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Strategies for Raising Low Test Scores of Minority Students

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Strategies for Raising Low Test Scores of Minority Students

by

[Shanika McClendon](#)

Master's Project

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Shanika McClendon

Abstract

This project is an in-service professional development to prepare teachers for implementing effective strategies for raising minority test scores on standardized tests. These strategies focus on the development of vocabulary and on students' self-efficacy. The literature shows that the failure for African American and minority students to be successful on standardized test is likely due to lack of support, resources, and adequate preparation. Furthermore, the literature reveals that most of these tests are probably biased toward these students' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Studies also show other factors such as stress, stereotyping, depression, and anxiety. Taking into consideration these factors, which constitute real obstacles for African American and culturally and linguistically diverse students, this project focuses on teaching strategies and resources to contribute to resolving the poor performance on standardized tests of these categories of learners.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

Standardized tests adversely affect African American students as well as culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Most standardized tests are based on mainstream's cultural, social, and economic values. It is not therefore surprising that many students, among whom are African Americans and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students underperform. While many factors intervene in the success or failure of a student, the fact that standardized tests focus for the most part on the mainstream's cultural, social and economic values, sets African American students and CLD learners at a disadvantage. The interpretation of these tests has often led to stereotypes and false conclusions related to these students and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which in turn have resulted in anxiety, emotional stress, and depression in some students. It is essential that educators began to recognize adverse effects of standardized test. Contributing factors to this issue include the lack of consideration for African American and CLD learners' culture, as well as a lack of consideration for the English dialect that these groups speak. Standardized tests are instead constructed valuing mainstream English and mainstream culture. African American and CLD learners are raised in households that speak their own

English dialect and value their own culture. This lack of exposure to mainstream English and mainstream culture is shown when African American and CLD students' overall standardized test performance is lower than that of White students. Mainstream American English and Culture is more closely connected to America's majority race which is Caucasian. As a result, mainstream English and culture is used to develop standardized assessments. Educators need to be aware of these facts in order to support students accordingly.

Action plans should be put in place in order to counter the negative effects of standardized tests. Research has shown that counter measures including confidence counseling, helping students to cope with anxiety and better teacher preparation will play a role in invoking higher achievement of minority students. Going forward preventative measures must be taken in order to combat adverse effects and increase African American and CLD learner's achievement in spite of the hindrance they may have encountered in the past.

Importance and Rationale for Project

Addressing the problem of negative effects of standardized tests is important. Some outcomes that can occur by addressing this problem include increasing student growth, lessening school closures, and strengthening communities. Minority students face many challenges related to socioeconomic status. "In 2017, 18% of children lived in poverty with the proportion of children in poverty, by race/ethnicity, highest among black and Hispanic children (29 and 25 percent, respectively, compared with 11 percent among white children)." (childtrends.org). Children in living poverty are also at a higher risk of dropping out of school. "In 2018, there were 2.1 million status dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24, and the overall status dropout rate was 5.3 percent" (NCES 2020). "The status dropout rate for Black 16- to 24-year-olds was

6.4 percent in 2018 and for Hispanic is the same age range 8 percent.” (NCES 2020). As previously shown a higher percentage of African American and Hispanic students live in poverty. These same groups have a higher percentage of high school dropouts than White students whose dropout rate is 4.2 percent. These unfortunate statistics trail back to education or a lack thereof. Socioeconomic status, and poverty level factor into the high school dropout rate. My project is important because it is tailored to help students of lower socioeconomic status who are at a higher risk of dropping out of high school. The project components will help students before they start high school giving them a better chance of overall academic success. The American Educational System does not consider the culture or dialect of these groups when developing standardized assessments, as a result, there is a lack of value for the educational system which can be connected to the higher dropout rates of African American and CLD learners. The project that I am proposing will help students value themselves as well as show a greater value for their education through their increased academic success.

