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EFFECT OF MEDITATION ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Background: A growing literature describes the importance of social-emotional learning (SEL) for student social behavior, academic performance, and emotional health. One widely implemented school program, the Quiet Time program, has been shown to improve factors associated with SEL, including positive emotional and behavioral coping skills, resilience, and self-actualization. **Methods**: A total of 101 sixth-grade students, 51 students from a public West Coast Quiet Time school practicing Transcendental Meditation (TM) and 50 non-meditating students from a matched-control school, participated in the study. Both teacher rating of social-emotional competencies, using the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), and student self-reported psychological distress, using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) emotional symptoms scale, were completed at baseline and four-month posttest. **Results**: Significant improvement was found in the TM group compared to controls in social-emotional competencies for both the entire sample and high-risk subgroup (p values <.001; effect sizes = .78 and 1.32, respectively). A decrease in negative emotional symptoms was observed in high-risk TM students compared to controls ($p < .073$; effect size = -.70). **Conclusion**: These findings indicate the value of implementing TM to enhance social-emotional learning and decrease psychological distress in middle school students. Future studies are encouraged.

Keywords: Meditation, social-emotional learning, social-emotional competencies, middle school, students, stress

Introduction

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly being recognized as an important goal of education (Cohen, 2006; Elias et al., 2014; Weissberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2004). Development of social-emotional learning competencies involves effectively applying knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set goals, and engage in positive social relationships and healthy behaviors (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013). These competencies include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, goal-directed behavior, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, which may help students perform better academically and enhance emotional and social well-being (Belfield et al., 2015; Snyder, 2014; Snyder et al., 2010; Catalano, Berglund et al., 2004; Durlak, Weissberg et al. 2011; Zins, Payton et al., 2007).

Recent meta-analyses indicate that SEL programs may improve students' competencies and reduce mental health problems (Durlak et al., 2011, Sklad et al., 2012, Wigelsworth et al., 2016). A recent study by Humphrey et al. (2016) found that an alternative thinking strategy SEL curriculum led to a reduction in emotional symptoms, as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, among children classified as at-risk at baseline.

Meditation programs are being implemented in schools as a means to help children improve SEL competencies and improve their emotional health and well-being (e.g., Black et al., 2009; Wendt et al., 2015; Elder et al., 2013). One widely-implemented school program, the Quiet Time Transcendental Meditation (TM) program has been shown to improve a number of factors associated with SEL, including stress management, emotional and behavioral coping skills, resilience, and self-actualization (So, K-T. & Orme-Johnson, 2001; Nidich et al., 2009; Wendt et al., 2015; Alexander et al.,1991).

Transcendental Meditation is described as an effortless, automatic self-transcending technique that employs the use of a mantra (sound) to produce a physiological state of "restful alertness" (Travis & Shear, 2010; Travis, Tecce, Arenander, & Wallace, 2002; Dillbeck & Bronson, 1981). The practice of the TM technique is not based on religious or other philosophical beliefs and does not involve major changes to one's lifestyle (Roth, 1994).

The purpose of the current pilot study was to evaluate the effect of the Quiet Time TM program on social-emotional learning by teacher rating, and student self-reported negative emotional symptoms. This was the first study to evaluate effects of the Transcendental Meditation (TM) program on teacher-rated social-emotional learning in middle school students.

Methods

Overview

The study compared sixth-grade students who took part in a Quiet Time program with twice-daily practice of the TM program to non-meditating students from a matched control school within the same West Coast urban public school district. Both schools were similar in terms of grade level, geographical location, size, demographic composition, and socio-economic status. A total of 101 students were included in the study. Outcomes included teacher rating of student social-emotional competence (SEC) and student self-reported emotional symptoms. Measures were administered at baseline (prior to students learning the TM program) and again at four-month posttest.

Participants

A total of 101 sixth-grade students took part in the study: 51 students who took part in a Quiet Time TM program and 50 non-meditating students from a matched-control school from the same school district. Both experimental and control students were similar in terms of age, gender, and ethnic background. Students from both schools continued with their standard curriculum and instruction throughout the school day.

Transcendental Meditation Program

Students were taught the Transcendental Meditation technique in a standard seven-step course over five sessions and then practiced for 10 minutes twice a day at the beginning and end of the school day, as part of their daily Quiet Time program. They were also encouraged to practice their meditation program at home on weekends.

The Transcendental Meditation program was taught to students by certified teachers following the same standardized procedures for teaching: initial introductory/ preparatory lectures and a brief personal interview; individual personal instruction session; three group meetings to verify the correctness of practice and to provide additional knowledge about the practice over the next three consecutive days; and additional follow-up meetings with students to insure continued regularity and correctness of practice. Students practiced their meditation program in school at the beginning and end of each day, supervised by a classroom teacher or Transcendental Meditation instructor. Written parental permission was required prior to students learning the program.

Measures

Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) Mini teacher-rating scale:

The DESSA Mini form 1 (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapiro, 2011/2014; LeBuffe, Naglieri, & Shapiro, 2011) is an 8-item strengths-based behavior rating scale assessing social emotional competence. The DESSA Mini shows good reliability and validity for assessing progress in middle school children, with a Cronbach's alpha across multiple middle school grade levels of .92 (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapiro, 2011). The DESSA-Mini has been found to be a reliable and valid instrument compared to the full version DESSA assessment (Shapiro, Kim et al., 2016).

The DESSA-Mini evaluates student progress in multiple developmental competencies, including decision-making (learning from others and from her/his own previous experiences, using her/his values to guide her/his action, and accepting responsibility for her/his decisions); goal-directed behavior (initiation of and persistence in completing tasks, and performing steps of a task in order to achieve goals); personal responsibility (tendency to be careful and reliable in actions and contributing to group efforts); relationship skills (performance of socially acceptable actions that promote and maintain positive connections with others); and optimistic thinking (confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking) (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapiro, 2011/2014; LeBuffe, Naglieri, & Shapiro, 2011).

Six teachers from the experimental school and six teachers from the control school each rated approximately 7-8 individual students in their homeroom class. Each student in the study was rated by the same classroom teacher at baseline (prior to TM intervention) and again four months later.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Emotional Symptoms scale:

Psychological distress was measured using the 5-item student self-report SDQ emotional symptoms scale (Goodman, Meltzer, & Baily, 2003). The SDQ was developed from the well-established British Rutter scales and is highly correlated with the Youth Self

Report (Goodman, Meltzer, & Baily, 2003; Koskelainen, Sourander, & Kaljonen, 2001). The measure has been shown to have good discriminative validity (Elder et al., 2013), and a Cronbach's alpha >.80 (Goodman, 2001). All students in the study completed the SDQ scale at baseline and again at four-month posttest.

Statistical Analysis

Change in outcome variables was analyzed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), adjusted for baseline dependent variable. Additional subgroup analyses were conducted on students above the median on SDQ emotional symptoms, and on students below the median on DESSA total social emotional competency. All *p* values were reported as two-tailed. Effect size was based on Cohen's *d*: difference in mean change between groups divided by pooled baseline standard deviation.

Results

Baseline

The two groups were similar in terms of age, gender, ethnic composition, and baseline DESSA and SDQ emotional symptoms total scores (all p values >.05; see Table 1).

Outcomes

Eighty-eight teachers (TM = 41; Control = 47) completed baseline and four-month rating of students' social emotional competencies. Analysis of DESSA total change scores indicated a significant increase in overall social emotional competency in the TM group compared to controls (TM: mean change = 4.17, 95% CI 2.62, 5.72; Control: mean change = -.026, 95% CI -1.71, 1.20; p < .001; between-group effect size = .78). Analysis of individual items showed significant improvement on all test items in the TM group compared to controls (all p values < .015; effect sizes ranged from .43 to 1.98; see Table 2).

Table 1: Demographic and Baseline Data by Group

Variable	TM	Control
Age (mean)	10.98	11.00
Gender (% female)	49%	55%
Grade (6th grade %)	100%	100%
Ethnicity (%)		
African American	23%	8%
Hispanic	26%	20%
Asian	44%	65%
Caucasian	5%	0%
Other	2%	7%
DESSA total score	25.27 (6.40)	23.94 (6.45)
SDQ Emotional Symptoms total score	4.86 (1.51)	4.62 (1.14)

Note: TM: n=51; Control: n=50 for demographic and SDQ emotional symptoms, and TM: n=40 and Control: n=47 for DESSA teacher rating scale; Mean (standard deviation); P values > .05, effect sizes <. 25.

One hundred and one students (TM = 51; Control = 50) completed the baseline and four-month SDQ emotional symptoms scale. No significant between-group difference was observed (mean change = 0.04, 95% CI -0.33, 0.42; Control: n = 50; mean change = 0.52, 95% CI 0.04, 0.80; p < .164; effect size = .35).

Further analyses were conducted with high-risk subgroups on both DESSA total and SDQ emotional symptoms scores. On the DESSA total scale, TM students who were below the median baseline score (baseline score =< 26), showed a significant increase on social emotional competency (TM: n = 18, mean change = 7.45 CI 95% 5.05, 9.86) compared to controls (Control: n = 29, mean change: = 0.62 CI 95% -1.28, 2.51 ; p <.001; effect size = 1.32).

For the SDQ emotional symptoms total scale, TM students who were above the median baseline score (baseline score => 5), showed a significant decrease on emotional

Table 2: Adjusted Mean Change Scores by Group

Variable	TM	Control	P value	Effect Size
	Adjusted Mean (SE)	**Adjusted Mean (SE)**		
DESSA Total	4.47 (0.66)	-0.52 (0.62)	<.001	.78
Accepting responsibility for actions	0.39 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.12)	.015	.43
Doing something nice for others	0.85 (0.11)	-0.12 (0.10)	<.001	1.02
Speaking about positive things	0.96 (0.11)	-0.96 (0.10)	<.001	1.98
Paying attention	0.42 (0.12)	0.00 (0.11)	.011	.39
Contributing to group efforts	0.53 (0.11)	-0.20 (0.11)	<.001	.75
Performing steps of a task in order	0.55 (0.12)	0.09 (0.11)	.005	.61
Showing care when doing a project or school work	0.49 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.09)	<.001	.54
Following advice of a trusted adult	0.41 (0.11)	-0.20 (0.10)	<.001	.65
SDQ Emotional Symptoms Scale	+0.04 (0.24)	+0.52 (0.25)	.164	-.35

Note: Means adjusted for baseline dependent variable; SE= Standard error; Effect size based on Cohen's *d*.

Table 3: Adjusted Mean Change Scores for High-Risk Subgroup

Variable	TM	Control	P value	Effect Size
	Adjusted Mean (SE)	**Adjusted Mean (SE)**		
DESSA Total	7.45 (1.19)	0.62 (0.94)	<.001	1.32
SDQ Emotional Symptoms	-0.93 (0.26)	-0.23 (0.27)	.073	-.70

Note: Means adjusted for baseline dependent variable; SE= Standard error; Effect size based on Cohen's *d*.

distress (TM: n = 30, mean change = -0.93, 95% CI -1.45, -.41) compared to controls (Control: n = 27, mean change: = 0.23, 95% CI -0.78, 0.32; p <.073; effect size = -.70).

Discussion

Findings indicate that practice of the TM program in middle school students may be beneficial for developing social-emotional learning. Effect sizes for the DESSA total score and individual items were generally in the medium to large range. The results on SEL competencies by teacher rating are consistent with previous self-reported findings showing improved social-emotional competencies in secondary school and college students (So, K-T. & Orme-Johnson, 2001; Wendt et al., 2015; Alexander et al., 1991; Nidich et al., 2009).

The findings of improved total social emotional competency and decreased negative emotional symptoms were most pronounced in the subgroup of at-risk students. For students who indicated high emotional symptoms at baseline, practice of the TM program compared to controls produced an effect size that was relatively large *(d* = -.70). This finding is consistent with prior research showing decreased psychological distress in high school and college students (Elder et al., 2013; Nidich et al., 2009). For DESSA total scores in the at-risk subgroup the effect size was large (*d* = 1.32).

The results of this and prior studies on Transcendental Meditation suggest that "transcending" during daily practice of this self-development program may enliven the inner intelligence of the mind and body (Castillo-Richmond et al., 2000), resulting in improved SEL competencies and emotional health. Transcending leads to a subjective state described as "pure consciousness" or "self-referral consciousness", a state of least-excitation of the mind (Travis and Pearson, 2000), which is accompanied by a style of brain functioning marked by higher integration and coherence. These transformations in inner experience and in brain functioning could positively change how one interacts with one's social environment and how one meets challenges in life. Students participating in the Quiet Time TM program previously have shown reductions in negative school behavior, improved academic achievement, and higher graduation rates and lower school dropout (Elder, Nidich et al., 2013; Barnes, Bauza, & Treiber, 2003; Nidich et al., 2009; Colbert & Nidich, 2013).

Previous research indicates that TM reduces psychological and physiological response to stressors, including decreased sympathetic nervous system and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis overactivation, including reductions in elevated cortisol (stress hormone) level (Barnes et al. 2001; MacLean et al. 1997; Walton et al. 2004). Research also shows a more integrated style of brain functioning, evidenced by EEG imaging, which is associated with lower stress reactivity (Travis et al. 2009). Changes in brain functioning, related to executive functioning and higher cognitive processing, have been found due to TM practice (Dillbeck & Bronson, 1981; Travis, Grosswald et al., 2011). These effects may provide possible physiological mechanisms for improvements observed in this study.

While the TM technique may be considered primarily both an SEC self-awareness technique (due to its inward, self-transcending mechanics) and a self-management technique (due to its stress reduction impact), other critical SEC components appear to be positively influenced. Results on the individual items of the DESSA-Mini indicate improvement in the TM group compared to controls in the areas of decision-making, goal-directed behavior, personal responsibility, relationship skills, and optimistic thinking (scale categories on the full version DESSA assessment).

This study adds to the literature on SEC and shows that the DESSA-Mini is sensitive to change due to meditation treatment in middle school students. The use of a teacher-rating instrument was an important component of the study in terms of obtaining useful data on children's social-emotional competencies, rather than relying solely on student self-report.

Strengths and Limitations

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to determine whether practice of the Transcendental Meditation program could result in increased social-emotional competencies and decreased psychological distress in public middle school students. The major strengths of the study included the use of a matched control school to avoid within-school contamination effects and the use of teacher rating to assess student social-emotional competencies. Analyses included comparison of the groups from the entire sample of students and high-risk subgroups (students who were below the baseline median on DESSA-Mini and above the baseline median on SDQ emotional symptoms). Both West Coast district schools had a predominantly ethnic minority composition. Future research on social-emotional competencies and mental health factors is encouraged to look at longer-term effects of the TM practice with larger student numbers. Randomized controlled studies are encouraged. In addition, future research with larger numbers of subjects in specific racial and ethnic samples is encouraged.

Conclusion

This study showed improved social-emotional learning competencies and reduced emotional problems due to practice of the TM program in middle school students. These results are consistent with previous research on TM in students. Policy makers and educators are encouraged to contribute to the healthy development of children by supporting the incorporation of evidence-based programs such as TM into standard educational practice.

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AN INVESTIGATION OF METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN COLLEGE FRESHMEN

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Prior research suggests a relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic success, in which individuals with greater metacognitive awareness perform better in academic settings compared to those with a lesser degree of metacognitive awareness. In the current study, we sought to generalize this finding to the population of college freshmen students by examining the relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic performance. In addition, we aimed to explore the potential value of metacognitive awareness training in college freshmen students to encourage retention in higher academic settings. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and college freshmen students' academic performance, as indicated by cumulative grade point average (GPA). This implies that students with a higher degree of metacognitive awareness tend to also succeed academically when compared to those with a lesser degree of metacognitive awareness. In addition, these results generalize the association between academic performance and metacognitive awareness to the college freshmen student population. Since the degree of metacognitive awareness can be increased with instruction, these findings suggest a route in assisting at risk freshmen succeed in academic settings.

Keywords: Grade point average, multiple choice exams, metacognitive awareness, academic performance, college freshmen students

Metacognitive awareness was first defined by Flavell (1979) as the knowledge about one's cognitive processes, and the ability to control or regulate these cognitive processes. Schraw (1998) further proposed that metacognitive awareness is composed of two primary factors: knowledge about cognition, and regulation of cognition. Knowledge about cognition refers to an individual's understanding of person, task, and strategy variables. Regulation of cognition encompasses the overall planning and monitoring of an individual's specific cognitive actions. Kuhn (2000) suggested that the basic processes underlying metacognitive awareness begin to develop during childhood. An extensive meta-analysis by Hertzog and Hultsch (2000) further suggested that once metacognitive awareness arises, it remains relatively intact throughout development and into old age.

Metcalfe and Shimamura (1994) argued that metacognitive awareness is a higher level cognitive process that influences other factors of cognition, such as perception and memory. These cognitive constructs are strongly related to an individual's overall intelligence (Tourva, Spanoudis, & Demetriou, 2016). A number of researchers have supported the proposition that metacognitive awareness is involved in problem solving (Swanson, 1990), and may be related to general intelligence (Yong, 2001). For example, Berardi-Coletta, Dominowski, and Rellinger (1995) found that individuals with higher metacognitive awareness problem solving strategies performed significantly better on training and transfer tasks compared to those with lower levels of metacognitive awareness. Rickey and Stacey (2000) further reported that improving metacognitive awareness abilities can result in more successful problem solving. Yong (2001) proposed that metacognitive awareness and intelligence interact with one another, and likely influence one another in a complex manner currently unknown. A review by Hertzog and Robinson (2005) suggests that metacognitive awareness is essential for higher intelligence, and predicted that future research should provide strong support for this theory.

