M., Irby, M., Langman, J. (1994). *Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McNeil, L. (2000). *Contradictions of School Reform: Educational Costs of Standardized Testing*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers
- Miller, B., O'Connor, S., Sirignano, S., Joshi, P. (1996). *I Wish the Kids Didn't Watch So Much TV: Out of School Time in Three Low-Income Communities*. Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.
- Mohanty, C. (2003). *Feminism without Borders*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Montagu, A. (1975) *Race and IQ*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Noguera, P. (2007). Evaluating No Child Left Behind. *Nation*. 284(20), 18-20.
- Noguera, P., Akom, A. (2000). Disparities Demystified. *Nation*. 270(22), 29-31.
- Norman, O., Ault, C., Bentz, B., Meskimen, L. (2001). The Black-White "Achievement Gap" as a Perennial Challenge of Urban Science Education: A Sociocultural and Historical Overview with Implications for Research and Practice. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*. 38(10), 1101-1114.
- Normore, A., & Ilon, L. (2006). Cost-Effective School Inputs. *Educational Policy*, 20(2), 429-454
- Number of Charter Schools and Students in the 2006-07 School Year*. (2007). National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Downloaded on August 4, 2007 from <http://www.publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/2182/>.
- Nye, B., Hedges, L., & Konstantopoulos, S. (2004). Do Minorities Experience Larger Lasting Benefits From Small Classes? *Journal of Educational Research* (Washington, D.C.), 98(2), 94-100.
- Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ogbu, J. (2004). Collective Identity and the Burden of "Acting White" in Black History, Community, and Education. *Urban Review*, 36(1), 1-35.
- Ogbu, J., Fordham, S. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of 'acting white'" *The Urban Review*. 18(3), 176-206.

- Olson, L. (2005). NCLB Choice Option Going Untapped, But Tutoring Picking Up. *Education Week*. 24(27), 1-21 (3 pg.).
- Osher, D., Fleischman, S. (2005). Research Matters: Positive Culture in Urban Schools. *Educational Leadership*. 62(6).
- Osterman, K. (2002). Schools as Communities for Students. In *Schools as Community: From Promise to Practice*, edited by G. Furman. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Paige, R. (2004). *A Time for Choice*. Heritage Lectures. No. 820. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation.
- Parker, L., Lynn, M. (2002). What's Race Got to Do with It? Critical Race Theory's Conflicts with and Connections to Qualitative Research Methodology and Epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8(1), 7-22.
- Parker, L., Stovall, D. (2004). Actions Following Words: Critical Race Theory Connects to Critical Pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 36(2), 162-182.
- Pearl, A. (1999). Cultural and Accumulated Environmental Deficit Models. In R. Valencia (Ed.) *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Pianta, R., Walsh, D. (1998). Applying the Construct of Resilience in Schools: Cautions from a Developmental Systems Perspective. *School Psychology Review*. 27, 407-417.
- Pierce, K., Hamm, J., Vandell, D. (1999). Experiences in After-School Programs and Children's Adjustment in First-Grade Classrooms. *Child Development*. 70(3), 756-767.
- Piha, S., Miller, B. (2003). *Getting the Most from Afterschool: The Role of Afterschool Programs in a High-Stakes Learning Environment*. Wellesley, Mass.: National Institute on Out-of-School Time. <http://www.niost.org/CNN.pdf>.
- Pittman, K., Irby, M., Yohalem, N., Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. (2004). Blurring the Lines for Learning: The Role of Out-of-School Programs as Complements to Formal Learning. *New Directions for Youth Development*. (101), 19-41.
- Pluviose, D. (2006). Study: 'Acting White' Accusation Has Damaging Legacy For Black Students. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, 23(4), 8.