Students should be educated in a manner that will close the education achievement gap in our country. “In 2017, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students in grade 4 scored significantly lower than the national average in reading.” (Status Trends 2018) Though there has been a narrowing of points in reading and math from 1992 to 2017 between white and black students (from 32 to 25 for reading and math) and white and Hispanic students (From 26 to 19 for reading), these points differences are still quite large (Status Trends 2018 p 5-6). Students who find themselves trailing behind the national average can lose confidence which may increase their likelihood of dropping out of school. In 2019, high school dropouts made on average \$606 weekly versus someone with an advanced degree who made on average \$1,559 weekly

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). This shows that your socioeconomic status is most likely based on your level of education. In order to ensure the country remains a strong competitor all students need to be provided with effective education that is tailored to their needs that will increase the number of Americans who will help in continuing to strengthen the U.S., a leading competitor in this world. With a focus on vocabulary and confidence counseling more African American and CLD learners will have the ability to perform better in school which may encourage them to continue their education and rise above their current socioeconomic status.

Background

The history of standardized tests dates back to World War I, when the US used that form of assessment to recruit and segregate troops by race (Rosales, 2018). These tests evaluated the aptitude and intelligence based on European American characteristics. Rosales (2018) reports that these practices were pervasive and entered the field of education, where they were used to classify and rank students at all levels. These assessment types led to the institution of the S.A.T. which is currently used to determine college entry. Rosales responds to the SAT by saying that “Unlike the college boards, the SAT is designed primarily to assess aptitude for learning rather than mastery of subjects already learned,” according to Erik Jacobsen, a New Jersey writer and math-physics teacher based at Newark Academy in Livingston, N.J. “For some college officials, an aptitude test, which is presumed to measure intelligence, is appealing since at this time (1926) intelligence and ethnic origin are thought to be connected, and therefore the results of such a test could be used to limit the admissions of particularly undesirable ethnicities.” (Rosales 2018). Finally, Rosales states, “By 1930, multiple-choice tests were firmly entrenched in U.S. schools”. (Rosales 2018). This background information shows the purpose of implementing these

assessments was to separate those with a so-called higher level of intelligence from all others. The problem is that the tests are developed and tailored to a specific group which creates the achievement gap that the education system is battling now.

This achievement gap has been heavily highlighted since the implementation of No Child Left Behind NCLB. As a result of the push for high stakes testing and funding being connected to success rates, research in relation to the achievement gap has surfaced. Brunn-Bevel et al. (2015), reviewed data from a Virginia public school district. The study suggests inequality in the state tests which lead to the state's achievement gap between whites and minority students. The following are the major findings from the authors "Our analyses highlight black-white standardized test score disparities in Virginia's public schools that reflect common racial inequalities in education nationwide. With the exception of black students' performance in history and social science during elementary and middle school, these students consistently fall behind white students in all subject areas at each grade level". (Brun- Bevel 2015 et al p 441) This points to racial inequality which can be found within standardized assessments, resulting in a consistent trailing behind of black students versus their white peers. Duncan et al. (2013) also conducted a study related to identifying bias within standardized assessments in K-12 settings. Their study was conducted on the achievement gap between whites and minorities using the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery ASVAB and Peabody Individual Achievement Test PIAT assessments. The authors' reply with findings stating, "This paper illustrates how the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition technique can be used to measure the relative bias in achievement tests. We find that the math and verbal portions of the ASVAB are relatively more biased compared to the purely math oriented PIAT achievement exam (Duncan et al, 2013). The

authors concluded that there is discrimination embedded within both assessments which resulted in the achievement gap being above 40% between whites and minorities (Duncan et al, 2013). These current military entry exams are used just like the World War I exams to determine entry level and occupations within the military. The results from this study shows that based on test score minorities would be placed in lower ranking positions more often than their white peers.

In the same line of thought, Howard et al. (2010), conducted a study on the effects of stereotype threat on middle school students in large minority settings. Student performance on past assessments percentiles were used to determine students' levels as high, medium or low performers. During the study participants were put in two groups, the non- threat and stereotype threat group. The non-threat group were asked their grade level and to complete an expectancy measure before taking the assessment. The threat group started with a presentation on the achievement gap and its connection to race. After watching the video participants were asked to select their race then complete an expectancy measure predicting how they would perform on the assessment. Authors found that, "In this study of seventh-grade students, expectancy was influenced by stereotype threat manipulation, however its influence was observed only in the medium performing group with respect to the prior standardized test performance." (Howard et al 2010) The studies' major findings were that students from the threat group who scored within the medium percentile group based on prior performance were more vulnerable to stereotype threat and their expectancy measure was lower after watching the presentation. This study shows how students' view of themselves can be impacted when stereotypes are introduced. This

suggests the need for confidence counseling for students who may be more vulnerable to stereotype threat.