Given the theoretical relationship between metacognitive awareness, intelligence, and problem solving, it is not surprising that researchers have reported associations between metacognitive awareness abilities and academic performance (Garofalo & Lester, 1985; Romainville, 1994; McCrindle & Christensen, 1995; Schleifer & Dull, 2009; Young & Fry, 2012). For example, researchers have reported a positive association between metacognitive awareness and academic performance, in which individuals with a higher degree of metacognitive awareness performed better academically than those with lower metacognitive awareness scores (Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Young & Fry, 2012). Specifically, Isaacson and Fujita (2006) found that undergraduate students with greater metacognitive knowledge performed better on tests compared those with a lower degree of metacognitive knowledge. In addition, Young and Fry (2012) found a positive relationship between metacognitive awareness and cumulative grade-point average in upper level (e.g., junior, senior, graduate) college students. This association between metacognitive awareness and academic success appears to be stable across a wide variety of major disciplines, such as chemistry (Rickey & Stacy, 2000), biology (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995), economics (Romainville, 1994), accounting (Schleifer & Dull, 2009), and mathematics (Garofalo & Lester, 1985).

Despite prior evidence generalizing the association between metacognitive awareness and academic performance to the overall population of college students (Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Young & Fry, 2012), there is currently a limited understanding of this relationship regarding the college freshmen student

population. This is critical given that a growing concern has been illuminated by research showing that college freshmen students often experience academic performance difficulties when transitioning into the college academic setting. This line of research has explored factors that may be related to metacognitive awareness. For example, Balduf (2009) reported that college freshmen underachievement is related to poor study skills, poor time management, and an overall lack of understanding of how to tackle difficult challenges. Furthermore, Seidman (2005) argued that the development of critical thinking is a central skill to college academic success. Halpern (2002) describes critical thinking skills as involving metacognitive awareness processes, such as the ability to monitor and understand one's own cognitive processes. Moreover, there is also some evidence that metacognitive awareness can be increased with training (Kramarski & Mevarech, 2003; Teong, 2003), suggesting that some of the academic difficulty encountered by freshmen students may be alleviated through metacognitive awareness training.

Based on a review of the literature encompassing metacognitive awareness, we aimed to explore if the association between metacognitive awareness and academic performance extended to the population of college freshmen students. Specifically, we hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between overall metacognitive awareness score and cumulative grade point average (GPA). This result would suggest that students with a greater degree of metacognitive awareness also perform better overall academically compared to their peers with a lower level of metacognitive awareness. In addition, this finding would support prior studies showing this association, and generalize this finding to the college freshmen student population.

Method

Participants

We recruited 97 student volunteers, 55 females (56.7%) and 42 males (43.3%), from an introduction to psychology course. This course is primarily taken by incoming college freshmen students. Participants volunteered through a department research participation pool at a large Midwestern university. Students with access to the research pool represented every major at the university. The sign up system had a brief description of the study and indicated that the volunteers could access the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI; Schraw & Dennison, 1994) questionnaire online. Only freshmen students were included in the analyses. The age range of the participants was 18-21 years with a mean of 18.7 years. Two students had no GPA because they received incompletes in all courses, and were excluded from the study. This study was categorized as scholarship of teaching and learning, and thus exempt from the university's Institutional Review Board reviewing process. However, normal procedures for a confidential study and data collection were followed.

Materials

Participants were asked to complete the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI), a 52-item measure used to assess for overall metacognitive awareness (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). The instrument assessed overall level of metacognitive awareness, and the sub-factors of knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition. Knowledge about cognition was assessed by questions such as, "I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses", and regulation of cognition is assessed by questions such as, "I set specific goals before I begin a task". The questionnaire was made available to participants via Qualtrics online software.

Procedure

The study was made available near the end of the current academic semester. Participants were provided with a link to the Qualtrics survey when they signed up for the study. Participants completed the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI; Schraw & Dennison, 1994) online via Qualtrics. After the end of the semester, participants' respective cumulative GPAs were provided by the university's Office of Institutional Effectiveness. GPAs at the large Midwestern university are on a standard 0.0 to 4.0 scale.

Results

A Pearson's r correlational analysis was conducted between overall metacognitive awareness, knowledge about cognition, and regulation of cognition with overall cumulative GPA. As predicted, there was a significant weak positive correlation [r (95) = 0.22, $p < 0.05$] between overall metacognitive awareness (MAI) score and average cumulative GPA (Figure 1). Individuals with higher MAI scores earned a higher cumulative GPA.

In addition, knowledge about cognition had a significant weak positive correlation with GPA [r (95) = 0.39, $p < 0.001$] (Figure 2). Individuals with greater knowledge about cognition also had a higher cumulative GPA. However, regulation of cognition was not significantly related to cumulative GPA [r (95) = 0.11, ns].

Discussion

The obtained results supported the hypothesis that metacognitive awareness and college freshmen student cumulative GPA are related to one another. Specifically, college freshmen with a higher degree of metacognitive

Figure 1: Relationship between overall Metacognitive Awareness Inventory score and Cumulative Grade Point Average.

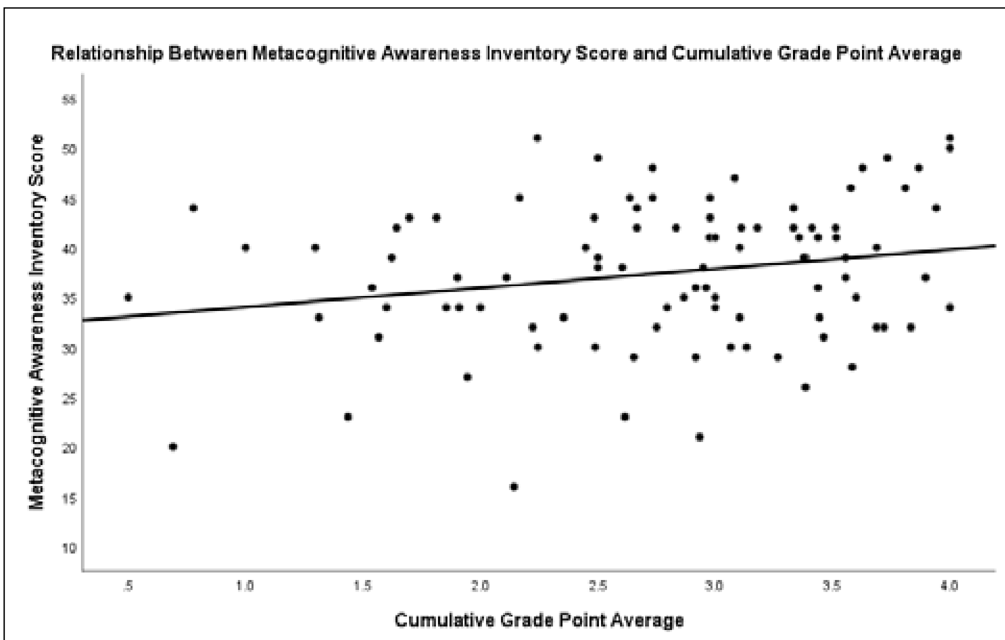
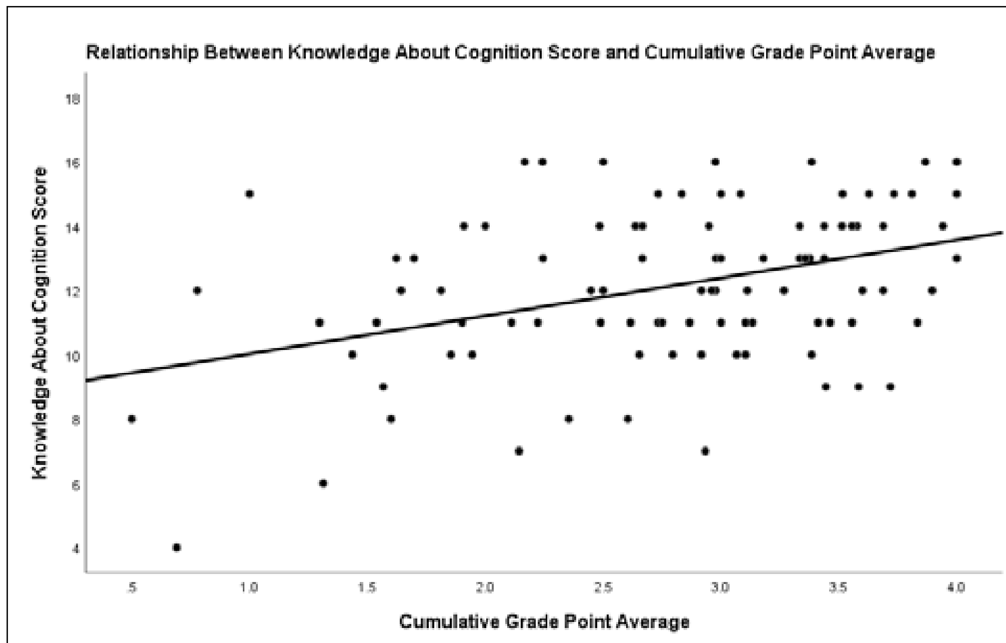


Figure 2: Relationship between Knowledge About Cognition score and Cumulative Grade Point Average.



awareness obtained a higher cumulative GPA than those with a lower level of metacognitive awareness. These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating a relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic performance (Garofalo & Lester, 1985; Romainville, 1994; McCrindle & Christensen, 1995; Schleifer & Dull, 2009; Young & Fry, 2012). In addition, these results extend these previous findings by generalizing this association to the population of college freshmen students, many of whom have not yet declared a major for a specific educational discipline, and are prone to experience academic performance difficulties when transitioning into the college academic setting.

Additional investigation revealed a positive correlation between the sub-factor of knowledge about cognition and GPA. Knowledge about cognition entails what an individual knows about his or her own cognitive enterprises (Schraw, 1998). This includes the specific cognitive strategies used by an individual, and can be thought of as the basic foundation for obtaining conceptual knowledge. The observed association between this sub-factor of metacognitive awareness and cumulative GPA supports two important implications. First, students with a higher awareness of their own specific skillsets and strategies also displayed greater performance in academic settings compared to students with a lower degree of awareness. Second, this greater awareness is believed to reflect heightened levels of conditional knowledge. Therefore, it is likely that college freshmen are aware of which strategies work best for different academic situations, and are capable of implementing such strategies as needed in order to perform effectively in an academic settings.

Knowledge about cognition accounted for over 15% of the variance in GPA. It is

possible that this study has underestimated the strength of the relationship due to ceiling effects (i.e. some students had a maximum GPA) and floor effects (i.e. some students had already left the university and others had incompletes). It is also possible that other factors could be contributing to an individual's academic success, ones that the metacognitive awareness inventory (MAI) is not sensitive to. For example, researchers have suggested that other constructs, such as self-regulation and self-efficacy, are also strongly related to academic performance outcomes (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Landine & Stewart, 1998; Lane & Lane, 2001; Zimmerman, 1995). These other factors may be interacting with metacognition or making independent contributions to cumulative GPA as has been argued by a number of researchers (Dinsmore et al., 2008; Mayer, 1998; Schunk, 2008).

Many college freshmen students have academic problems that may be a related to a low degree metacognitive awareness. The results of this study are important since researchers have reported that metacognitive awareness can be increased with training (Kramarski & Mevarech, 2003; Teong, 2003). This suggests that metacognitive awareness training could potentially serve as a mediator to help improve college freshmen academic performance and retention in higher education settings. Instructors might implement metacognitive awareness training strategies in pre-college preparation programs in order to increase the chances that students will succeed academically in higher education settings. Alternatively, colleges and universities could develop such training "courses" for at risk students.

It is important to note that we only measured cumulative GPA as an indicator of academic performance. Young and Fry (2012) proposed that metacognitive awareness may be better served as a broad predictor of academic achievement, such as with cumulative GPA, versus single measurements, such as a multiple choice exam. This would suggest that programs targeting at risk students should focus on more broad behaviors that may improve academic performance. It is critical that future research investigates the relationship between metacognitive awareness and other more specific academic performance measures (e.g. homework, written essay reports, projects, and other forms of exams). Future work should also address any potential interactions metacognitive awareness may have with other proposed factors, such as self-efficacy and self-regulation. Such investigations may help refine the focus of programs aimed at improving retention rates for at risk students

In conclusion, the current findings further replicate the relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic success. However, our study generalizes this association to college freshmen students. This target population tends to have educational challenges, as college freshmen students often experience academic performance difficulties when transitioning into the college academic setting. Given these findings regarding the association between metacognitive awareness and academic success, it is possible that metacognitive training strategies may prove as a useful means for improving college freshmen student performance and retention. However, future research is necessary in order to further understand the relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic measures of performance, particularly the effects of metacognitive awareness training in at risk college freshmen students.

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IS SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORRELATED WITH COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AMONG CHILDREN?

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The present study aims to investigate correlation between development of socio-emotional skills and transition from intellectual reality to visual reality. Therefore, it was designed in correlational research. Research sample included 120 primary school children. Data was collected through Facial Emotion Recognition and Empathy Test (FERET), and a rating scale developed by the researchers. Findings of the research indicated that correlation coefficient between the variables is .56. Furthermore, linear regression model explains .31 of the variance. Findings of the research are going to be discussed through Piaget's moral development theory and Luquet's theory.

Key Words: *Cognitive development, social-emotional development, primary school children*

Introduction

Seminal theories have been developed in order to understand child development. Piaget is one of the most influential person who developed cognitive and moral development theories for children. Piaget developed a moral development theory which explains development of moral judgment among children. Piaget's moral development theory deals with moral development through reciprocity, obligation, social interaction and transformation. Piaget's moral development theory consists of two stages as heteronomous morality and autonomous morality. In heteronomous morality children know their duties and responsibilities but don't see them as social arrangement as regulation of human interactions. They assume social rules are fixed like natural laws and same for everyone. Children with heteronomous morality cannot manage their behaviours through personal judgment. As children grow older, they interact more with others. Social interactions make them more adept in understanding morality and help them take others' view point. In autonomous morality stage, they come to be aware of that moral rules are mutual agreements and arrangements between individuals. Children who are in autonomous morality, follow moral rules through their self-constructed convictions (Piaget, 1932; Rest, 1979).

Egocentrism and lack of decentering are obstacles of moral judgment for children. According to Piaget (1965), young children centering on object, are unable to shift their attention from one aspect of an object to another. This disadvantage underlies preoperational and concrete operational children's egocentric thought and inability in moral judgment. In communication child with egocentric thought fails take others' point of view into account (Rubin & Schneider, 1973).

Moreover, the child, who cannot decenter, fails to think reciprocal, interpersonal aspect of moral situations to solve moral conflict (Lee, 1971).

Cognitive skills are one of the skills to adjust social and physical environment. Luquet theory influenced Piaget and Piaget used theoretical backgrounds of Luquet theory to develop his cognitive development theory. Luquet (1913) proposed a theory in which children drawing is explained with their cognitive characteristics. His theory deals with children drawing in five stages as fortuitous realism (18 months to 2 years), failed realism (2 to 3 years), symbolic realism (3 to 4 years old), intellectual realism (5 to 7 years old), and visual realism (8 years and older). Children make their first scribbles and acquire coordination between eye and hand in fortuitous realism. In failed realism children's' scribbles become more recognizable whereas they have lack of coordinating their drawing. Children come to draw details of object in relationships and their drawings are simple in nature in symbolic realism. Intellectual realism children's drawings reflect some element which they know to exist although it is not possible to see. Visual realism is the stage at which children can apply perspective rules on their drawings, draw from a particular viewpoint, and use their perceptions. Eng (1957) and Luquet (1913) proposed that children draw based on what they know rather than what they see. Luquet (1913) claimed that conceptual knowledge is more dominant over perceptual knowledge among children whose age is 8 to 9 years. Those children are inclined to depict object that is impossible to view.

Purpose of the Research: Facial emotion recognition plays pivotal role in social interaction. Therefore, facial emotion is one of the socio-emotional skills. Empathy, another concept of socio-emotional skills, is defined as emotional response based on recognition of emotions. Facial emotion recognition is component of the empathy skill. Empathy and facial emotion recognition are pro-social behaviours. Therefore, empathy also contains skill of taking others' point of view.

There are several researches about emotion, regulation and moral development (Eisenberg, 2000), development of moral emotions and moral development (Malti & Ongley, 2014), relationship between empathy and moral reasoning (Berenguer, 2010), association between empathy and moral judgment (Kalliopuska, 1983), role of empathy in social reasoning in youth (Paciello, Fida, Cerniglia, Tramontano, & Cole, 2013), However, there are very few studies that aim to investigate relationship between cognitive development and socio-emotional skills in the context of moral reasoning.

Method

Research Design: The present study aimed to reveal correlation between social-emotional development and cognitive development, compose a model between the two domains of development. Therefore, it was designed in correlational research.

Participants: Convenience sampling strategy was used due to financial, time constraints and impossibility of list and randomly assignment. Sample of the study consisted of primary school children. 30 of them were 7 years old, 30 of them were at the age of 8, 30 of them of them were 9 years old, and 30 of them were 10 years old.

Instruments: Facial Emotion Recognition and Empathy Test (FERET) was used to assess participant children's facial emotion recognition and empathy as socio-emotional skills. The FERET consists of 6 items. The FERET's internal consistency coefficient is 82. Participant children's cognitive skills were evaluated through a rating scale of child drawing developed by the researchers.

Process: All data collection and all procedures were followed in the same order

in order to norm data collection. First the FERET was given away to the students and they responded the items on the FERET. After the FERET was completed, drawing sample was displayed through a computer and projection device. They were asked to draw what they saw. After they had finished drawing the data collection process was ended.

Findings

Table 1:Correlation between Socio-emotional Skills and Cognitive Characteristics

Variables	N	r	p
Cognitive Characteristics Socio-Emotional Skills	120	.56*	.00**

* Two-Tailed; **p < .01.

Correlation between socio-emotional skills and cognitive characteristics was found as .56. Findings in the Table 1 revealed that there is positive, medium and significant correlation between the research variables (r=.56; p<01). Moreover, regression analysis was carried out in order to create a model based on the variables Results of the regressions analysis were indicated on the Table 2.