- Posner, J., Vandell, D. (1994). Low-Income Children's After-School Care: Are There Beneficial Effects of After-School Programs? *Child Development*. 65(2), 440-456.
- Posner, J., Vandell, D. (1999). After-School Activities and the Development of Low-Income Urban Children: A Longitudinal Study. *Developmental Psychology*. 35 (), 868-879.
- Protheroe, N. (2007). Emotional Support and Student Learning. *Principal*. 86(4), 50-4.
- Puriefoy, W. (2005). Why the Public Is Losing Faith in the 'No Child' Law. *Education Week*. 24(39), 34-5.
- Ramsey, C. (2005). *District of Columbia Public Schools*. FD.C.H Congressional Testimony: Statement made to the Committee on House Government Reform.
- Ravitch, D. (1999). Student Performance: The National Agenda in Education. In M. Kanstoroom and C. Finn (Eds.). *New Directions: Federal Policy in the Twenty-first Century*. Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.
- Reid, K. (2004). D.C. Students Find Few Options for Transfer. *Education Week*. 24(1), 6.
- Restoring Excellence to the District of Columbia Public Schools: Report of the Strategic Support Team of the Council of the Great City Schools*. (2004). Council of the Great City Schools and the Department of Education. 104.
- Riggs, N., Greenberg, M. (2004). After-School Youth Development Programs: A Developmental-Ecological Model of Current Research. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*. 7(3), 177-189.
- Robertson, H. (2005, November). Does Size Matter? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(3), 251-258.
- Rodgers, A., Lazere, E. (2004). *Income Inequality in the District of Columbia is Wider Than Any Major US City*. DC Fiscal Policy Institute.10.
- Ross, J., Saavedra, P., Schur, G., Winters, F., Felner, R. (1992). The Effectiveness of an After-School Program for Primary Grade Latchkey Students on Precursors of Substance Abuse. *Journal of Community Psychology*. (OSAP Special Edition). 22-38.
- Roth, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., Murray, L., and Foster, W. (1998). Promoting Healthy Adolescents: Synthesis of Youth Development Program Evaluations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*. 8, 423-459.

- Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*. New York: Teachers College, Economic Policy Institute, Columbia University.
- Ryan, A., Patrick, H. (2001). The Classroom Social Environment and Changes in Adolescents' Motivation and Engagement During Middle School. *American Research Journal*. 38, 437-460.
- Schroeder, K. (2007, January). Kids Need Play. *Education Digest*, 72(5), 73-74.
- Scott-Little, C; Hamann, M.; Jurs, S. (2002). Evaluation of After-School Programs: A Meta-Evaluation of Methodologies and Narrative Synthesis of Findings. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 23(4), 387-419.
- Seligson, M., Genser, A., Gonnet, E., Gray, W. (1983). *School-Aged Child Care: A Policy Report*. Wesley, MA: School-Aged Child Care Project, Wesley College, Center for Research on Women.
- Seppanen, P.; Love, J.; deVries, D.; Bernstein. (1993) *National Study of Before- and After-School programs*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Education; 1993 ; (AN FSD0017379)
- Serving Those Most In Need or Not? A Report on the Implementation of the NCLB's Supplemental Education Services in New York City*. (2003). (Report No. UD035937). Long Island City, New York: Advocates for Children of New York, Inc. (Rockefeller Foundation). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482411).
- Shields, C., Bishop, R., Mazawi, A. (2005). *Pathologizing Practices: The Impact of Deficit Thinking on Education*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Shreffler, M. (1998, Spring). Raising a village: White Male Teachers as Role Models for African American Male Students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 67(2), 91.
- Simmons, J. (2001, December). Finding the Will to Re-Make Hispanic Education. *Education Digest*, 67(4), 52.
- Smith, E. (2005). Raising Standards in American Schools: The Case of No Child Left Behind. *Journal of Education Policy*. 20(4), 507-524.
- Smith-Maddox, R., Solorzano, D. (2002). Using Critical Race Theory, Paulo Freire's Problem-Posing Method, and Case Study Research to Confront Race and Racism in Education. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8(1), 66-84.
- Snipes, J., Williams, A., Horwiz, A., Soga, K., Casserly, M. (2007). *Beating the Odds: A City-by-City Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State*