Minority students test scores in all subjects in relation to White students is a current issue within America. Researchers are approaching the issue of low minority student test scores by implementing direct vocabulary instruction to minority students. A specific method for direct vocabulary implementation currently being used by researchers is the Frayer Model. A study comparing the Frayer Model and Concept Mapping showed that the use of the Frayer Model was more effective than concept mapping. The author's found that, "From the result of normalized gain, it can be seen that the students who are taught using in the result FM got 0.8162 and those who are taught using CMS got 0.7631" (Panjaitan et al 2020). From these findings authors concluded that teachers should use the Frayer Model due to the student vocabulary acquisition increase after use. This shows that direct vocabulary instruction increases student vocabulary acquisition. African American and culturally and linguistically diverse students deserve instruction that is tailored to their needs and direct vocabulary instruction is the key to their success.

In order to build student confidence and lessen anxiety programs such as Growth Mindset have been used in the past. Using growth mindset as a foundation for the study McCutchen et al (2016) present their purpose by saying, "The present study seeks to evaluate the relationship between mindset and academic achievement over time" McCutchen et al. (2016). This mixed methods study includes a questionnaire done at the beginning of the students and the retrieval of standardized tests results to evaluate the relationship between student mindset and academic

achievement. The major findings of McCutchen et al. (2016), were students with teachers within the study that promoted a growth mindset within the classroom obtained positive gains on high stakes tests. Students within the study who did not encounter teachers who promoted a growth mindset were labeled as having a fixed mindset which resulted in low performance of students on high stakes tests. This shows the positive effects confidence counseling programs such as Growth Mindset has on student standardized tests performance.

These tried and tested methods are what I plan to use to develop and implement an in-service to assist teachers with effective teaching of vocabulary for CLDs. The second in-service training will be to implement school wide confidence counseling for students. For the past six years I have worked in an inner-city charter school in Detroit, Michigan. The school consists predominantly of African American students and 98% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Students speak an African American dialect versus Mainstream American English which is used when developing standardized tests. The schools test scores have increased throughout the years yet there is a recurring issue that my colleagues and I have faced. The issue is that there is a low percentage of students testing at proficiency on the Michigan student test of educational proficiency (M-STEP) assessment. What makes this so much more disheartening is that a vast majority of students are testing at partial proficiency. Not only are they testing at partial proficiency, but they are between 5-7 points from a proficient score. This is too close for comfort and improvements to student instruction should be made. Students lack exposure to situations, vocabulary and events presented in standardized tests which hinders their optimal success on these culturally biased assessments. Through the

implementation of direct vocabulary instruction and confidence counseling these students have the ability to increase their test scores and close the 5–7-point deficit that has plagued the school.

Statement of Purpose

This project’s purpose is two-fold. The first purpose is to administer professional development for teachers and support staff to implement effective direct vocabulary instruction. The second purpose is to help students become self-motivated via an implementation of a schoolwide growth mindset framework. During the professional development for Kindergarten-Eight grade students vocabulary instruction, teachers will be provided three vocabulary related strategies to implement in their classrooms. These strategies will include the teaching of word parts, using word multi-tiered vocabulary lists coupled with reading passages to teach vocabulary and having teachers adjust their classroom vernacular to include the words that are being taught in the classes’ everyday language. These strategies will build a culture of vocabulary. Implementation of the Frayer Model will be modeled with both word parts and multi-tier words.

During the professional development for the Growth Mindset framework, it will be suggested that teachers identify students who lack confidence and resilience. Once these students are identified teachers along with social workers will work together to implement the program for all students yet provide special attention to students who may be considered “at-risk” of failure due to their lack of confidence and resilience.