Regression model, based on the correlation between cognitive characteristics and socio-emotional skills, was observed to fit modestly to the data (R^2= .31). This finding indicates that cognitive characteristic of the participant students predicts socio-emotional skills score from the FERET. B coefficient for the scores of socio-emotional skills was found as 6.79. B coefficient revealed that if cognitive characteristic increases, socio-emotional skills from the FERET rises by 6.79 points

Discussion

Result of the study reveals that cognitive development characteristics of the participant students modestly predict their socio-emotional skills. In other words, better cognitive development characteristics leads to better socio-emotional skills. Luquet (1913) emphasized that children with better cognitive development can draw based on what they see rather than what they know. Drawing of the participant children were assessed by examining appropriateness in terms of colours, proportion between the objects, location of the objects, perspective rules (usage of sky and ground lines) direction of the objects, similarity of the objects, and emotional expression of the object. Cognitive development characteristics of the participant children were identified through their drawing and evaluated by Luquet's principles. In the study the children who drew the sample drawing without caring the sample drawing features, was evaluated as intellectual realism period children because of the fact that they portrayed through their conceptual knowledge rather than perceptional features of the sample drawing. On the other hand the children who depicted the sample drawing by taking perceptional features of the sample drawing into consideration, was evaluated as visual realism period children.

It was observed in the study that visual realism children scored better from the FERET than intellectual realism children did. Piaget (1950) and Rest (1979) stressed that better cognitive development makes children more adept in moral reasoning. Better cognitive development characteristics may have helped them perform better in the FERET whereas poor cognitive development characteristics

Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	p	r	R^2	ΔR^2	F
Cognitive Characteristics	-47.09	13.42	.51	-3.50	.00	.56	.31	.31	50.00
Socio-Emotional Skills	6.79	.96	.51	7.07	.00				

may have led to poor performance in the FERET. Lee (1971), and found that the children who fail to decentre, have lack of solving moral conflict. In the study it was found that intellectual realism period children, whose cognitive development characteristics are not as good as visual realism period children, poorly performed in progression of emotional and social information task in the FERET. Result of the study confirms Lee (1971), Piaget (1965), and Rest (1979).

There is close relation between Piaget's cognitive and moral development theories and Luquet's theory. Intellectual realism period children are dominated by conceptual knowledge rather than perceptual knowledge, so they draw based on what they known about the object, being drawn whereas visual realism period children can draw based on what they see. In Piaget's terms, intellectual realism period children have inability to shift attention from conceptual knowledge, fail to decentre, and are under impact of egocentric thought. This disadvantage of the intellectual realism period children with egocentric thought make them poor in moral reasoning.

Conclusion

It was concluded that socio-emotional development and cognitive development are modestly correlated. Cognitive development helps children to develop in socio-emotional domain in which children need to process information related to facial emotion recognition and empathy skills. Findings of the research indicate that there is medium interaction between cognitive development and affective development so improvement in cognitive domain leads to improvement social-emotional development. Therefore, primary school teachers and parents addresses cognitive development and social-emotional development together.

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LEADING EFFECTIVE BUILDING LEVEL CHANGE

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Social, economic, political, and commercial forces are driving the current school transformation agenda; as a result, principals are under direct pressures to improve schools. Principals are expected to be the instructional leaders, to address unending mandates, and to produce immediate improvements in student achievement. Federal initiatives and corresponding state mandates have provided continuous pressures on the public schools to improve. This article provides discussion and examples of the Kotter eight-step model for organizational change as applied to public schools.

Social, economic, political, and commercial forces are driving the current school transformation agenda; as a result, principals are under direct pressures to improve schools (Levin & Fullan, 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Recent attempts to reform schools include the effective schools movement, school restructuring, federal efforts to legislate quality, and state mandates to align with federal requirements. Ongoing accountability initiatives to promote school improvement have resulted in the institutionalization of the use of test scores as the measure of student, teacher, principal, and school success. In addition to governmental mandates, principals face many operational challenges, which include teacher shortages, social media, student poverty, school violence, and safety concerns. Principals are expected to be the instructional leaders, to address unending mandates, and to produce immediate improvements in student achievement.

School reform efforts have been linked directly and indirectly to the perception that teaching and learning will improve based on directives, legislative action, and administrative regulations: that is, if the directives are bold and explicit, then student achievement will improve. However, Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) provided example of both positive and negative impacts on schools; they recommended that flexible policies that aligned with local needs and context. However, effective change is much more complex; if leadership fails to focus on appropriate goals and/or lack need skills then school improvement will not occur. School leaders are expected to implement sustainable change (Levin & Fullan, 2008). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) specifically

focused on the role of the principal in school reform stating: "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among the school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 3).

Federal initiatives and corresponding state mandates have provided continuous pressures on the public schools to improve (e.g. No Child Left Behind in 2001, Race to the Top in 2009, and Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015). Many states have developed addition initiatives to promote improvement of teaching and learning. For example, "Sixteen states plus D.C. require third grade retention" (Diffey, 2016, p. 1) if students fail to meet established reading standards. Bailey, Cameron, and Cortex-Ford (2004) argued that accountability requirements have forced school leaders and teachers to focus on immediate changes rather than on long-term sustainable projects. However, "large-scale, sustained improvement in student outcomes requires a sustained effort to change school and classroom practices, not just structures such as governance and accountability" (Levin & Fullan, 2008, p. 291).

Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) identified four general areas of effective principal leadership: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program. Education leaders need a straightforward method to facilitate change and to promote continuous improvement. Kotter (1996) developed an eight-step change model that provides guidelines that can be utilized by principals to promote continuous school improvement. Kotter (1996) argued, "successful change of any magnitude goes through all eight steps, usually in sequence" (p. 23): (1) Establishing a sense of urgency, (2) Creating the guiding coalition, (3) Develop a vision and strategy, (4) Communicating the change vision, (5) Empowering broad-based change, (6) Generating short-term wins, (7) Consolidating gains and producing more change, and (8) Anchoring new approaches in the culture. Kotter's eight-step model is designed to promote transformation change; he explained that skipping any of the steps will most likely result in problems.

The following sections provide discussion and examples of the Kotter eight-step model for organizational change as applied to public schools. Steps 2 through 7 involve a high level of stakeholder participation. Steps 1 through 4 relate to preparing employees for change; these steps relate to resistance to change and getting the organization ready to change. Steps 5 and 6 relate to moving the organization to a new place. Finally, steps 7 and 8 address approaches to making the change a permanent part of the organizational culture. Within the business community, Kotter's approach has become the de facto method to implement systemic change; we posit that the process provides a roadmap which will enable principals to implement transformation change within their schools.

Sept 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

A critical component is leadership recognize that change is necessary; often, such a realization is connected to a predicament or crisis. Kotter (1996) explained the importance of stakeholder engagement in evaluating organizational status with respect to established norms and future goals; that is, stakeholders must understand the critical nature of needed change. If stakeholders lack a sense of urgency, the principal will not have the influence to implement change; positional power is not sufficient to implement significant school improvement.

The principal can start with valid and reliable data related to standards, to curriculum, to instruction, and to results; hopefully, these components are deeply aligned. If not,

documentation of the misalignment is an indicator of needed change; in addition, the sources of data need to extend beyond traditional standardized student achievement results. Educational stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, principals, and district leadership) need a deep understanding of the issues and indicators of the required changes. If stakeholders lack an understanding of the urgency to change, then they will reinforce the status quote and create sources of resistance (Self, 2007). The involvement of stakeholders beyond the building will reinforce the efforts to facilitate change.

The principal must go beyond dramatic and rational arguments; the principal should provide creditable data to reflect needed change. However, the data must be presented in such a manner that it is understood and usable by stakeholders and aligned with established school goals. Effective databased decision-making utilizes information beyond the aggregated reports provided by the state department of education and the local school district. The data should relate to the school, be valid and reliable, and align with school goals. Such data provide a baseline for evaluation of the change progress at the various steps of the model. The creation of a sense of urgency can be linked to unfreeze the status quo in Lewin's unfreeze-move-freeze theory of change (Burnes, 2004).

Step 2: Create a Guiding Coalition

Kotter (1996) explained that a single person cannot successfully plan, implement, and manage effective organizational change; a guiding coalition must be established to lead the change effort. That is, the principal cannot single-handedly drive the change; an effective leadership team is necessary. Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher (2005) explained that leaders need to "move toward a deeper commitment to developing knowledge, skills, and beliefs" (p. 64) within an organization.

For some time, professional learning communities (PLC) have been identified as the best approach to design and implement change within schools (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; Hord, 2015; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Dufour et al. (2005) explained that a Professional Learning Community is a group of educators working as a team with a common vision, values and beliefs; Little (2003) explained that effective PLCs provide a format for a constructivist approach to school improvement. Hord (2015) argued that "the most powerful structure and strategy enhancing educators' effectiveness and increasing students' successful learning" (p. 38) is an authentic professional learning community. An effective Leadership PLC is an ideal format for the guiding coalition described by Kotter (1996); it can provide the structure and environment to challenge existing shared assumptions, values, and beliefs held by stakeholders, which reflects the existing culture of the school.

The Leadership PLC should be composed of key stakeholders, which will included highly effective team members who can be characterized by their authority, expertise, credibility, and leadership (Kotter, 1996). The exact number and make up of a Leadership PLC will vary. However, to be highly effective, members will require, at a minimum, training, ongoing coaching, professional development, and support in areas related to instructional leadership, effective feedback, and databased decision-making (Copeland, 2003; Newman, et al 2000). For each step of the change process, the principal needs to provide on-going support and skill development for the Leadership PLC.

Step 3: Develop a Vision and Strategies for the Change

Kotter (1996) suggested that the first task of the guiding coalition is to develop a vision and related strategies for the needed change.

He identified six characteristics of an effective vision: imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable. Today, most schools have a vision and mission statement; however, Step 3 must go beyond the review of documents and an annual blessing of an existing vision and mission. The vision of a school should relate to the needed changes and connect to system goals (e.g. improved achievement, parent involvement, student engagement). Step 3 is better characterized as the design, development, and implementation of a strategic plan related to the identified school needs aligned with the school vision. The Leadership PLC should clearly define and articulate the needed changes and an appropriate strategic plan to accomplish these changes. Such a strategic plan provides a clear picture of the desired future and a roadmap to move the school into that future. That is, the plan provides a clear theory of action with methods to implement and evaluation the change. The Leadership PLC needs to provide the leadership for development and implementation of the strategic plan; however, teachers need to be actively involved in phase of the change process.

During Step 3, the Leadership PLC should establish a baseline with appropriate data, aligned with the basic question, what is the current status of the school with respect to key indicators? The plan should include SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused, and Time-bound), baseline data, aligned strategies, timelines, responsibilities, implementation procedures, and an evaluation process. Data aligned with the sense of urgency (Step 1) should be included in establishment of the baseline.

Today, student achievement is a common baseline for most public schools; in too many schools, this is the only measure of success. The baseline data should expand beyond standardized assessments; indicators should include, as appropriate to the plan, targeted professional development, applied educational technology, out-reach activities to parents, partnership activities with community stakeholders, induction activities for new teachers, and levels of implementation. For example, at a secondary school, the outcome measures, at a minimum, should include credit earned, credit recovery, graduation rates, student attendance, discipline referrals, and measure of parent-teacher interaction. Outcome indicators could include results from common course assessments, following-up of students as they matriculate to other schools, and attitude measures. In addition to achievement scores, appropriate measures related to goals are critical.

Step 4: Communicate the Change Vision

The principal and the Leadership PLC should clearly explain the strategic plan and provide multiple approaches for implementation. Kotter (1996) strongly argued that leaders underestimate the level and the amount of communication required to establish an understanding of a proposed change process. He explained that under-communication of the change process is linked to failure of transformation efforts. Within schools, complaints of insufficient information are commonplace. Too often, if accurate information is not available, stakeholders will address the void. Unfortunately, during times of school change, one of the main forms of communication is gossip and rumors can destroy the change effort. Fiore (2011) established linkages between meaningful communication from the principal and positive school culture. Thus, the Leadership PLC must establish highly effective and purposeful communication with all stakeholder groups.

Memos, meetings, discussions, and talk are not sufficient; meaningful dialogue is necessary (Senge, 1990); Senge makes an important distinction between discussion and dialogue. In a discussion, opposing views are

presented and defended; a discussion is associated with the influence, acceptance of opinions, and winning approaches. However, in a dialogue a climate and culture exists which supports queries, examination of issues, and group learning. The Leadership PLC must continuously engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholder groups. The point is, communication for effective change is not about selling a specific point of view; dialogue is about learning as a group, seeking best approaches, and promotion of a win-win culture.

At each step, purposeful dialogue from the Leadership PLC is a critical component to establish the creditability of the change process. The Leadership PLC should design and implement carefully planned activities that communicate the strategic plan and related change activities. Examples include positive stories posted on the school website, online training activities related to use of data, illustrations of applications, and ongoing communications with community groups. Members of the Leadership PLC should develop positive relationships with all stakeholder groups. All communications should include information related to the strategic plan. As an illustration, when the Leadership PLC conducts a coaching activity, a component should include dialogue related to vision and to change activities.

Step 5: Empower Broad Based Change

Kotter (1996) provided examples of employee empowerment linked to effective communication of the vision and a corresponding carefully designed strategic plan. The Leadership PLC must create meaningful involvement of all stakeholder groups, especially teachers. Stegall and Linton (2012) argued that "creating a structure that empowers teachers builds buy-in, a sense of transparency, and collective efficacy" (p. 63). Bolman and Deal (2008) maintain that teachers function best in environments that support autonomy and that teachers who are treated as professional are more likely to implement the desired change. Harris (2001) encouraged leadership to create "conditions, opportunities, and experiences for collaboration and mutual learning" (p. 261), which can promote empowerment of staff. An overriding goal at Step 5 is for the teachers to develop an understanding of the change efforts and to assert ownership; this will require time, often professional development, and a sense of involvement.

The Leadership PLC should assess potential barriers within the school and develop procedures to remove identified barriers. Some members will need additional support and training. For example, professional development related to coaching and effective use of data should be provided to each member of the Leadership PLC. Most educators need additional support to understand and to effectively utilize databased decision-making. The Leadership PLC must provide sufficient information to develop a clear understanding of the change to all stakeholder groups; it cannot be assumed that participation implies understanding.

Step 6: Generate Short-term Wins

Teachers will need some quick wins to boost their confidence and to help establish the credibility of the process. In this step, the principal must recognize achievements of others and celebrate successes. Kotter (1996) stressed that effective short-term wins need three specific characteristics: short-term wins are highly visible to the stakeholders; short-term wins are real events; and finally, they must be directly linked to the change initiative. Teacher motivation is a critical component of effective school improvement (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002).

Early successes can increase self-confidence, momentum, and self-efficacy of the teachers (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). For example, data directly linked to planned changes provides

feedback on effectiveness of specific activities and enables formative adjustments. If careful planning occurred during Step 3, the development of the strategic plan, then the basis for short-term wins was established—metrics, timelines, types of assessment, etc. The short-term wins will provide direct reinforcement for members of the Leadership PLC, teachers, students, as well as other stakeholder groups.

Short-term wins could include teacher involvement in decision-making, effective engagement of parents, or development of an aligned curriculum for a common course. Short-term wins should directly relate to the indicators established in earlier steps of the change process. For example, if student attendance was identified as a problem and it improved, then data is a positive indicator of a short-term win. Completions of strategic activities are examples of short-term wins (e.g. common course curriculum, aligned assessments, databased decision-making workshop). Similarly, effective use of data, implementation of results related to professional development, feedback from stakeholders, and student success are examples of short-term wins. Short-term wins are small events that can be related to easily identifiable planned changes, they should link to intrinsic motivation, and they should connect to small celebrations.

Step 7: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change

Continuous improvement, fine tuning, and support will encourage members of the Leadership PLC. Kotter (1996) argued that a destructive error occurs when the leader declares victory too soon; too many leaders declare victory at the first sign of successful change. "Whenever you let up before the job is done, critical momentum can be lost and regression may follow" (p. 133). The Leadership PLC can utilize SMART goals and corresponding assessments to provide indicators of progress within a framework of continuous incremental progress. However, such short-term wins are not indicators of successful organizational change.

At this step, short-term wins serve as a focus of success and identify corresponding systemic changes that should be implemented. Alignment of professional development, hiring decisions, and allocation of recourses are key, and need to be deeply aligned with the strategic plan. New projects and next steps should reinforce the transformational vision. The effective dialogue related to the successful efforts continue throughout the process.

Step 8: Anchor New Approaches in the Corporate Culture

At this point, the leadership team can define success in relationship to established goals with aligned data. Kotter (1996) argued that hard won organizational changes need to be secured within the culture of the organization. He linked the need to change the organizational culture to two critical factors. There is the need to reinforce that "the new approaches, behaviors, and attitudes have helped improve performance" (p. 67). Too often, employees cannot make these connections. Second, there is a need to ensure that "the next generation of management personifies the new approaches" (p. 67); that is, there is a need to protect successful change from outside forces. If the new procedures do not become an integral part of the organizational culture, then the existing culture will drive out the changes.

Thus, the principal and Leadership PLC must work to connect the new approaches to the culture of the school; they need to make the change stick. For example, if the school established a goal to utilize databased decision-making, then decisions that apply data must be reinforced. Data would be discussed at all staff meetings, progress documented using data, and growth would be continuously evaluated using established metrics.

Tangible indicators of the change need to become a component of the culture of the

school. For example, professional development, meetings, teacher evaluations instill and reinforce the changes in the school. Resources allocations aligned with the change process and school-wide systems should support continuous improvement.

You Can Change Your School

Leadership ability and building capacity of teacher leaders are fundamental to school improvement (Copland, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2001; Levin & Fullan, 2008). Highly effective principals continuously increase the capacities of teachers and systems. Today, most people are willing to discuss needed changes in public education; however, there seems to be a shortage of effective methods to improved schools or districts. Hope and a unitary focus on student achievement will not result in long-term school reform. Kotter's eight-step model presents a straightforward approach for leading organization change that can be implemented in a continuous improvement framework. For educational leaders to make meaningful impacts on public education, they must understand how to develop and lead effective organizational change.