- Assessments. Results from the 2005-2006 School Year.* Washington, DC.: Council of Great City Schools.
- Solorzano, D., Yosso, T. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8(1), 23-44.
- Solorzano, D., Yosso, T. (2000). Towards a Critical Race Theory of Chicano and Chicana Education. In C. Tejada, C. Martinez, and Z. Leonardo (Eds.) *Charting New Terrains in Chicano(a)/Latino(a) Education* 35-66. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Solorzano, D. (1997). Images and Words That Wound. Critical Race Theory, Racial Stereotyping, and Teacher Education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*. 24(3), 5-19.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications
- Stevenson, R. (2004). Constructing Knowledge of Educational Practices from Case Studies. *Environmental Education Research*. 10(1), 39-51.
- Sunderman , G., Kim, J. (2004). *Increasing Bureaucracy or Increasing Opportunities? School District Experiences with Supplemental Educational Services*. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.
- Sunderman, G., Kim, J., Orfield, G. (2005). *NCLB Meets School Realities: Lessons from the Field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- TAC's Executive Summary*. (n.d.) The Afterschool Center.
- Taylor, E (1998). A Primer on Critical Race Theory: Who are the Critical Race Theorists and What Are They Saying? *The Journal on Blacks in Higher Education*.(19), 122-24.
- Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing Critical Ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- Tyack, D. (1974). *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Tyson, K., Darity, W., & Castellino, D. (2005, August). It's Not 'a Black Thing': Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement. *American Sociological Review*, 70(4), 582-605.
- Urrieta, L. (2004). Assistencialism and the Politics of High-Stakes Testing. *The Urban Review*. 36(3), 211-226.

- U.S. Department of Education (2002a). *No Child Left Behind: A Desktop Reference*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- U.S. Department of Education (2002b). *No Child Left Behind: Supplemental Educational Services, Non-Regulatory Guidance*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- U.S. Department of Education (2003). *No Child Left Behind: Supplemental Education Services, Non-Regulatory Guidance (Final Draft)*. Washington, D.C. (author).
- U.S. Department of Education (2005). *No Child Left Behind: Supplemental Education Services, Non-Regulatory Guidance (Update)*. Washington, D.C. (author).
- U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *10 Facts about K-12 Education Funding*. Retrieved on December 8, 2004 from <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/10facts/index.html>.
- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Executive Summary*. Retrieved March 28, 2005 from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/execsumm.html>.
- Valencia, R. (1999). *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Vandell, D., & Shumow, L. (1999). After-school Child Care Programs. *Future of Children*, 9(2), 64-80
- Vasquez, J. (1988, January 1). Contexts of Learning for Minority Students. *Educational Forum*, 52(3), 243. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ369895)
- Wang, M., Haertel, G., Walberg, H. (1997). *Fostering Educational Resilience in Inner-City Schools*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, DC. (ERIC Document ED419856).
- Ware, F. (2006). Warm Demander Pedagogy: Culturally Responsive Teaching That Supports a Culture of Achievement for African American Students. *Urban Education*. 41: 427-456.
- Welch, O., Hodges, C., Payne, L. (1996). Project EXCEL: Developing Scholar Identity within a Community of Respect. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED394471)
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2007). Promising Practices in Afterschool Program and School Partnerships. *After School Issues*. Wellesley College. 3(1). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED496336).

- Werbner, R. (2002). Introduction: Challenging Minorities, Difference, and Tribal Citizenship in Botswana. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 28(4), 671-684.
- What Makes Us Unique*. (n.d.). The Afterschool Center.
- White, H. L. (2004, March 11-17, 2004). CMS Capacity, Spending Dilemmas: Inner City Schools Remain Underused; 25% Budget Hike Proposed. *The Charlotte Post*, pp. 1A, 2A.
- Whitebook, M., & Sakai, L. (2004). When Directors Leave: The Causes and Consequences of Center Administrative Changes. *Exchange: The Early Childhood Leaders' Magazine Since 1978*, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ755222).
- Whiting, G. (2006, Summer). From At Risk to At Promise: Developing Scholar Identities Among Black Males. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 17(4), 222-229
- Wolf, P., Eissa, N., Puma, M. (2005). *Evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program: First Year Report on Participation*. Washington, D.C.: US. Department of Education.
- Yin, R. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications
- Yohalem, N., Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., Pittman, K. (2004). *Participation During Out-of-School Time: Taking a Closer Look*. Out of School Policy Commentary #6. Washington, D.C. The Forum for Youth Investment.
- Yosso, T. (2005). Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 8(1), 69-91.
- Zosky, D. (2003). No Child Left Behind: An Assessment of an After-School Program on Academic Performance Among Low-Income, At-Risk Students. *School Social Work Journal*. 27(2), 18-31.