Project Objectives

- Increase students’ vocabulary acquisition grades K-8.

- Increase student efficacy and resilience grades K-8.

Definition of Key Terms

- Achievement gap- The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. (edweek.org)
- Countermeasures - action taken to counteract a danger or threat
- Culture of vocabulary- an atmosphere where fluent vocabulary is being used by everyone.
- Direct vocabulary instruction- teaching vocabulary words in isolation.
- Efficacy- the ability to produce a desired or intended result
- Growth Mindset- A growth mindset is when students understand their abilities can be developed. (Dweck, 2014)
- Minority students- those who do not belong to a region's or nation's majority racial or ethnic group (rand.org)
- Standardized test bias- educational tests are considered biased if a test design, or the way results are interpreted and used, systematically disadvantages certain groups of students over others, such as students of color, students from lower-income backgrounds, students who are not proficient in the English language, or students who are not fluent in certain cultural customs and traditions (Glossary of Education Reform, date).
- Stereotyping- In social psychology, a stereotype is a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people. (simplypsychology.org)
- Vocabulary- the knowledge of meaning of words

Project Scope

The scope of this project is to increase student vocabulary acquisition and confidence which will increase students standardized test scores. The language development section of the project will help teachers create a culture of vocabulary with their students. The goal of a vocabulary rich classroom culture is to increase exposure of Mainstream American English and Culture for African American and CDL's. The Growth Mindset program will be implemented by teachers to help increase students' efficacy and resilience. Instead of continuously observing students partially reaching what these standardized tests consider academic proficiency, this project will provide a solution to teachers. This project will not provide teachers with a vocabulary curriculum, nor will the growth mindset program be mandatory for teachers to use. The motivating factors for this project is to increase academic proficiency in students who experience negative effects when taking standardized tests.

There are factors that may hinder this project. One factor is the lack of teacher participation. If teachers do not embrace the project and effective implementation does not occur students will not succeed. Another factor that might hinder the project is student resistance. If students do not embrace a Growth Mindset the project will not succeed. In order to ensure effective implementation of the project effective professional development must occur.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

A higher level of academic achievement on standardized tests for culturally diverse speaking students can be acquired through the implementation of effective teaching approaches. These approaches should be purposeful and tailored to the needs of the students. This literature review contains a thorough overview of the body of literature that supports evidence of strategies that effectively increase student test scores. This chapter will begin with a theoretical framework that is the foundation of this project. Research and evaluation of the literature supporting the project will proceed. Following the research/evaluation is a summary of the major findings, ending with conclusions drawn from the information within this section.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this project is three dimensional. The three theories that drive this project are the Social linguistic theory of William Labov, Constructivism by Lev Vygotsky, and Humanistic learning of Abraham Maslow. Due to the 2 objectives of this project more than one theory is necessary. Social linguistics and constructivism are coupled in this project in the support of implementation strategies to develop language use in the classroom. Humanistic learning of Maslow supports the necessity for confidence counseling through the Growth Mindset program.

Labov's theory on sociolinguistics puts emphasis on the variations of a language spoken and written. This theory contends that these variations of language or vernacular first learned are used in more intimate settings with family and friends. This intimate vernacular may not commonly be used in the development of standardized assessments. As a result, culturally diverse language students do not perform as well as those who commonly speak the mainstream

language that is used to develop assessments. This may be due to a lack of exposure to the mainstream language. The book *Lenses on Reading* highlights Labov's theory and its social effects by stating, "For example, children from at-risk communities often do not gain a familiarity with conventional English syntax because the primary language spoken in their homes is not English, or, if it is English, it is a vernacular rather than Standard English.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that children from at-risk communities are exposed to significantly less vocabulary than their more affluent peers." (Tracey et al., 2006, p.102). By implementing direct vocabulary instruction students in the area of vocabulary exposure can be met.

Vygotsky's constructivist theory is based on the idea that meaning is constructed by the individual and their experiences. As a result of this it is important that educators provide students with the necessary experiences that will help develop their use of Mainstream English. Educators must also realize that the experiences of their students in at-risk communities may be limited. Vocabulary exposure is a way to increase students' experiences. This knowledge will help them to begin to make their own meaning due to the increased amount of experiences due to a focus on language development.