Kotter's eight-step model has significant advantages for practicing principal; it provides a concise set of recommendations with indicators for each step. The model provides a focus on both concrete factors and emotional factors associated with organizational change. Clearly, organizational change will present many challenges; however, this model provides a comprehensive roadmap with practical guiding principles. The model encourages capacity building, proactive involvement, and deep understanding among stakeholders. The eight-step model can enable the Leadership PLC to identify realistic, meaningful, and achievable goals; the model enables the team to utilize formative feedback and databased decision-making to promote continuous growth. With increased capacity and gained knowledge, the school can make true systematic change aligned with meaningful goals. Kotter's eight-step model can enable a school to implement a strategic planning process, provide a straightforward manageable procedure to engage stakeholders, and move it toward a well-published vision of excellence.

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TEACHER EVALUATION AND ITS IMPACT ON WELLBEING: PERCEPTIONS OF MICHIGAN TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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This mixed-methods study examined the perceptions of 1,274 Michigan teachers and 474 administrators on the teacher evaluation process and teacher wellbeing. A stratified convenience sample of public school educators from Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts were surveyed using a researcher-constructed survey tool that included categorical sliding scales and extended response questions. An additional stratified sample 128 teachers and 48 administrators from the original participants were selected for interviews. Quantitatively, administrators perceived that the teacher evaluation process increased teacher well-being significantly more than teachers perceived. Qualitatively, teacher described how the teacher evaluation process increased stress, unhealthy competition, and administrator inconsistency. Administrator responses were mixed with a nearly equal number concurring with teachers and those who perceived increased collaboration and healthy competition. Both groups agreed that lack of time was the primary barrier to effective teacher evaluations. Improving the evaluation process is vital since teachers with low wellbeing are more likely to leave the profession, which could exacerbate our nation's growing teacher shortage.

Key words: *teacher evaluation, teacher wellbeing,*

Introduction

In 2016, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) adopted the ambitious and ambiguous vision of becoming a "top 10 education state in the next 10 years" (Michigan Department of Education, 2016). In order to meet the goal of developing, supporting, and sustaining a high-quality, prepared, and collaborative teacher workforce, the MDE identified "implementing Michigan's educator evaluation law with fidelity [as] a key strategy" (Michigan Department of Education, 2015, p. 4).

Evaluation of teachers has been common since the beginning of the 20th Century (Cubberley, 1916), and recent legislation (i.e., No Child Left Behind, 2001; Race to the Top, 2009; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015) have tied federal resources to student achievement scores, which in turn have tied student achievement to educator effectiveness. Efforts to quantify teacher effectiveness has resulted in the acceptance of Value-Added Measures (VAM), which are "measures that employ mathematical algorithms in an attempt to isolate an individual teacher's contribution to student learning from all other factors that can influence academic achievement and progress" (Value-added measures, 2013). While VAM originated in the 1980s, they came to the forefront in 2010 when the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation founded the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project to "investigat[e] better ways to identify and develop effective teaching" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). VAM have continued to grow in popularity and now most states place high weight on student test scores as part of teacher evaluations. Michigan is one of those states. Currently in Michigan, 25% of teacher evaluation is based on student achievement and assessment data. Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, this percentage jumps to 40 percent.

In mandating these new procedures and requirements for evaluating teachers and administrators in Michigan, the MDE asserted: "High quality educator evaluations support both student learning as well as educator wellbeing" (2015, p. 4). Despite a body of research on the role of teacher evaluations on student learning, little research exists on the role of the evaluation process on supporting teacher wellbeing.

Defining Teacher Wellbeing

While the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) posits that educator evaluations support educator wellbeing, they offer no definition of teacher wellbeing nor what is meant by "supporting" teacher wellbeing. Definitions of wellbeing date back to the 1940's and consist of objective and subjective measures. Objective measures of wellbeing focus on economic, health, and political dimensions; whereas, subjective measures of wellbeing "variously encompass factors such as happiness, emotion, engagement, purpose, life satisfaction, social relationships, competence, and accomplishment" (McCallum, Price, Graham, & Morrison, 2017, p. 6)

Wellbeing can be described as the basic desire people have for "optimal psychological experiences and functioning" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 1) or "the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced" (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012, p. 230). Countless definitions of wellbeing exist, with no agreed upon components. Ereaut and Whiting (2008) warned that wellbeing is like a mirage with few common components and high contextualization.

Definitions of wellbeing related specifically to teachers have emerged, including: "a positive emotional state, which is the result of harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on one hand, and the personal needs and expectations of teachers on the other hand" (Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem, &

Verhaeghe, 2007, p. 286) and, "an individual sense of personal professional fulfillment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students" (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p. 101). Certainly, teacher wellbeing is multifaceted and multidimensional (McCallum, Price, Graham, & Morrison, 2017).

Supporting Teacher Wellbeing

Fostering teacher wellbeing is important for several reasons. First, teacher wellbeing positively correlates with student learning (Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Roeser, Skinner, Beers, & Jennings, 2012), although more research is needed to determine causality. Second, teachers with lower measures of job wellbeing also experience lower markers of physical wellbeing including anxiety, high blood pressure, and heart disease (Roeser et al., 2013). Third, teachers with low wellbeing are more likely to leave the profession, exacerbating a growing teacher shortage problem (Iancu, Rusu, Măroiu, Păcurar, & Maricuțoiu, 2017; Santoro, 2011).

Central to wellbeing are competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are components of self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT provides a framework for studying teachers' growth and development, particularly related to their psychological needs and motivations. Feelings of competence nourish wellbeing (Gangé & Deci, 2005). Firestone and Pennell (1993) identified four conditions that lead to teachers' feelings of competence: administrative support, adequate physical facilities, adequate instructional materials, and manageable workloads. Likewise, adequate professional development and teacher training increase teacher competence, morale, and commitment (Ingersoll, 1999).

Teacher wellbeing is influenced by the degree to which teachers feel connected to others in their professional context. According to Gangé and Deci (2005), "satisfaction of the needs to be connected to others and to be effective in the social world support people's tendency to internalize the values and regulatory processes that are ambient in their world" (p. 337). Collaboration and support are indispensable to teacher wellbeing and to student success (Schleicher, 2017). When teacher perceptions of empowerment and professionalism increase, their on-the-job stress decreases and job satisfaction increases (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Strong & Yoshida, 2014).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) asserts that teacher professionalism is comprised of three components: autonomy, or teachers' decision-making power, knowledge base for teaching, and peer networks. When examining data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the OECD found that high levels of professionalism within an educational system were correlated with high level of satisfaction with the teaching profession, work environment, and sense of self-efficacy.

Vital to teacher self-efficacy is professional feedback. According to Firestone (2014), self-efficacy "enhances intrinsic motivation most when the individual gets feedback on performance" (p. 4). Feedback can be instrumental (taking immediate action toward corrective practices or professional development), conceptual (changing teacher beliefs), or symbolic (confirming a teacher's existing practices or beliefs) (Rossi & Freeman, 1993; Tuytens & Devos, 2017; Visscher & Coe, 2003).

While teachers seek autonomy, they also desire administrative support. Support in the form of feedback is essential to teachers' feelings of competency, particularly when teachers receive daily feedback and appreciation. What is more, teachers feel more

competent when they have the resources and facilities to support their practice. However, compared with other professions, teaching is subject to more external mandates, reforms, and changes, which impede autonomy (McCallum et al., 2017).

In this mixed-methods study, we investigated teachers' and administrators' perceptions related to the evaluation process and teacher wellbeing. The research questions guiding our study were: Do educators perceive that the teacher evaluation process supports teacher wellbeing? Do teachers perceive that the educator evaluation process supports educator wellbeing? Do administrators perceive that the educator evaluation process supports educator wellbeing?

Methods

We used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through the use of a survey and structured interviews (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Combining quantitative data from the participants' responses to anchored sliding-scale questions with qualitative data from their responses to the open-ended questions allowed for depictions and perceptions of their teacher evaluation process, as well as for convergence and corroboration of the quantitative results (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). Furthermore, the interviews provided ample samples for us to reasonably conclude all perceptions were represented, with our meaning-making reaching saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Collection

We surveyed a stratified convenience sample of 1,746 public school educators (teachers; n = 1,274 and administrators; n = 474) from Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts using a survey that included categorical sliding scales and extended response questions. An additional stratified sample of 128 teachers and 48 administrators from the original participants was selected for phone or electronic interviews, which consisted of extension questions from the survey.

Participant Demographics

Consistent with national statistics on educators (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016), more than 70% of the participants were female. Female teachers far outnumbered males (79% vs 21%); whereas, the administrator participants were more evenly gendered (56% vs 54%).

The teacher participants' years of classroom experience were evenly distributed with 19% in their first five years in the profession, and 23% with 6-10 years of teaching experience. Approximately half of the administrators taught for 6-15 years before they moved into administrative positions.

Teacher ratings and compensation

Nearly 99% of the teacher participants were rated Effective or Highly Effective during the 2016-2017 school year (54.6% Effective and 44% Highly Effective). Approximately 20% of the participants' schools compensated teachers for receiving a highly effective rating. Of those who reported that highly qualified teachers receive compensation in their district, 48% were unsure of the stipend amount. Stipends of $249 or less were reported by 22% of those teachers, and 10% reported that teachers are compensated by getting days off.

Data Analysis

For the quantitative questions, we applied exploratory factor analyses using principle components on the items asked of both teachers and administrators. We created subscales based on identified components with reliability statistics on a subset of the data preliminary to analysis. Subscales were then used on all data in predictor models to address the research questions.

We used principal components analysis with a varimax rotation to identify groups of items using SPSS (2017). Inter-item reliability coefficients were calculated for items within the subgroup (Cronbach, 1951). The identified group and reliability coefficient for responses related to the teacher wellbeing sub-group of 11 questions was .92, and inter-item correlations ranged from .38 to .86.

We used nonparametric tests to determine if there were differences in teacher responses and administrator responses to the 11 questions. We used Kruskal-Wallace one-way analysis of variance (KWANOVA) for comparison because sample distributions were not normally distributed, and there were more teacher responses than administrator responses.

For the qualitative data, we analyzed the participants' responses to the open-ended questions from the survey and electronic interviews using a multi-step coding process. First, we used *a priori* codes based on our research questions to categorize the responses using Dedoose data management system. Second, we applied collaborative open coding to sub-categorize the participants' responses. Third, we combined categories and recategorized until the data were saturated. Finally, we identified emergent themes from the data, from which we excerpted quotes to illustrate each theme in the Results section.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Administrators perceived that the teacher evaluation process supported wellbeing more positively than teachers did as demonstrated by their responses to the 11 sliding-scale items. There was a significant difference in responses by teachers (mean ranking = 762.39) than administrator responses (mean ranking = 1172.88), $c^2(1, N = 1747) = 229.01$, $p < .01$, $h^2 = .13$. These findings represent a medium effect size with 13% of the variability of responses accounted for by teachers versus administrators.

Qualitative Findings

The educators' responses related to teacher wellbeing elicited notable differences in perspective between the teachers and the administrators. Two questions (*How has the teacher evaluation process at your school changed the relationships among teachers? How has the teacher evaluation process changed the culture of your school?*) yielded more than 2,000 teacher comments and nearly 1,000 administrator comments, which clearly revealed teachers do not perceive that the evaluation process supports their wellbeing.

Teachers' perspectives on wellbeing. A very small minority of teachers reported that the evaluation process improved teacher wellbeing. For example, one teacher declared, "Teachers have become more supportive in every way." Another teacher stated, "Some collaborate more with one another." Furthermore, a small minority reported that the teacher evaluation process has not affected teacher wellbeing or that they were unsure. The vast majority of teachers, however, described ways in which the evaluation process has affected them negatively.

Several themes emerged from the teachers' negative responses about the evaluation process. Frequently, teachers described how the process has increased their stress and anxiety. Teachers made comments like: "It creates stress and negative feelings, which cause teachers to speak from emotion"; "It seems to bring stress to the building as a whole"; and "Higher stress and shorter fuses, especially at the end of the year."

Teachers suggested that the stress did not merely affect them personally, but also their teaching. For example, one teacher remarked, "I think that it cause teachers to stress out and worry too much about the system and

not the students." Another teacher said, "It has created stress for everyone and draws our attention away from our students." Teachers described how the evaluation process makes them nervous and how that impacts their students. One teacher remarked, "The multiple meetings and paperwork and observations are scary. They make teachers nervous. When teachers are nervous, they are not at their best, and children suffer."

When describing their increased stress, teachers frequently mentioned how the evaluation process has decreased collaboration. For example, one teacher remarked, "It has made people more stressed and some are more competitive or less likely to collaborate." Another teacher said, "Teachers feel like they must compete against each other now. This is not what is best for students. It invites corruption and will be less likely for teachers to collaborate and share."

Teachers described how the evaluation process increased competition, which they overwhelmingly viewed as negative rather than for its potential to improve their performance. One teacher commented, "It has pitted teachers against each other, created unfair "competition," and demoralized most teachers no matter what their rating is." Another teacher said, "Teachers are angrier, feel more backed against a wall, and it's much more competitive in a way that doesn't promote teacher growth or community."

Teachers explained how comparing themselves with others has undermined collaboration. For example, one teacher stated, "Teachers look at others and think that they may be working just as hard but not getting recognized. It's a very non-collaborative culture." Another teacher remarked, "[The evaluation process] can cause people to pass blame and point fingers." Divisiveness was common theme, as demonstrated by comments like the following:

> There is a lot of pressure to perform well, and a lot of negative feelings when your class doesn't do well. There is a feeling of the "haves" and "have nots." Instead of coming together, teachers start doing whatever they can to raise their own scores and do not collaborate with other grade levels. Teachers become hesitant to listen to each other's ideas.

Teacher comparisons have lead many teachers to question the fairness of the process. One teacher remarked, "Ever since the rating system began some teachers have begun comparing what they do to others. This year with several ratings dropping it has led to some teachers questioning the system and how fair it is."

A commonly cited reason for unfairness was administrator bias. Teachers made comments like, "From my experience, my principal held everyone to different standards" and, "The principal plays favoritism." Teachers described how important it is to please their principals. Comments, like the following, revealed teacher perceptions of divisiveness and cliquishness:

> If you aren't in the principals "group" you might as well realize you won't be highly effective or effective if she has her way. Teachers are bragging that they are her tattletales as they walk around doing whatever they want because they don't have to worry about being targeted. They are all chummy. Our building is pitted teachers against one another. It used to be a family atmosphere, and now it's a divided mess.

Another teacher commented, "[The evaluation process] creates hostility and jealousy because the principal likes someone more than others. That's the reason why they received a good evaluation, not that they are a good teacher." Accordingly, the teachers

reported that they worked to please their principals over what they believed to be good teaching. For example, one teacher stated, “We focus on what they are looking for in the lesson.”

Overall, there were very few examples of teachers reporting that the teacher evaluation process increased their wellbeing. Comments like the following were not uncommon:

> I think overall, teachers are discouraged, stressed and afraid. It leads teachers to be secretive about how they really feel about things. Thus, our administrator hears one thing to her face, but teachers continually complain about anxiety, wanting to quit, cry behind closed doors......... Also it has led to teachers trying to step over one another in order to stand out and succeed. There is much less collaboration.

Teachers reported that they now like their jobs less. The following comment effectively captures the teachers’ perceptions of the evaluation process on their wellbeing:

> There is so much more stress, anxiety, job dissatisfaction, secretiveness and much less collaboration. I do not recognize my school as it used to be. I am intrinsically motivated to do my best at all times, but it is not with the same energy that I used to have just a few years ago.

Administrators’ perspectives on wellbeing. The administrators’ responses about teacher-wellbeing revealed both similarities and differences compared to the teachers’ responses. Like the teachers, approximately one-third of the administrators acknowledged that the teacher evaluation process has increased competitiveness and decreased collaboration. They described the stress teachers are under and the increased challenges they face because of the evaluation process. Another third of the administrators suggested that the teacher evaluation process has not had an effect on teacher wellbeing. Finally, unlike nearly all the teachers, one-third of the administrators reported that the teacher evaluation process has improved teacher wellbeing. We will explore some of these themes below, as contradictions.

Principals remarked that the evaluation process has “increased stress and anxiety.” Some described how the process has created a “hostile environment” and has created an “us versus them” culture. One principal described how her school is a “scary and negative place during eval conversations.” Another principal stated, “Teachers get really stressed out during evaluation time. This lends itself to an all-around negative atmosphere when we really should be celebrating student and teacher successes.”

A number of administrators expressed a nuanced perspective on the role stress plays in the teacher evaluation process. Though these administrators recognized that the evaluation process increased teacher stress, they suggested that the stress can be positive. For example, one principal remarked, “Our teachers have been stressed out about the change to a dramatically new system, even though most agree it is better.” Another suggested that the evaluation process has “added stress, but fostered better conversations about teaching.”

Some administrators proposed that the teacher evaluation process increased teacher collaboration. For example, one administrator said, “Teachers are more likely to feel like part of the conversation and contribute to the process.” Another principal stated, “Teachers now share teaching strategies with each other and this is the key to success” and, “The teachers in my school are working together more collaboratively to share ideas and skills.”

Modesty was absent from several administrators’ responses, as they applauded their own roles in increasing teacher

wellbeing. For example, one principal stated, "I think it's helped collaboration for the most part. But that's in part due to help from administration." Another suggested, "Teachers acknowledge and appreciate the support and feedback by the seasoned administrator." Some administrators acknowledged that teachers often "play the game" and seek to please their principal. One principal described how teachers quickly "figure out what your admin does and does not appreciate."

Similar to the teachers, the administrators described how the teacher evaluation process has increased competition among teachers. While some administrators dogmatically stated things like, "It has made teachers more competitive and less likely to help each other," other administrators were more nuanced in their replies, stating things like, "It has become more competitive rather than collegial in some instances" and, "There is an unhealthy competitive nature at times." According to administrators, comparison with others was the cause of diminished teacher wellbeing. For example, one principal remarked, "They don't want to share ideas with each other when they are worried that someone could be better at their job than they are." Another principal stated, "It can cause competition and bitterness if people compare their scores with each other. We strive for collaboration, but I think the evaluation process can hinder that when you start rank ordering teachers by a number score."

Administrators acknowledged the high-stakes culture that the teacher evaluation process has created. For example, one principal noted, "It has made some of them more competitive and proprietary about their teaching practices; it is a competition because if there are layoffs, the bottom person is the one let go." Another principal explained, "It created negative feelings and finger pointing at each other. I feel this could have been the case as well at my school if there were layoffs at the elementary level."

In a vast departure from the teacher responses, the administrators regularly cited how competition caused by the evaluation system is a force for good in the teachers' lives. For example, one administrator commented, "Teachers collaborate when preparing for end of year evaluations, they sometimes have healthy competition." Another principal suggested that competition was greater in the past but has since subsided:

> I think humans are competitive by nature. As we've moved to a system that requires us to label people "effective" vs "highly effective" it has created some friction. That said, we've been doing this long enough, much of that has ebbed away.

Administrators were often wishful in their descriptions of how teacher tension will dissipate over time. For example, one principal offered, "There always seems to be some competition. You want to see this drive teachers to be better at their craft and not create conflict among themselves."

Although the administrators expressed a more positive view of how competition influenced teacher wellbeing, they did not hold back their criticisms of teacher jealousy and lack of ability to accurately self-assess. For example, one principal stated,

> Teachers are a tough group. Many don't grasp the idea that teaching is a profession and often narrowly self-assess their teaching abilities. Being told that you are basic or proficient is not good enough when they know that distinguished is the top-level on the score sheet. Some teachers become defensive when evidence is provided illustrating they are not where they should be or want to be on the rubric.

The administrators addressed "bad apple" teachers and suggested that they tend to view

the process differently from highly effective teachers. For example, one principal stated,

> Most of my teachers rate very high on the areas of assessment in the Charlotte Danielson review; however, when a teacher does not, the tool is viewed as arbitrary and subjective by those who score as ineffective. Also, the less than effective teachers tend to display jealousy toward those who are more successful and sometimes those who are more successful seem to be judgmental of the ones who need their support and guidance.

Likewise, one principal said, “Teachers question why they are not highly effective. That negatively impacts the culture.” However, according to the principals, the wellbeing of highly effective teachers has not changed. As one principal said, “For teachers who are historically effective, the teacher evaluation process hasn’t changed their relationships.”

Overall, the administrators expressed mixed perspectives on how the teacher evaluation system has affected teacher wellbeing. Though a majority of the principals described the evaluation process as negative or neutral on teacher wellbeing, approximately one-third of the administrators described how competition and accountability associated with the process improved collaboration and student learning. Nonetheless, none of nearly 1,000 comments suggested that the process made the teachers more comfortable, healthy, or happy.

Discussion

The analyses of this study revealed valuable yet not unprecedented findings, as Michigan administrators were shown to be on trend with those nationwide who rate nearly all teachers as effective (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017; Louwes, 2017). Consistent with the findings of Kraft and Gilmour (2017), who also studied Michigan teachers and found that 97% received effective or higher ratings, 99% of the teachers in this study were rated as highly effective or effective in 2017. Corroborating the findings of Ford et al. (2017), this study found that highly effective/effective ratings do not determine teachers’ job satisfaction and wellbeing. While participating administrators felt the evaluation process resulted in positive professional growth, participating teachers experienced the contrary. Participating teachers perceived the added stress, competitive culture, and distrust of the system as interferences to job satisfaction.

Furthermore, such high ratings seemingly undermine participating administrators’ claims that the teacher evaluation process creates healthy stress and competition among teachers, putting pressure on apathetic or oppositional teachers. As Berliner and Glass (2014) have explained, competition is anything but healthy when teachers feel they have been given a Hobson’s choice on actions that could save their evaluations and therefore their jobs (Amrein-Beardsley & Collins, 2012; Koretz, 2008). While excessive high-stakes testing and its accompanying mesoscale teacher evaluation system have not been proven to increase student achievement (Croft, Roberts, & Stenhouse, 2015), those factors contribute to teacher stress (Iancu et al., 2017; Feuerhahn, Bellingrath, & Kudielka, 2013).

The vast majority of teachers expressed that the teacher evaluation mandates hurt their teaching effectiveness and wellbeing, and while approximately one-third of administrators extolled the benefits of the evaluation process, a similar number were as critical as the teachers. A possible solution to administrators’ and teachers’ dissatisfaction with the teacher evaluation process and its negative fallout is granting more time. In this study, both groups identified time as a barrier to

successful implementation of the evaluation process. Consistent with the findings of other studies (Lavigne & Chamberlain, 2017; Ramirez et al., 2014), participating administrators lacked sufficient time to conduct multiple observations and hold meetings with teachers, while participating teachers cited the obligation to document evidence of effective teaching as time-consuming and overwhelming. Furthermore, teachers in this study longed for meaningful and critical feedback that could help them to improve their practice. Regular feedback from administrators takes time; however, its absence is a major contributor to teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2001).

Conclusion and Implications

In its support of new mandates (PA 173, 2015) for evaluating teachers, the Michigan Department of Education claimed that the new teacher evaluation process would "support both student learning as well as educator wellbeing" and would "provide teachers with critical feedback on how they can improve their own practice to impact the lives of students" (Michigan Department of Education, 2016, p. 4). This comprehensive study of the perceptions of a stratified convenience sample of 1,746 public school educators (teachers; n = 1274) and administrators; n = 474) from Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts revealed that MDE's claims are not being met; and, arguably, evidence suggests that the new teacher evaluation mandates have had the opposite effect they intended.

On a scale from -10 (strongly disagree) to +10 (strongly agree), the median administrator scores were 2.6 for teacher wellbeing; whereas, the teacher's median scores were -.85 for teacher wellbeing. The teachers reported the teacher evaluation process has had a negative effect on their wellbeing, and their scores were significantly lower than administrators' scores. In other words, there is a chasm between what the administrators think about the teacher evaluation process and what the teachers think. Qualitative data from thousands of questionnaire and interview responses from this study confirm this disconnect. While the administrators expressed greater variation in their responses, the teachers were overwhelmingly negative about the impact of the evaluation system.

The teacher evaluation system in Michigan is not working as it was intended, and it is not working the way administrators and teachers proclaimed it should be. Educator discontent with the teacher evaluation process is problematic beyond its failure to meet the espoused goals. Teacher shortage is a growing concern in Michigan, and a reduction in teacher wellbeing is likely to make the profession less attractive to teacher candidates and increase teacher turnover. The teachers and administrators in this study commonly described the negative impact the teacher evaluation system has had on their job satisfaction. Low job satisfaction is a primary reason teachers leave the profession (Perrachione, Petersen, & Rosser, 2008), and teacher perceptions are most accurate predictor of job satisfaction (Cunningham, 2016). Student achievement in schools with higher teacher turnover is significantly lower than in schools with less teacher turnover (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Accountability measures, particularly their impact on teacher wellbeing, have increased the number of teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2016). What's more, minority teachers have been leaving the profession at a higher rate than non-minority teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2016).

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EFFECTS OF AGING FACULTY

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Faculty working well beyond retirement age has become an issue in higher education that includes increased expenditures in benefits and salaries, hindrance of hiring minorities and women, and teaching effectiveness. The effects of aging faculty contribute to the factors in student retention. A few factors in student success involve affordability, which the cost of rising tuition has been an issue for student retention. A factor in the rising cost of college is faculty salaries. Another factor in student retention is the faculty's ability to maintain the changing learning needs of students. Furthermore, research has indicated that minority student' best succeed when taught by minority faculty. This paper will explore these three issues regarding aging faculty.

Keywords: tenured faculty, teaching effectiveness, aging faculty, diversity, minorities

Introduction

"Low retirement rates and slow growth limit the number of new hiring opportunities in many institutions," according to Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005, p. 385). The practice of faculty working further into their careers have stalled the potential of new faculty, which includes women and minorities. Another issue that has risen from aging faculty is the ability to maintain the change in pedagogy and students' learning needs. Of course, the costs of health and retirement benefits for tenured faculty are an issue as universities cut non-tenured faculty positions, adjuncts, and staff positions to balance the budgets, as state appropriations are decreased and enrollments decline (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005).

The questions being pursued in this article are what are the effects of aging faculty in regards to hiring new faculty, diversity, student retention, and costs. Furthermore, what are the leaders' options in regards to increasing new diverse faculty with new pedagogical techniques and contending with aging faculty? Indeed, the questions proposed are sensitive and complex issues for both the faculty member and the administration, but as budgets are increasingly being reduced and benefit costs rising administrators in higher education have a serious issue.

However, the issues are a major issue within higher education. For instance, higher education has a strong purpose to increase diversity within their faculty and student population, which also aids in student retention,

especially for the underrepresented student (Dummas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001). Therefore, the university has to have available positions to provide opportunities for a diverse array of applicants. Universities are also contending with increasing pressure towards student retention and graduation rates, most specially the underrepresented. An increased diverse faculty population will aid in student retention amongst minority students (Dummas-Hines, Cochran et al., 2001). Finally, the financial burden of the institution in regards to providing health and retirement benefits are hindering universities from maintaining budgets (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005).

Historical Information

The Employment Act was amended in 1986 in regards to the Age Discrimination section, that eliminated the age 70 cap; however, the act exempted higher education institutions from enforcing the mandatory retirement age of 70 (Ashenfelter & Card, 2002). The purpose for exempting higher education from forcing retirement at age 70 was heavily pushed by colleges and universities to increase women and minorities into new faculty roles. The exemption also allowed universities seven years to assess and create a plan for new retirement trends that included reexamining the tenure concept and incentives to offer voluntary retirement (Ashenfelter & Card, 2002). Burton (1986) offered insight into the issues the Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1986 would have on institutions following the 1993 extended period for the elimination of the 70 year age cap.

The seven year exemption period, according to Burton (1986), was detrimental to higher education. The author stated seven years was not an efficient time period to increase women and minorities into faculty positions, as well as establish new retirement policies. Burton (1986) added, "white males hired before colleges became concerned about affirmative action can continue to work past 70, while fewer jobs open up for everyone else" (p. 455). The extended period faculty members remaining in their position also causes a backlog of the faculty hierarchy, which causes financial and organizational issues for the university. Burton also predicted the Discrimination Act noted the possible effects,

> Without mandatory retirement, a large group of minimally active, but highly compensated, older faculty may strain institutional resources, inhibit the prospects of women and minorities for employment and advancement, and even threaten academic quality if incompetent or nonperforming faculty members become too difficult to remove (Burton, 1986).

The exemption term in the Act also did not account for faculty members' timeframe for retirement. The significance in understanding the retirement timeframe is to factor in the transition of new faculty, women, and minorities. Burton (1986) stated legislatures and higher education administrators did not compute that allowing faculty to retire *at will* could over-extend their work career. In other words, the economy is an important factor in the faculty member's decision to retire. Therefore, prior to the 70 age cap, the economy was not an issue; however, the faculty member could wait several years for the stock market to peak before retiring or the faculty member could extend service to add further salary to his/her savings (Burton, 1986).

Another factor regarding the absence of a 70 year cap is faculty becoming ineffective teachers and leaders in their respective departments and fields (Burton, 1986). The decrease in performance is an issue that directly effects the students, the departments, and the institutions. With a tenured faculty member, the institution would struggle to remove him/

her without a mandatory retirement policy. Of course, any removal by an institution of a tenured faculty member will be a complex and sensitive situation. Certain reasons for removal can be for good cause, reasonable factors other than age or bona fide seniority system.

A more stern process would be decoupling tenure from the employment contract that removes the tenure status from the faculty member, yet keeping her/him employed. However, decoupling can be risky for the institution, because the tenure contract with faculty can be deemed breach of contract between the faculty and the institution. Each of these reasons can make it still difficult to remove a tenured faculty member (Burton, 1986).

While the Act allowed higher education institutions options for contending with the removal of the age cap, Burton (1986) noted options regarding the tenure issue. He suggested universities can create a term for tenured faculty, such as 20 to 30 years within a contract that could be renewed or not renewed by the institution. Another option would be for a post-tenure review that would again give the institution the opportunity to deem the faculty member effective or ineffective. The final option was to increase retirement incentives.

Based on Burton's projections of the removal of the age cap in the Age Discrimination Employment Act, higher educational institutions were going to have several issues. Three main issues Burton mentioned were the stagnate hire of new, women, and minority faculty, ineffective faculty, and the financial burden the aging faculty will place on the institution due to salaries, health care costs, and retirement benefits (Burton, 1986).

The Increase of Aging Faculty

The Age Discrimination Employment Act, as predicted by Burton, has had an impact on higher education. For instance, following the official abolishment of the mandatory retirement in 1994, there has been an increase in aging faculty, which has also reduced tenure-track positions for new faculty and increased part-time positions (Figlio, Schapiro, & Soter, 2015; Doyle, 2008). The lifetime employment guarantee established by removing the mandatory retirement age is noted by the statistics that demonstrate "in 1988 approximately 20 percent of faculty members at public comprehensive institutions were aged 55-64, with 2 percent over age 65. By 2004, the percent of faculty aged in 55-64 had increased to 29 percent" (Doyle, 2008, p. 56). *Aged faculty represented a 45 percent increase in higher education* (Doyle, 2008).

While the mandatory age statute is a major factor in faculty working well past the age of 70, other factors are included in the aging faculty. First of all, tenure is a significant reason for long careers in higher education, because it provides faculty with a guaranteed lifelong position (Earle & Kulow, 2015). Even though numerous universities are implementing more part-time or contingency faculty as efficient means to balance budgets, those tenured are utilizing lifelong job security. Those who are able to receive tenure are receiving tenure at an older age. The average age for a tenured professor was forty-seven in 1993; however, in 2004 the average age for a tenured professor was fifty-four (Earle & Kudlow, 2015). The trend indicates new faculty are entering higher education later in their careers due to the limited positions held by aging faculty.

Second, aging faculty are able to continue in their career due to the improvements in the health profession. Technology has allowed employees to work longer in white collared professions, which includes professors. Since the faculty are able to physically work longer this creates less positions for potential new faculty members (Earle & Kudlow, 2015).

Third, financial issues are another reason faculty work long into their career. Most notably the 2008 Great Recession had an impact on extended professors' timeframe for

retirement. Education does not always provide the best retirement incentives, therefore faculty remain in their position until they can retire financially (Earle & Kudlow, 2015). However, not all faculty retire once financial needs are met. According to Ashenfelter and Card (2002), "individuals with a higher rank within the salary distribution of their institution have lower retirement rates, even controlling for the level of their salary" (p. 958).

The final reason for an extension to their work career is job satisfaction. Some faculty will remain in their positions because they feel a sense of responsibility and devotion. Hicken (2013) stated 80 percent of aged faculty members said they stayed in their position because they enjoyed teaching and the students, according to the American Association of University Professors.

Despite the intentions or reasons aged faculty remain in their position for an extended period of time, the results are effecting higher education, e.g., in hiring new, diverse, and women faculty, teaching deficiencies, institutional governance, and financial burdens on the higher educational institutions.

Diversity

The main purpose for the extension of the Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1986 was to determine new retirement policies in higher education to increase women and minorities into higher education. However, the issue was never fully resolved, which has not corrected the race and gender issue in higher education (Ashenfelter & Card, 2002). Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) stated. "In many colleges and universities, retirements of older faculty are the primary mechanism by which faculty positions become available" (p. 393). Until positions become available, universities are unlikely able to afford to create new positions for minorities and women. Of course, institutions can also replace retired faculty with senior faculty from other universities with similar salaries (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005).

Recruitment is a major factor in increasing diversity within higher education faculty ranks. Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) noted, "If American universities are to remain the best in the world, they must continue to attract and retain the best and the brightest faculty members" (p. 399). In order for an increase in a diverse faculty population, universities must create policies and incentives to aid in retiring current aged faculty members.

The importance of increasing women and minorities in faculty positions is based on demographics, which state 60 percent of American college students are female and by 2050 the minority will be more than 50 percent overall in the United States (Taylor, Burgan, Hill, McGrann, & Wang, N.D.). Approximately 20 percent of faculty are minorities, whereas one-third of the nation's population is comprised of minorities.

Another reason for more diversity in faculty positions is student retention. Taylor et al. (N.D.) noted, "all students are better educated and better prepared for leadership, citizenship, and professional competitiveness in multicultural America and the global community when they are exposed to diverse perspectives in their classrooms" (para. 2). Dumas-Hines, Cochran, and Williams (2001) noted "Self-isolation from the general student population and college life is recognized as one of the main factors that contributes to minority student attrition" (p. 433). With more minority faculty, the ability to recruit more minority students is greatly enhanced (Dumas-Hines et al., 2001).

Once positions do become available administrators are heavily tasked with recruiting a diverse faculty population, which can be an issue due to incentives available for new faculty. An incentive is tenure, which "the obtainment of tenure has been more successful in white faculty compared to minorities"

(Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 53). Along with the struggles of achieving tenure, new faculty will have to contend with no opportunities for tenure. Due to budget issues, most universities are leaning towards filling full-time positions with part-time or adjunct faculty, which are paid significantly less than a tenured faculty. Therefore, minorities are struggling to not only enter higher education, but they are not able to be retained by institutions. This is significant in providing minorities the incentives to enter the profession (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). Another issue is qualified faculty within the minority population. Therefore, institutions need to seek out minority potential Ph.D. students. (Taylor et al., N.D.).

Dumas-Hines et al. (2001) provided four recommendations for institutions and leaders to utilize in recruiting diverse students and faculty. The four recommendations are: create a diversity policy university wide, assess the current diversity among the campus and ways it can be improved, conduct research on ways to recruit and retain diverse faculty members, and have activities across the campus that emphasize cultural diversity.

Teaching Effectiveness

A concern regarding a professor's ability to effectively teach a course is an issue with an aged faculty member, especially as new technology is being demanded by students and new pedagogical techniques being developed to aid the different learning styles of a more diverse student population. In regards to teaching effectiveness, the concept is towards not only aging faculty, but the effects of aging faculty and institutional hiring of faculty. Ashenfelter and Card (2002) noted universities increased hiring contingent faculty either part-time or full-time in replacement of tenure-track professors. However, *research has indicated tenured faculty struggle to teach effectively more than the contingent faculty* (Figlio et al., 2015).