Maslow's humanistic learning theory is based on a hierarchy of needs. These needs include physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Maslow contends that before people reach their full potential, they have to satisfy a series of desires. The physiological needs for students include food and clothing, this is usually provided at home yet school lunch programs and stipends for families in need can be obtained

through the school. The schools meet students' safety needs by providing them with a secure place to learn, grow and develop infused with structure, rules and procedures. Schools create a positive and welcoming environment to target students to belong or be loved. In Maslow's five stages, esteem needs are to be met before self-actualization or their full potential can be reached. This project's focus is on first meeting student esteem needs then helping them obtain self-actualization. The esteem needs will be met through confidence counseling and growth mindset, while self-actualization or reaching their full potentials will be assisted through the implementation of classroom strategies that are tailored to academic growth. Students in low socioeconomic communities may have less of their needs met at home. As a result, the school and classroom culture can be developed to assist in meeting students' needs.

The trio of theories used in this project are similar in their focus on meeting specific needs. While Labov and Vygotsky's theory are more connected to academics, Maslow's theory is about meeting personal needs or desires. Sociolinguist theory focuses on language and vernacular effects across cultures. Vygotsky's theory is more central to the learner being engaged in the learning process. Competing theories include behaviorism and cognitivism. These theories were not used due to a greater focus being on African American and CLD students' variations in vernacular and a focus of engaging students in the learning process versus conditional training of students or a focus on the teacher building students' knowledge.

In conclusion the instructional practices suggested in this project will provide educators with the necessary tools to help students meet their full potential on standardized assessments. When implementation of these practices is done effectively every student can definitely succeed.

Research/ Evaluation

Standardized tests and minority achievement

The educational achievement gap is a serious issue that has been difficult to address. Year after year students around the United States take standardized tests and one main theme of the results is that students are not performing as well as others. When viewed through the lens of race it is shown that minority students are performing lower than their White peers. The issue of Black students performing lower than White students connects to Labov's sociolinguistic theory and his works connected to segregation and its effects on the academic performance of Black children. In a 1985 interview with William Stevens Labov says, "the communication between whites and blacks is increasingly difficult and black children in school might be worsening". This is a crucial statement made by Labov's because it connects Black language dialect and unintentional segregation to student achievement.

Two similar studies found that African American students standardized test scores were significantly lower than White students. (Brunn-Bevel 2013; Duncan 2016). These two correlating studies are vital evidence that the achievement gap is a recurring issue in education. In the Brunn-Bevel et al (2013) study researchers reviewed standardized test scores and made a connection not only to the difference between performance based on race but also aligned poverty levels and segregation to the achievement gaps within the Virginia school system. The study by Duncan et al (2013) also researched test scores based on race and made connections to student achievement based on family income levels. Brunn-Bevel and Byrd (2012) suggest that "students from all racial-ethnic groups who attend high-poverty schools have lower academic achievement". This vital connection between poverty and low academic achievement provides an

understanding of why the reoccurring achievement gap persists. Instead of simply stating their opinion on the connection between family income and student performance as done in the Brunn-Bevel and Byrd study, Duncan et al (2013) found that there was correlation between income and student achievement from the results collected during their study. Duncan et al used two assessments within their study which were the Armed Services Vocational Battery (ASVAB) assessment and Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT). One key finding in the Duncan et al study showed, “Black and white respondents from families with higher incomes score higher, in a statistically significant sense on the ASVAB. But, the effect of family income is statistically insignificant with respect to performance on the PIAT.” (Duncan et al 2013). This information reveals that family income level has a minimal effect on the overall achievement gap that is present in standardized assessment results. One can deduce that poverty levels alone are not the reason for the reoccurring achievement gap. Though in both studies overall minority student performance was significantly lower than their White peers you can see a difference of reasoning. While Brunn and Byrd argue segregation and poverty level is an issue related to minority student success on standardized assessments, Duncan et al provide evidence that reveal these factors may vary based on the type of test that is administered.