According to Figlio et al. (2015), "Our results suggest that on average, first-term freshmen learn more from contingent faculty members than they do from tenure track/ tenured faculty" (p. 719). The research noted the difference of effectiveness in tenure and contingent faculty could be based on the weaknesses of the faculty. Figlio et al., (2015) noted some contingent faculty, who were not promoted, may not have been promoted based on poor teaching performance, while tenured faculty may have been promoted to tenure based on research strengths rather than teaching capability.

Students' input and learning level regarding the research also indicated contingent faculty were better at teaching underprepared students in more difficult subject matter (Figlio et al., 2015). Overall, the empirical study indicated "students do better in subsequent course work than do their tenure track/tenured track colleagues" (p. 723). Earle and Kulow (2015) also noted "Having an eighty year old professor teach is not *malum in se*; rather what is frequently deleterious is there is no possibility of injecting new full time faculty into the department cohort" (p. 373).

New faculty is an important aspect of higher education, because the new faculty bring "different experiences, pedagogical styles, and specialties" (Earle & Kulow, 2015, p. 373). Those faculty who are in the position for life do not seek out new ideas and techniques. Harvard University President Emeritus, Larry Summers, stated higher education's worst idea "was the movement away from mandatory retirement in higher education" (p. 373). He even stated the no mandatory retirement statute and tenure was "deeply toxic" (p. 373). Of course, he noted the retirement requirement would never return to the previous status due to discrimination legalities, nor would tenure be abolished due to academic freedom implications.

Neither of the studies conclusively stated an aged faculty member is either better or worse in regards to teaching effectiveness. However, the ability to adjust to the different generational educational needs are significant in student retention, which is a major factor in all universities. Administrators must be well-aware of the faculty's ability to provide students with quality education.

Costs to the Institution

The financial implications of an aged faculty member is through high salaries, continuous health and retirement benefits, and recruiting new faculty. Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) stated universities are contending with "the escalating costs of employing faculty – especially the increasing costs of providing health insurance to active and retired faculty" (p. 386).

In order to transition aging faculty from universities, some offer faculty incentives or phase out their retirement. Other options for administrators are to remove the tenure title and place the faculty on annual contracts with post-tenure evaluations. The phased out option allows the institution and the faculty member to agree on a timeframe for retirement, as well a possible workload reduction (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005). The early retirement option is a cost saving factor for the university by reducing the time allotted for retirement, yet provide the retired faculty member the full incentive on anticipated date of retirement (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005).

Health care is an important issue as administrators try and provide the benefit to current faculty, but as institutions plan the retirement incentive for aged faculty, the rising costs of the insurance also encourages faculty to work even longer. Therefore, the issue is a difficult option for administrators as they face the continued rising costs (Clark & d'Ambrosio, 2005).

Governance

Governance is an issue as aging faculty begin the departure from universities. Currently, the senior tenured/tenured track full-time faculty member has positions within the institution in department and university-wide committees or organizations. Whereas, the part-time or contingent faculty member has little voice within the institution. The concern is whether future faculty will have any power once the senior faculty retire, which may shift more towards the administrators (Doyle, 2008).

The issue administrators need to consider is the policy needed to transition the old and new faculty into governing roles. Doyle (2008) stated, "Colleges and universities should consider alternative governance arrangements – particularly those that involve part-time and other contingent faculty" (p. 59).

Conclusion

Overall, the issue of aging faculty is a concern for administrators and faculty following the abolishment of the mandatory age of retirement act. The guaranteed lifetime position for tenured faculty has caused several issues for higher education in increasing women and minorities, as well as financial costs to the universities and inefficiencies in teaching and retaining students.

The statute has allowed faculty to remain longer and allowed institutions to change their hiring practices to compensate for the filled senior positions by hiring part-time or contingent faculty, which has greatly hindered new faculty from entering higher education. Clark and d'Ambrosio (2005) stated "Each time a faculty member retires, an institution must decide whether it will hire a new full-time, tenure-track faculty member, or fill the vacancy by an employing a full-time contract instructor, a postdoctoral fellow or part-time lecturers" (p. 390).

Therefore, numerous potential new faculty members enter in low-paying positions. Hicken noted (2013) in 2011, the American Association of University Professors reported "40 percent of college professors are forced to rely on poorly paid and less secure adjunct positions" (para. 6). Hicken compared an aging faculty member to an adjunct. The tenured faculty member at George Mason University has taught for 50 years and has stated plans to continue to teach another five to ten years. Meanwhile, an adjunct teacher in the Pittsburgh area teaches eight biology and anthropology courses including the summer and only earns $30,000 a year, without benefits or a retirement plan or job security (Hicken, 2013).

Due to several issues, aging faculty do have an effect on higher education. Administrators will have to revise or create policies to ease aging faculty into retirement in order to provide an ample opportunity for new faculty and a better learning environment for students. Dunn and Halonen (2017) offered suggestions for faculty that were department heads or chairs in regards to understanding the time to step down. They recommend faculty have an agenda, achieve their goals, and plan an exit strategy. The authors noted most cannot complete their agenda, but staying too long will not mean the goal will be achieved regardless of the effort devoted to it. Therefore, it is recommended faculty should reflect on their accomplishments.

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION OF MISCONDUCT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN DELTA STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

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This study investigated Principals' Perception of misconduct among Secondary School teachers in Delta State. Four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used for collection of data was tagged "Principals' Perception of Teachers Misconduct Questionnaire" (PPOTMQ). For content validity, the instrument was given to some lecturers in the Department of Guidance & Counselling who scrutinized and made some corrections. The test-retest method of reliability was employed and the co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained. The sample consisted of 100 principals. The t-test statistics was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study revealed that absenteeism, lateness, truancy and poor quality teaching were perceived by principals as forms of misconduct in public secondary schools. Recommendations that were proffered include counselling tutors against indiscipline in all post-primary institutions in Delta state, Nigeria.

Keywords: Misconduct Absenteeism, Lateness, Truancy and Poor Quality Teaching.

Introduction

Education is regarded as a powerful tool for the development of individual citizens of a country and the country as a whole. The broad objectives of secondary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) are; preparing students for useful living within the society and attaining higher education. There is no gainsaying the fact that if these laudable goals are realized, individuals will not only be useful to themselves and their families but will also contribute their quota to the development of this country in every ramification. Admittedly, the executioners of these goals are teachers. In fact, teachers are the pivot on which the educational system rests and so they are indispensable in the educational sector. Undoubtedly, teachers are the human resources needed to impart knowledge to students and to inculcate the right morals in them. According to Fakoya (2009), the business of teachers is to help students to achieve higher standards of knowledge, ability, skills and moral character.

After the attainment of independence in 1960 until the early 80's, Nigerian teachers (primary and secondary) were very dedicated to their duties; their level of commitment was high and were greatly motivated. Buttressing this point, Onoyase (2000) opined that in the 70's, the standard of education was high because teachers devoted much time and

energy to teaching, not because the condition of service was very attractive but just for the sake of imparting knowledge to the young ones. Continuing, she stated that these teachers organized evening lessons free of charge and tirelessly taught pupils good handwriting. Still on teachers' attitude to work, Solarin and Akinsanya (1982) as cited in Aronokhale (1999) observed that before independence and even shortly after, Nigerians (including teachers) diligently went about their assigned jobs, be it government services or private sector, from dawn to dusk. From observation, teachers are no longer as dedicated as were their counterparts of old. Rossouw (2013) opined that the incidences of misconduct among teaching staff in public secondary schools in South Africa is increasing at an alarming rate and that cases of misconduct include insubordination, dishonesty, absenteeism and late coming amongst others. It is now a common occurrence among some workers to keep away from work for many days within a month and receive their salaries at the end of the month without thinking of the consequences of their action on the organization (Ukoeshi, 1984 in Adeleke, 2000),

Other forms of misconduct include truancy, persistent lateness, theft, poor quality teaching, failure to write lesson notes and insubordination to constituted authority. Adeleke (2000) reiterated that truancy and persistent lateness are indicators of decreased commitment of the Nigerian worker and that if left unchecked, this negative attitude can account for low productivity. Oghuvwu & Okpilike (2012) observed that there are some unethical conducts among teachers in schools and that they include truancy, lateness to school, drug abuse and improper dressing.

The misconduct of teachers was also observed by the West African Examination Council. WAEC (2009) noted that more candidates fail in their examination due to lack of quality teaching compared to what most adults got during their school days. WAEC also discovered that candidates fail examination because they and their teachers hardly read nor make use of WAEC syllabus as a guide. From experience, the researcher has observed that some teachers in public secondary schools deliberately hawk different kinds of wares during official hours instead of teaching their lessons. According to Kazeem & Ige (2010), when these tutors eventually settle to teach, they hardly have enough time to cover the syllabus and consequently organize "extra lesson" with its attendant financial implications (on parents) to make up for lost time. Again, Akinlabi (2012) reported that many teachers in secondary schools are now too big to stand for forty-five minutes to teach a lesson.

Furthermore, he observed that teachers take delight more in discussing under trees and analyzing situations (such as government policies, politics, football and even marital issues) instead of teaching their lessons. It has to be pointed out that while these tutors are busy discussing these irrelevancies; they send notes to class prefects to copy on the board for their classmates. One therefore begins to wonder whether note taking has taken the place of teaching in our secondary schools.

Fry, (2002) observed that there is growing government and public concern over the prevalence of misconduct among college teachers in Tanzania and that such misconduct may be viewed as a means of livelihood strategy for coping with demanding jobs when living conditions are difficult. In otherwords, teachers become irregular in school so as to look for other sources of income to make both ends meet. In 1995, a World Bank survey carried out in Tanzania revealed that 38% of teachers were absent for a minimum of two days in the primary school previous Week (Schleicher, Siniscalco and Postlethwaite, 1995). The survey also reported that a large proportion of absence are for legitimate reasons

such as illness or attendance at in-service training but that teachers' truancy featured in interviews with Inspectors and Education officers. UNESCO (2005) Global monitoring report revealed high level absenteeism in Tanzania which it attributed to professional standards and lack of support or control by education authorities.

Mothermane, (2004) undertook a research on how principals manage educators' (teachers) misconduct in public secondary schools in Bochum district, Limpopo province (one of the nine provinces in South Africa). Nine out of the ten schools in the district were used. The researcher used the interview method and the same questions on how principals manage educators' misconduct were posed to both principals and educators. The results revealed that late coming is the most common form of educator misconduct in the schools that participated in the study. Furthermore, the findings indicated that absenteeism ranked next to late coming and that both forms of misconduct are more frequent on Mondays and Fridays, The reasons one may adduce for the lackadaisical attitude of secondary school teachers to work in Nigeria are wrong orientation about government's work, poor supervision, lack of adequate motivation, poor work environment and job dissatisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

In the distant past in Nigeria, professional misconduct among teachers was uncommon. Presently, it is now a serious problem that seems to have defied all solutions. In most public secondary schools, tutors hardly resume work at 8.00am and even some of them who arrive late, sooner or later leave their duty post in the guise of going to pick one thing or the other. Sadly enough, Fridays are gradually becoming non-working days in Nigeria, in government institutions (including public secondary schools) because of marriages or burial ceremonies. Moreover, some teachers deliberately stay away from work for selfish reasons without permission or official notification. Inadequate preparation for lessons and failure to write lesson notes also seem to reveal the lack of commitment of secondary school teachers to their work. The problem of this study therefore is to examine principals' perception of teachers' misconduct in secondary schools and critically discuss how counsellors can effect a change in the attitude of these teachers.

Research Questions

Four research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Is there any difference between male and female principals' perception of teachers' absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

2. What is the difference between older and younger principals' perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

3. Is there any difference between rural and urban principals' perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

4. What is the difference between experienced and less experienced principals' perception of teachers poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were formulated for the study and these include the followings;

HO_1. There is no significant difference between male and female principals' perception of teachers' absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

HO_2: There is no significant difference between older and younger principals' perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

$HO_{3:}$ There is no significant difference between rural and urban principals' perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

HO_4: There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced principals' perception of teachers' poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Purpose of the study

The objective of this study is to determine the existence of misconduct among secondary school teachers with a view to counselling the teachers to develop positive work habits.

Research Method and Procedure

The descriptive Survey research design was adopted to elicit information from the respondents using the questionnaire. The population comprised all principals in Delta Central Senatorial District. The instrument used for the collection of data was tagged 'Principals' Perception of Teachers' Misconduct Questionnaire" (PPOTMQ) and was made up of twenty items. For content validity, the instrument was given to four lecturers in the Department of Guidance & Counselling who scrutinized and made necessary corrections. The reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained, using the test-retest method at 0.05 level of significance. This is an indication that the instrument is reliable and suitable for data collection. The questionnaire comprised two sections; section A contained questions on biographic data of subjects such as gender, age, level of experience and nature of school (rural and urban) while section B consisted of 20 items indicative of professional misconduct of teachers. The questionnaire items include the following: "Absenteeism of teachers in secondary schools is on the increase," 'Teachers are not perturbed about their persistent lateness to school," "Sneaking out from school by teachers is seen as a "normal" practice". The researcher used the random sampling technique to select three from eight local government areas in Delta Central Senatorial District. All the principals in public secondary schools in the three local government areas – Ughelli North, Ethiope West and Uvwie, totaling one hundred and twenty five (125) principals were used. Three research assistants aided the investigator in the administration of the instrument and one hundred (100) principals returned their questionnaire showing 80% retrieval rate. The researcher then utilized the t-test statistical method to the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Definition of Terms

The terms below have been defined operationally.

Misconduct: Misconduct refers to negative behaviour exhibited by secondary school teachers.

Older principals: These are principals who are between 55 and 60 years of age.

Younger Principals: These are principals whose age range from 48years to 55 years of age.

Urban Principals: Urban principals are heads of post-primary institutions whose schools are located in towns with basic amenities such as electricity, water and good roads.

Rural Principals: Rural principals are principals whose schools are situated in villages where there is no electricity, pipe-borne water or good roads.

Experienced Principals: These are principals who have been heading schools for a period of over 10 years.

Less experienced Principals: This category of principals has leadership experience below 5 years.

Presentation of Results and Discussion

The findings of the study have been reported in four tables as follows:

Research Question One

Is there any difference between male and female principals' perception of teachers absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between male and female principals in their perception of teachers' absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Table 1 has indicated a difference in the mean perception of male and female principals regarding absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. The difference is not however significant because the t-calculated value of 0.837 is less than the t-critical value of 2.000. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference between male and female principals' perception of teachers' absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Research Question Two

What is the difference between older and younger principals' perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

On table 2, the t-calculated value of 0.236 was lower than the t-critical value of 2.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This revealed that there was no significant difference between older and younger principals' perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Table 1: T-test Analysis of Male and Female Principals' perception of teachers' absenteeism as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
Male principals	63	14.95	2.40	98	0.837	2.000	0.05	Not significant (accepted)
Female Principals	37	14.46	3.48					

P > .05 level of significance

Table 2: T-test Analysis of Older and Younger Principal's perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
Older (Principals) (55-60yrs)	45	14.16	2.66	98	0.236	2.000	0.05	Not significant (accepted)
Younger Principals (48-55 years)	55	14.02	3.08					

P > .05 level of significance

Research Question Three

Is there any difference between rural and urban principal’s perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

An inspection of table 3 showed that there is a difference in the mean perception of rural and urban principals as regards truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. But the difference is not significant as the t-calculated value of 1.370 was less than the t-critical value of 2.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This shows that there was no significant difference between Rural and Urban Principals’ perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Research Question Four

What is the difference between experienced and less experienced principals’ perception of teachers’ poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools?

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced principals’ perception of teachers’ poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

The data on table 4 revealed a difference between experienced and less experienced Principals perception of teachers’ poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. This is so because the calculated t-value of 1.454 is less than the critical t-value of 2.000 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retrained.

Discussion

The research has revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female principals’ perception of teachers’ absenteeism as a form of induct in secondary schools. This is in line with Ukoeshi (1984) and Adeleke (2000) who opined that it is now a common practice among workers in Nigeria (including

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Rural and Urban Principals’ perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
Rural Principals	23	14.04	3.08	98	1.370	2.000	0.05	Not significant (accepted)
Urban Principals	77	13.18	2.51					

P > .05 level of significance

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Experienced and Less Experienced Principals’ perception of teachers’ poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
Experienced Principals (Over 10 years experience)	59	13.20	2.45	98	1.454	2.000	0.05	Not significant (accepted)
Less experienced Principals (below 5 years experience)	41	12.51	2.17					

P > .05 level of significance

secondary school teachers) to keep away from work for many days within a month without thinking of the consequences of their action on the organization. Furthermore, the study supports UNESCO's (2005) Global monitoring report which revealed a high level of absenteeism among teachers in Tanzania.

Another finding of this study has indicated that there is no significant difference between older and younger principals' perception of teachers' lateness as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. This corroborates the view of Adeleke (2000) who emphasized that persistent lateness of workers in Nigeria is an indication of their decreased commitment. The result also supports the research of Mothermane (2004) which revealed that lateness is the most common form of Educator misconduct in Bochum district (Liropopo Province), South Africa and is more frequent on Mondays and Fridays.

The investigation has also found out that there is no significant difference between rural and urban principals' perception of truancy as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. This agrees with Oghuvwhu and Okpilike (2012) who observed with dismay some of the unethical conduct in schools and identified truancy and lateness as some of them. This finding also gives credence to Adeleke (2000) who decried the incidence of truancy in schools and emphasized that if left unchecked could account for low productivity.

The last finding of this study has shown that there is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced principals' perception of poor quality teaching as a form of misconduct in secondary schools. This result supports WAEC (2009) which noted that more candidates fail in their examination due to lack of quality teaching compared to what most adults got during their school days. Again, the finding also substantiates the view of Akinlabi (2012) who opined that teachers in secondary schools take delight more in discussing under trees and analyzing situations such as government policies and politics and send notes to class prefects to copy on the board for their classmates.

Conclusion

Conclusively, this study investigated Principals' Perception of Misconduct among secondary school teachers in Delta State, Nigeria. The results indicated that absenteeism, lateness, truancy and the issue of poor quality teaching are prevalent in post-primary institutions. There is need for all stakeholders in the education sector to step up efforts to stem this tide.

Implications for Counselling Practice

One of the implications of this study is that counsellors are needed in secondary schools. They are to counsel teachers on the need to take their jobs seriously and also employ behavioural techniques (such as reinforcement and modeling) to assist the teachers to unlearn undesirable behaviour such as absenteeism, lateness, truancy and lack of commitment and imbibe desirable and acceptable behaviour such as punctuality, regularity and commitment to work.

Also, guidance counsellors are the trained personnel who will help to change the irrational beliefs of some teachers who think that government work should not be taken so seriously. Through the use of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT), counsellors can achieve this and teachers will develop the right attitude to work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Guidance counsellors should be posted to all public secondary schools to counsel teachers on how to be intrinsically motivated.

2. The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), Delta State branch should in conjunction with the Post-Primary Education Board organize seminars, workshop and symposia for teachers so as to change their irrational beliefs about government work and imbibe the right attitude to their jobs.
3. On a regular basis, Inspectors from the Post-primary Education Board should pay unscheduled visits to secondary schools because this will act as a check on teachers' misconduct.
4. The state government should launch "War Against Indiscipline" in all post-primary institutions in Delta State and appropriate punitive measures should be meted out to defaulting teachers.
5. Annually, prizes should be awarded to the best behaved teachers in the various disciplines as this will motivate lazy teachers to take their work more seriously.
6. Principals should demonstrate exemplary behaviour by being punctual and regular in school so that their staff could emulate them.
7. Promotion and salary increment should be based on regularity of teachers in school and the quality of teaching that is rendered as mass promotion encourages indolence and discourages dedication to work.
8. Federal and state governments should endeavour to make the school environment conducive so as to boost teachers' morale and increase their productivity.
9. Monitoring teams should be put in place by secondary schools authorities to supervise teachers' attendance in class as well as their teaching.

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USING WALKING SURVEY AS A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING COMPONENT OF AN ONLINE HEALTH PROMOTION COURSE

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Needs Assessment and Planning Health Promotion Programs is a senior-level online course for students seeking a bachelor's degree in health promotion. Historically this course has had the learning objective of helping students demonstrate an understanding of how to plan the assessment process, from the analysis of a planning model through to the completion of a planning model paper. Recently the addition of a community walking survey as a key component of the course has established a link between engaged learning and distance education. The inclusion of this community-engaged learning component as a supplement to the traditional needs assessment and program planning project will offer online students of health promotion the opportunity to learn community assessment skills while substantially increasing their knowledge of community health issues.

Keywords: community health, engaged learning, health promotion, online education

Introduction

Needs Assessment and Planning Health Promotion Programs is a senior-level online course for students seeking a bachelor's degree in health promotion. Historically this course has had the learning objective of helping students demonstrate an understanding of how to plan the assessment process, from the analysis of a planning model through to the completion of a planning model paper. In service of this objective, students choose an organization with which they might wish to work and then conduct a needs assessment of that organization, develop a program plan that fits within that organization's mission, and articulate an evaluation plan for that program. Recently the addition of a community walking survey as a key component of the course has established a link between engaged learning and distance education.

Student engaged learning is a topic of interest in higher education for its positive effect on student persistence and retention (Boston & Ice, 2011; Wyatt, 2011). This approach to learning involves not only the things that instructors do to engage students but also the instructional activities in which students participate (Bigatel & Edel-Malizia, 2018). In the online environment, however, the risk of student isolation and alienation increases amid a lack of physical connections, motivations, and opportunities for real-world application (Meyer, 2014; Rovai & Wighting 2005). Thus strategies that engage students

in online courses are in high demand. The addition of this community-engaged learning component as a supplement to the traditional needs assessment and program planning project will offer online students of health promotion the opportunity to observe their community and learn community assessment skills while substantially increasing their knowledge of community health issues.

The Role of the Walking Survey in Community Engagement

A walking survey is a systematic observation, made on foot, that can help a participant better understand either a community generally or a specific condition or aspect of a community (CCHD, 2017). A walking survey often represents the easiest and quickest way of obtaining an overview of an entire community and—of particular importance—can be structured to provide an objective view of the community. Such a survey also allows participants to draw clear comparisons among different parts of the community, and it can aid the determination of where to focus efforts (CCHD, 2017).

In the field of health promotion, students conduct a walking survey as a way of familiarizing themselves with a community and its population through the examination of factors that affect public health. Such an examination allows students to identify the strengths and capacities as well as the gaps and risks associated with a community. Students of health promotion thus acquire insights and information that can guide work conducted among a particular population. Community assessment allow students to make professional observations intended to contribute to community empowerment as well as to alter that which is seen as appropriate and acceptable for the target population (CASN, 2015).

Activity Overview

The walking survey has seen use among undergraduate students of health promotion in the online course Needs Assessment and Planning Health Promotion Programs at a midsized university whose average class size is approximately 40 students. However, it could also be adapted to suit both larger and smaller class sizes in both smaller and larger universities.

Students' introduction to the use of community walking surveys comes as a series of answers to the following questions: *What is a community walking survey? Why should you conduct a walking survey? How do you conduct a walking survey?* After thoroughly reviewing this introductory information, each student is asked to choose a section of his or her local community in which he or she would like to individually conduct a walking survey. This area should be a section of the community that features people and places to observe. Students who live in rural areas are advised to choose a nearby urban area large enough for a walk lasting about 20–30 minutes.

Each student receives a worksheet (Community Tool Box, 2014) and is asked to become familiarized with it. Students will complete this worksheet during the course of their walk (Figure 1). On it they will provide their name, the date and the beginning and end times of their survey, and a brief description of the location where they conducted their survey.

The worksheet features nine sections that pose a range of questions about the area chosen for the student's survey:

Housing

- What is the age and condition of housing in the neighborhoods you're surveying?
- Are houses and apartment buildings kept up, or are they run down and in need of repair?
- Are yards neat or overgrown?

Public spaces or parks

- Are there public spaces where people can gather?
- Who uses these spaces?
- Is there diversity?
- Are there parks, and are they well kept up?

Culture and entertainment

- Are there museums, libraries, theaters, restaurants, clubs, sports stadiums, historic sites, etc.?
- Are they accessible to all parts of the community (centrally located, reachable by public transportation)?
- Do they reflect the cultures of community members?

Commercial activity

- What kinds of businesses are there?
- Are there boarded-up or vacant storefronts?
- Is there a mix of large and small businesses?
- Are there grocery stores and supermarkets, pharmacies, and other stores that provide necessities in all parts of the community?

Infrastructure

- What is the condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, etc.?
- Are there differences in these conditions from one area of the community to another?
- Do all parts of the community seem to be equally served by electricity, water, phone, fiber optic, wastewater treatment, waste disposal, and other infrastructure services?

Transportation and traffic

- Is there a functioning public transportation system?
- How heavy is traffic in the community?
- Is it mostly commercial and industrial—vans, trucks, etc.—or mostly private cars?
- Is there ever gridlock?
- Is there much bicycle traffic?
- Are there bike lanes?
- Are there bike racks in many places?

Environmental quality

- How much usable green space is there, and is it scattered throughout the community?
- Is there smog or haze?
- Does the air smell of smoke, garbage, car exhaust, chemicals, industrial waste, etc.?
- Does the water in streams, ponds, lakes, etc. seem reasonably clear?

Health services

- How many hospitals and clinics are there in the community?
- Where are they located?
- How big are they?
- How easy are they to get to?

Schools

- Are there schools in the community?
- Are schools well maintained?
- Are there two- and four-year colleges and/or universities in the community?
- Where are they located?
- Do they seem open to the community, or do they seem self-contained and isolated?

The worksheet closes with an open-ended question:

- What is your overall impression of the community?

Students are then asked to conduct individual walking surveys, completing the worksheet as they do. They are also asked to take at least three photos of the community that illustrate either the assets or the challenges of this community, and then provide a written description of each photo.

After finishing their community walking survey, students are asked to write a reflection based on their experiences in answer to the following questions:

- What are the community's outstanding assets?
- What seem to be the community's biggest challenges?
- What is the most striking thing about the community?
- What is the most unexpected?
- Are you struck by the aesthetic quality of the community, either positively or negatively—i.e., is it particularly beautiful or particularly ugly?

Finally, each student uploads his or her completed walking survey worksheet, personal reflection, and commented photographs to the online platform hosting the course.

Activity Reflection and Evaluation

Each component of a student's submission will be evaluated against the grading rubric and awarded a grade of excellent, sufficient, approaching sufficient, or insufficient. An excellent grade for the walking survey worksheet requires that all components of the worksheet are completed in a thorough and substantive manner, for a personal reflection that it answers all required questions in a meaningful and substantive way, and for photos that at least three have been submitted along with a description of what each represents.

Students generally find this activity an enlightening one that teaches them a new way of looking at communities. They are often surprised by how many features of a community they have previously overlooked as assets, and they become more appreciative of the resources on which they could base their efforts to promote health within the community. Thus students benefit from having taken a closer look at how demographic, environmental, behavioral, and socioeconomic issues affect the health and wellness of people in a community.

Conclusion

Each community is unique, and even the neighborhoods that constitute a community are distinct and valuable places (MSUE, 2015). Online students of health promotion can discover the unique features of their community by intentionally observing them. By learning to notice and identify the components and elements that create an environment, they can begin to understand and appreciate their surroundings as they attempt to change them for the better (MSUE, 2015). Thus the community walking survey is a useful tool for students of health promotion and other health-related disciplines and can help students recognize health problems while grappling with their root causes as they seek to identify assets and other resources for tackling these problems (Tajeu, 2002). The skills that students hone while conducting a community walking survey will aid them in their future careers as public health professionals (Smith & Burdine, 2017).

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Walking Survey Community Assessment Worksheet

Student Name:

Date of Survey: Time Started: Time Ended:

Briefly describe the location of where this survey was conducted:

HOUSING

What is the age and condition of housing in the neighborhoods you're surveying? Are houses and apartment buildings kept up, or are they run-down and in need of repair? Are yards neat or overgrown?

PUBLIC SPACES/PARKS

Are there public spaces where people can gather? Who uses these spaces? Is there diversity? Are there parks, and are they well kept up?

CULTURE/ENTERTAINMENT

Are there museums, libraries, theaters, restaurants, clubs, sports stadiums, historic sites, etc.? Are they accessible to all parts of the community (centrally located, reachable by public transportation)? Do they reflect the cultures of community members?

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

What kinds of businesses are there? Are there boarded-up or vacant storefronts? Is there a mix of large and small businesses? Are there grocery stores and supermarkets, pharmacies, and other stores that provide necessities in all parts of the community?

INFRASTRUCTURE

What is the condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, etc.? Are there differences in these conditions from one area of the community to another? Do all parts of the community seem to be equally served by electricity, water, phone, fiber optic, wastewater treatment, waste disposal, and other infrastructure services?

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Is there a functioning public transportation system? How heavy is traffic in the community? Is it mostly commercial and industrial – vans, trucks, etc. – or mostly private cars? Is there ever gridlock? Is there much bicycle traffic? Are there bike lanes? Are there bike racks in many places?

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

How much usable green space is there, and is it scattered throughout the community? Is there smog or haze? Does the air smell of smoke, garbage, car exhaust, chemicals, industrial waste, etc.? Does the water in streams, ponds, lakes, etc. seem reasonably clear?

HEALTH SERVICES

How many hospitals and clinics are there in the community? Where are they located? How big are they? How easy are they to get to?

SCHOOLS

Are there schools in the community? Are schools well maintained? Are there two- and four-year colleges and/or universities in the community? Where are they located? Do they seem open to the community, or do they seem self-contained and isolated?

What is your overall impression of the community?

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ONLINE STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND INCREASE UNIVERSITY PERSISTENCE RATES

Joseph S.C. Simplicio, Ph.D.

"Learn at your own pace and earn your degree without missing out on the important things happening in your life." It sounds so easy and so appealing.

In colleges and universities nation-wide more and more students are signing up for online classes in the hope that they will be able to successfully juggle the demands of their daily lives while still achieving their academic and career goals.

Unfortunately, student success rates for these online courses are abysmal to say the least.

This article discusses online strategies colleges and universities may implement to offset this growing trend.

"Learn at your own pace and earn your degree without missing out on the important things happening in your life." So say the alluring advertisements for universities nationwide that tout the merits of asynchronous learning, better known as online education.

In 2016 more than 6.3 million students at over 4,700 colleges and universities choose to enroll in an online course (Friedman, 2018). Citing the Babson Survey Research Group The Center for Online Education says this means that 33 percent of college students are taking at least one online course (2018).

Unfortunately, student success rates for these online courses are abysmal to say the least.

Oria and Renfro-Michel point out that one of the biggest challenges for students is the fact that "Students attempting to navigate through online lectures, assigned readings, and discussion boards often find it difficult –or impossible- to chart their own preferred path through the material" (2017, p. 1).

The result is that research shows that there is a 10% to 20% higher failure rate in regards to retention (Bawa, 2016). Students simply drop out or fail the courses at much higher rates.

According to Smith, course drop out can reach as high as 80% (2010).

A major pitfall and the leading cause of student failures in an online course of study is the inability to maintain student interest and involvement.

Once a student falls behind on classroom assignments it is just easier for the student to drop out of the course, and then out of the program, and finally out of the university itself.

As a result, not only are students dropping out of their online classes, they are also abandoning online programs as well.

Research conducted by U.S. News and World Report discovered that only 17% of

students enrolled in baccalaureate programs graduated within three years and only 35% earned their degree within six years (Haynie, 2015).

These statistics run contrary to the claim by universities that students can accelerate their studies and receive their degrees in shorter periods of time as compared to more traditional plans of study.

The result is that students fail to achieve their academic and career goals and the university in turn experiences declining persistence rates.

The following are key strategies to maintain student interest and involvement, help students achieve their academic and career goals, and enable the university to maintain consistent persistent rates.

Strategy One: Make Sure Students are Ready for Online Courses

As simple as this may appear, this is often overlooked. The university should be asking key basic questions before any student is allowed to register for an online course.

First, what is the student's academic background? Where do they excel and where will they need help?

Second, is the student familiar with the technology involved in such a course? Do they have a computer or are they able to come to campus to use the university's resources?

As Bradford clearly points out "Learners may select online courses for personal reasons, without recognizing that they may have issues with their entry-level skills pertaining to the subject or technology used in online classes." (2011, p.8).

Third, do they realistically have the time in their lives to attend and successfully complete online courses?

Honest answers to these questions will allow universities to better allocate their resources to provide guidance and assistance to students in order to better guarantee their academic success.

Strategy Two: Selecting the Right Faculty

Introductory courses should only be taught by those instructors who are experienced in the nuances and difficulties of teaching online courses.

In addition, these instructors must be the most approachable faculty members on the staff.

They must enjoy teaching and interacting with their students because interactions and personal connections are crucial to academic success in online classes.

The inability on the part of instructors to establish and maintain a personal connection with their students is a sure fire formula for disaster.

These faculty members must also be willing to be more understanding and flexible. Very often students select specific online programs because of their life situations.

They often juggle work with family obligations and the desire to improve their career options. As Kern points out "Online instructors should be understanding of adult learners who often are balancing full-time jobs and family responsibilities…" (Kern, 2010, p.1).

Many of these non-traditional students have been away from a classroom environment for decades. They require more patience than a traditional student. An instructor's understanding of this fact can be the key difference between success and failure for students.

This means that these instructors must be a little more responsive to students who are already apprehensive about taking online classes. Returning emails in a timely manner for example can make a world of difference in reassuring students that they can indeed be successful in the class. "…it's important for online instructors to be online and checking E-mail as often as possible…" (Kern, 2010, p.1).

Academic flexibility is also important. Instructors must be willing to allow students to achieve the main objectives of the course

through possible alternate means of assessment. This might mean relying less heavily on traditional grading methods such as testing and placing more emphasis on written assignments or even portfolio use.

Strategy Three: Initial Classroom Assignments

Initial classroom assignments are an important component of student academic success and also in maintaining good persistence rates.

Unless they are highly motivated, students who work alone experience higher course failure rates. "They're stuck studying alone, with no sense of belonging to a broader community" (Bidaisee, p. 1).

To thrust a new student into a silo of academic pressure is not only academically unsound, it is unfair.

Instead, students should work with other students in a cooperative and collaborative group setting.

The use of group work for initial assignments allows students to develop a teamwork mentality that provides them with peer support, emotional backup, and a better opportunity for academic success.

Peer collaboration has proven to be an effective tool for academic success. For more than a decade researchers have known that "Students who are members of a tight network of peers have access to more resources…" (Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, 2006, p. 1).

As adults, in the real world these students are often accustomed to working with others, whether that is at the office or at home. Therefore working as part of a group in class is a natural extension of their daily lives.

In addition, group work provides immediate connections between students and as the literature clearly indicates students who maintain a personal and academic connection to a course, or a program, or a university itself, are more likely to buy into the academic goals the institution espouses.

This strategy will help develop connections that students would normally have established in on campus classes.

Most importantly, this strategy is the soundest approach to guaranteeing academic success without compromising academic course integrity.

In turn, it provides encouragement for students to continue on with their plans to achieve their goals.

The bottom line is that successful students return to class each semester and achieve their goals.

Strategy Four: Scheduled Contact Times

"If you need help, just contact me." So says the instructor. This has been the mantra for online courses since their inception.

Unfortunately it leads to student failure and higher dropout rates.

A study conducted at Kennesaw State University in Georgia that tested the effectiveness of practices such as welcome emails and periodic contact from instructors discovered that inconsistent and unscheduled contact was not effective in preventing high course dropout rates (Burnsed, 2010).

When instructors require students to post and use discussion boards at specific times the progress of these students can be better monitored. Their questions can be answered in a timelier manner. Instructors are also able to pinpoint possible issues more readily.

A few minutes each week with one on one time with the instructor in conjunction with time set aside for other students to provide helpful feedback, can prove to be the difference between success and failure.

In addition, regularly scheduled communication between students and other staff personnel such as advisors and tutors will keep crucial lines of communication open and will

provide valuable resources and important real life connections for online students.

As Bachner points out it is crucial to "Devote consistent blocks of time to the class." (2018, p. 1).

Strategy Five: Having a Strong on Campus Support System

All students must understand that they are not alone while taking an online course. In addition to assistance from other students and the instructor, they must have access to an established an effective set of campus resources.

These resources are best housed in a professional Learning Center.

Through this Center students will have access to professionally trained educators and staff members that they will need to successfully complete their academic studies.

In addition to trained professional assistance students should also be provided with cutting edge technological tools that they can utilize to improve their skills.

One such tool for example that utilizes artificial intelligence provides an intelligent tutoring system that accesses student weaknesses and diagnoses why students make specific errors. The system then adjusts instructional materials to meet students' needs. (Bettinger, Fox, Loeb, & Taylor, 2017).

Other computer based programs such as "drill and practice" tools provide unlimited opportunities for students to work on and master problem areas whether these are subject or skill based.

Effectively implementing these strategies through the use of such technological tools will help to better guarantee student success, and in return higher retention rates.

Technology alone though will not guarantee student success. In addition to dedicated faculty, cutting edge technology, and a professionally staffed Learning Center, effective design teams should be put into place to improve success rates.

These design teams consist "…of a primary faculty subject matter expert, lead instructional designer, and a curriculum coordinator: (Hale & Wood, 2017, p. 2).

Together this team can identify possible issues and create valuable solutions to meet students' needs.

Again, effective implementation of these strategies will in turn improve persistence rates significantly.

Conclusions

The reality is that online courses are here to stay. Each year more and more students are availing themselves of the opportunities to complete their studies through this option.

As these courses grow in number so will the challenge intensify for universities to ensure that their students can successfully navigate them.

Strategies such as those discussed within this article are only a beginning, only a stepping stone, to alleviate the growing persistence issues that will accompany the growth of online courses and programs.

More research and more experimentation, especially in the areas of curriculum development and student retention, will need to be conducted in order to develop viable and workable strategies to offset online issues.

I am confident that through this research will come new and innovative strategies and methodologies that will help students achieve academic success.

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND ADULT LEARNING THEORIES: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ABOUT TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS IN A DOCTORAL PROGRAM

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For over 25 years, my lecture driven teaching strategies that included passive learning outcomes has prevailed in my K12 and higher education teaching. The requirement to help doctoral students identify and understand their epistemology, ontology and worldview within a research methods class created a dilemma regarding the appropriateness of passive learning for these topics. Using autoethnography, this paper documents my journey in addressing the dilemma. The data include the previous research methods course syllabi, my notes from previous research methods classes, and research method student reflections from the past three years. This paper provides the context as the introduction followed by a literature review that includes adult learning theories such as andragogy (Knowles, 1988) and experiential learning theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984). Also included is a review of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1995). Aggregating the three theories into a map organized by my desired student behaviors provided a structure that will guide me in my transition to incorporate more ELT (Kolb, 1984) strategies that will create opportunities for transformational learning. During the analyses, I realized that the resolution of my dilemma regarding passive and active learning was an example of a transformative learning experience.

About 12 years ago I became an Educational Leadership Assistant Professor in a Midwestern University's College of Education. Having previously been a K12 public school STEM teacher for almost 20 years, I had no reservations about teaching in the higher education programs. I had lived the K12 leadership and teacher roles for almost 20 years. At the time of my transition to higher education, classes were delivered face to face and the traditional lecture style prevailed. The difference was that I would be teaching K12 teachers instead of K12 students.

Fast forward 12 years. Higher education instructional strategies have expanded to include hybrid learning, online learning and learning management systems such as Blackboard (https://uk.blackboard.com/learning-management-system/blackboard-learn.html). Each iteration of improvements has been helpful in adapting my preferred lecture based instructional strategies and curriculum designs.

In 2014, I began teaching a research methods course for a new education doctoral program in Organizational Studies. The

doctoral program is a non-traditional program that includes students who have full time jobs and have worked for at least three years in a leadership position. A cohort model is used, though some cohorts only complete the entry level courses together due to their specific topics of interest. The cohort sizes have ranged from 4 to 13, with a mode of 6 and they include education, military, profit and non-profit organizations representatives.

My preference for using the traditional lecture style to facilitate the research methods course was modified specifically for a few classes in order to cover the importance for students to know their worldview since self-knowledge is required in designing and conducting research studies. To help students identify their worldview, I provided readings providing insights into a variety of most common worldviews, epistemologies and ontologies. Students reflected about their epistemology and ontology and how either or both had evolved over time. I included some class time for discussion about their findings, but I was hesitant to allow the discussion to take too much time in case the discussion drifted to a topic about which I was not an expert. To further demonstrate my lack of comfort with active learning activities, I did not help the students articulate how their worldview related to their personal and professional goals. I guess I hoped they would make the connections themselves.

Each year I devoted more class time for this non-traditional (for me) instructional strategy of discourse and reflection on worldviews. I observed that the students energetically participated in the collaborative and reflective activities. In fact, I added more opportunities for this type of learning with regard to topics such as qualitative coding; the students regularly offered connections they noted related to worldview and other topics related to research methods. I enjoyed the spontaneous sharing throughout the class because it demonstrated that students had embraced the connection between self-awareness and research. Consequently, I decided to explore the updated literature about experience based learning and transformative learning to develop a plan for implementing experience based strategies more regularly.

This paper documents my journey to better understand why I began to believe that my traditional lecture style strategy was not having as strong an impact on my adult learner students as the experience based strategies. I wanted to better understand the theories behind the student engagement differences that I observed in the collaborative discourse learning activities. My study included a review of the Science of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) literature related to my quest. The literature review I present is followed by a description of why autoethnography is the method chosen for the study, which is followed by a mapping of my desired instructional outcomes with existing teaching and learning theories. The final section of the paper is a summary of my next steps in this journey.

Literature Review

In my search for learning and teaching theories related to my desire to minimize my reliance on lecture-based instruction, I focused on publications and research regarding andragogy (Knowles, 1988), experiential learning theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984), and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1995).

Andragogy

Adult learning theories re-emerged in popularity when Knowles (1988) differentiated adult learning from children learning theories; he referred to adult learning as *andragogy*, a term first used by Kapp in 1833 (Loeng, 2017) and which comes from the two Greek words ‘andra,’ which means ‘adult’, and ‘agogos’, which means ‘leader of’ (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1983). Unlike learning

theories for children, Knowles (1988) posited that adults learn based on their (a) need to know; (b) self-concept; (c) experiences; (d) readiness to learn; (e) orientation to learning; and (f) motivation. The differences between children learning and adult learning are associated with adults having lived and experienced more than children. Adults' life experiences impact their intrinsic motivation to learn as well as how they learn. Abela (2009) posited that adults are also motivated by extrinsic factors such as a job or a salary. In other words, motivation to learn is a major factor in the difference between adult and child learning theories. To that end, Taylor and Handy (2013) proposed that the adult learning characteristics that differentiate adult learners from children learners are not unique to adults but more likely parts of a continuum of learning that occurs during one's lifetime. The authors suggested that all learners move along the continuum at their own speed, influenced by the six items included in andragogy.

A criticism of the six items Knowles' (1988) related to andragogy is that learner reflection is not included as influencing adult learners. Reflection learning (Scho¨n 1983, 1987) supports the concept that learners who reflect and adapt their pre-existing understandings to include reflected learning are able to develop better understandings. For example, medical students practice a procedure on a non-living object, reflect on what worked and did not work, develop a strategy for improvement and then execute a second attempt. From a different perspective, Mezirow (2014) proposed that adult learners' habits in making meaning are important factors related to learning. In other words, learners' past experiences influence how they learn as an adult, as Knowles (1988) documented. A communicative reflective learner searches to understand what is read or spoken in order to accurately interpret the meaning rather than to blindly implement past learning protocols to interpret the information. Without reflection, the learner may never consider other interpretations and never consider exploring different methods for learning.

In my search for more information about the use of student reflection in learning, I was reminded that, Socrates (c. 470 BCE – c. 399 BCE) emphasized the importance of questioning for an intrapersonal learning experience (Vander Waerdt, (ed.), 1994). Socrates was a highly respected teacher during his life. His proposal that he 'knew nothing' is similar to A. Kolb and D. Kolb's phrase, 'all learning is relearning' (2005). Both Socrates' and A. Kolb and Kolb's phrases confirm that there is not one person who knows everything. Instead, students are continually expanding what they know based on existing knowledge. In discourse and discussions, effective instructors who emulate Socrates' teaching strategies should be a resource to keep the student conversations on topic, but they should not play the role of the keeper of knowledge. Interestingly, even 2500 years ago, the importance of collaborative discussions and reflections was recognized as a valuable strategy for learning because as Tweed and Lehman (2002) posited, 'In the ideal learning context, truth is neither presented by authority figures nor socially negotiated. Rather it is found by the self' (p. 91).

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

The next step in my quest was to identify the learning theories that were aligned with the types of learning that I desired for my students: ELT (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning (Meziro, 1978). In 1984, Kolb summarized six proposition regarding experiential learnings: (a) Learning is a process not outcomes; (b) All learning is relearning; (c) Learning requires the resolution of conflicts (Conflict, differences, and disagreements drive the learning process); (d) Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world; (e) Learning results from synergetic

transactions between the person and the environment; and (f) Learning is the process of creating knowledge (not transmitting knowledge). In 2005, Kolb, A. and Kolb, D. reviewed current research regarding adult learning and documented suggestions to enhance higher education student learning, including the importance of the learning spaces. The authors' suggested eight principles that enhance adult learning in an ELT environment are briefly described below:

a. Have respect for learners and their experience.
b. Begin learning with the learner's experience of the subject matter.
c. Create and hold a hospitable space for learning.
d. Make space for conversational learning.
e. Make space for development of expertise.
f. Make spaces for acting and reflecting.
g. Make spaces for feeling and thinking.
h. Make space for inside-out learning.
i. Make space for learners to take charge of their own learning.

The principles of andragogy along with the above list of nine suggestions to enhance ELT (Kolb, 1984) began to coalesce for me. The suggestions to respect learners and their experiences and to create a hospitable space for learning is clearly related to the andragogy principle that adults learn based on their experiences. The teaching theory based on andragogy (Knowles, 1988) reflects the suggested enhancements for ELT (Kolb, 1984). I was beginning to see more connections and the door was opening regarding why I enjoyed facilitating classes in which the students demonstrated significant changes in their self-understanding.

Transformative Learning

As I became more convinced that the instructional strategies I desired represented ELT as well as the suggested learning spaces (Kolb, A. & Kolb, 2005), I realized that my observations of students willingly participating and sharing learning in my previous classes represented transformative learning experiences.

> Transformative learning helps adult learners understand their experiences, how they make sense or "meaning of their experiences", the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meaning themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional. (Mezirow, 1997, p. xii)

According to Stevens-Long, Schapiro, and McClintock (2012), the term *transformative learning* can refer to three ideas: a transformational outcome, a process of learning that is experienced by a learner, and an educational program or event designed to foster learning experiences that result in or catalyze a transformational outcome. In other words, people who have experienced transformative learning are different afterwards; the differences are recognized by themselves and others.

For this paper, transformative learning refers to the targeted learning, including pedagogical practices, that will enable my students to reflect and understand how they make meaning. A short summary of transformative learning includes three types of changes: change in assumptions, change in perspective, and change in behavior (Cranton, 1992). For transformative learning to take place, the classroom experiences must facilitate a higher order of consciousness related to learner epistemologies and ways of creating meaning. Reflection must be a key element within the

course design. Also important are A. Kolb and D. Kolb's (2005) suggested practices of having safe learning spaces and of having respectful spaces that allow students to engage in open discussions about how and why they make meaning. In an ELT (Kolb, 1984) activity that targets transformative learning (Mezirow, 1995), students would understand their existing limitations in making meaning and develop other more appropriate forms for making meaning. Instructors can provide learning spaces and pedagogy that balance convergence and divergence as learners experience transformation.

Autoethnography

The methodology that guided this study is autoethnography, a methodology that combines autobiography and ethnography as a narrative (Hendricks, 2009). The design can refer to an ethnographic study of one's group or an autobiographical study recording one's ethnographic observations and analyses. The purpose of the study was to improve my theoretical understandings and developments (ethnography) related to seeking methods to increase the transformative learning experiences (Mezirow, 1995) for my students. The data for the autoethnography are the previous course syllabi, my notes from previous classes, and student reflections from the past three years of teaching research methods in a doctoral program. The analyses included integrating the teaching and learning theories with my desired student transformative learning experiences.

Making the Connections

A motivator for embarking on this autoethnographic journey was to identify learning and teaching theories related to non-traditional (to me) classroom instructional strategies that include active instead of passive learning. Specifically, my instructional goal was that in the process of learning the basics of research methods, my students would experience transformative learning. The behaviors listed below include in parentheses which of the three transformations defined by Cranton (1992) reflect transformational learning (Mezirow, 1997). Figure 1 reflects the targeted student behaviors mapped to andragogy theories and research (Knowles 1988), ELT (Kolb, 1984), and higher education learning space guidelines (Kolb, A. and D. Kolb, 2005). As the reader reviews the data in the columns beneath each student behavior, examples of principles that enhance skills for the behavior unfold. For example, since I desire to enhance my students' ability to complete critical reflections in class, as I plan a class I will review principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1988), ELT (Kolb, 1984) and the suggested learning space principles (Kolb, A. & D. Kolb, 2005). The Figure 1 allows me to determine which of the principles would easily align with the behavior goal and to develop activities using the principles. The information will guide my instructional designs throughout the research methods class in order to help students develop desired skills in fulfilling the opportunities.

Figure 1 also allowed me to think more specifically about the upcoming semester. I realized that I could not implement all the changes and improvements listed. However, I could implement some. For example, I could increase students' awareness of their own personal motivators by beginning with activities that involve discussing students' research experiences and by referring to those experiences during the semester class. I could be mindful that ELT (Kolb, 1984) assumes that learning results from synergetic transactions. I could plan activities about personal motivators that involve conversations and collaboration. And finally, during class discussions, I could listen for clues about students' self-concepts regarding research and learn about their orientation to learning more about research.

Figure 1. Adult learning theories and targeted student learning experiences. Increasing classroom experiences related to students' understanding of personal motivators can be enhanced through embracing the Andragogy and ELT principles listed in that column: Knowing students' self-concepts and orientation to learning; understanding that learning results from synergetic transactions; and starting the learner's experience of the subject matter. Understanding personal motivators support a change in understanding self

Targeted student learning experiences Theories	Share meaningful reflections (Behaviors)	Share personal habits of learning (Assumptions)	Complete critical reflective activities (Perceptions)	Understand personal motivators (Self)	Assist in identifying and measuring outcomes (Self-directed)
Andragogy	-Self-concept -Experiences	-Readiness to learn	-Need to know -Orientation to learning	-Self-concept -Orientation to learning	-Need to know -Self-concept -Experiences -Orientation to learning -Motivation
ELT	-All learning is relearning -Learning requires the resolution of conflicts -Learning is a holistic process -Learning results from synergetic transactions -Learning is the process of creating knowledge	-Learning requires the resolution of conflicts -Learning results from synergetic transactions -Learning is the process of creating knowledge	-Learning is a process not outcomes -All learning is relearning -Learning requires the resolution of conflicts -Learning is a holistic process -Learning results from synergetic transactions -Learning is the process of creating knowledge	-Learning results from synergetic transactions	-All learning is relearning -Learning is a holistic process -Learning results from synergetic transactions

Targeted student learning experiences Theories	Share meaningful reflections (Behaviors)	Share personal habits of learning (Assumptions)	Complete critical reflective activities (Perceptions)	Understand personal motivators (Self)	Assist in identifying and measuring outcomes (Self-directed)
Higher Ed Spaces	-Respect for learners and their experience -Making space for conversational learning -Making spaces for feeling and thinking.	-Respect for learners & their experience -Creating & holding a hospitable space for learning	- Respect for learners and their experience -Begin learning w/the learner's content experience. -Creating and holding a hospitable space for learning -Making space for conversational learning. -Making spaces for acting and reflecting -Making spaces for feeling and thinking. -Making space for inside-out learning. - Making space for learners to direct of their learning.	-Begin learning with the learner's experience of the subject matter.	-Begin learning with the learner's experience of the subject matter. -Creating and holding a hospitable space for learning -Making space for learners to take charge of their own learning.

In addition, as I embrace the activities that support changes in students' assumptions, I could be cognizant of A. Kolb and D. Kolb's (2005) guidelines for respectful, hospitable learning spaces that include space for conversational learning, acting, reflection, feeling, thinking and inside-out learning. During the semester I could maintain a journal about my efforts to instill more transformative learning experiences in my class. The learning and teaching theories covered in this paper should be referenced in my journal in order to guide me to critically reflect on how to improve the course in future semesters.

Summary

Using Figure 1 and reflecting on my dilemma regarding active versus passive learning helped me to realize that teaching the research methods class over the past three years had been a transformative learning experience for me. The transformation was related to me as an instructor. As I began to plan for a new semester, the dilemma was disillusioning enough to force me to revisit my assumptions, perspectives and beliefs about teaching. I refreshed my knowledge of research related to SoTL; through critical reflection I made connections between the learning and teaching theories published and the active learning I had observed in my class. I discovered that using ELT (Kolb, 1984) in my classroom would facilitate more transformative learning. In other words, I changed my assumptions through this transformative learning. Using the principles and guidelines included in Figure 1, I could design ELT (Kolb, 1984) activities that would enhance the transformative learning I sought. Each semester I could adjust my activities based on the adult learning theories (Knowles, 1988) and ELT (Kolb, A., & Kolb, D., 2005) suggestions in order to further improve the students' learning experiences in my research methods course. I am looking forward to integrating my resolutions into an updated research methods course plan and to observing more instances of transformational learning.

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