In another study evidence of higher standardized test scores of minority students versus White students has been found. Asian American and Pacific Islander students are part of the culturally and linguistically diverse group. In a study conducted by Pang et al (2011), authors’ purposed to expose the achievement gap between AAPI students and their White peers. The overall findings of this study revealed that AAPI students perform lower than White students on reading assessments yet scored higher on math assessments. This study revealed that while

White students continue to outperform minority students on reading assessments, AAPI students show that they perform better on math assessments. This data viewed in isolation shows a significant difference in math achievement for minority groups than is commonly noted. Pang et al (2011) argue that AAPI students are stereotyped as overachievers yet the individual findings of AAPI subgroups provide information of an achievement gap in not only reading but also math when compared to White students. AAPI Subgroups within the study whose performance was lower than their White peers included, Filipino American, Vietnamese American, Cambodian American, Lao American, Samoan American, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian American, Other Pacific Islander American, and Other Asian American (Pang 2011 pg 9). The higher performing AAPI Subgroups within the study were Chinese American, Japanese American, and Korean American students. This significant data reveals that only 3 out of the 12 subgroups listed are performing better in math than White students. That is only one-fourth of the AAPI subgroups that perform better in math. With this in mind, the authors demonstrate that there is an educational achievement gap between most AAPI subgroups in both reading and math in comparison to White students. Labov's sociolinguistic theory connects to this study due to the vast majority of AAPI students who are CLD students as well. These groups have their own language as well as cultural influences which are different from Mainstream American English and culture. Just like African American and other CLD groups it is important that AAPI groups are part of the conversation in order to narrow the achievement gap of minority students and their White peers.

Negative Effects of Standardized Tests

Although students desire to perform academically, they are often confronted with emotions. Students could feel anxiety either before or during the test, which can impact their performance. High stakes tests create high pressure anxiety in students.

Howard and Anderson (2010) conducted a study testing the effects of stereotype threat on middle school students. The authors examined the influences of race-based stereotype threat and prior student performance effects on student achievement. The authors found that students with medium leveled past performance were at the greatest risk of being influenced by stereotypes. These students expected their performance on the assessment to be lower after being exposed to a presentation with statistical evidence related to test performance and race. This shows that students lack confidence after viewing evidence relating to test performance rates based on race. Howard and Anderson (2010) demonstrated a connection between prior performance, stereotype threat, and anxiety. During the research the authors found that when exposed to stereotype threat students blood pressure increased. They then connected this data to multiple studies showing increased blood pressure resulting from high levels of anxiety. This important finding supports the notion that anxiety is a negative effect of stereotype threat. To boost their argument the authors identified a study stating that anxiety reduces working-memory which results in lower performance by students. This information is limited, and further research is needed to support how prior performance and stereotype threat affect anxiety levels. What is clearly evident in this study is that mid-level performing students expected themselves to perform worse than they have prior to their exposure to the stereotype threat videos within the study. As a result of these findings, it is important to develop support systems for students who are susceptible to anxiety

based on their past performance on assessments as well as stereotype threats they may experience. This study is connected to Maslow's theory on Humanism. Students need to have their self-esteem built up in order to reach their full potential. Students who are susceptible to stereotype threat and possible increased anxiety levels when expected to perform at high academic levels will benefit from confidence counseling.

High stakes assessments can put increased pressure on students to perform. This pressure could come from adults or even from themselves. In a study comparing student responses to high and low stakes assessments Eva Kmeta (2017) found that students were more relaxed and less anxious when taking low stakes assessments. Kmeta's (2017) study is similar to Howard and Anderson's (2010) study due to the investigation aimed at anxiety and student expectancies. Kmeta's study revealed that when taking high stakes assessments student levels of anxiety increased. Though the level of anxiety increased when students took the high stakes assessment, the high stakes assessments were deemed more important, and students were more motivated. Kmeta's study can connect to Maslow's theory on humanism by showing that students with higher esteem can step up to the challenge of reaching their full potential even when enduring stress and anxiety. It is necessary to ensure that students feel a certain way about themselves so that when the stakes are higher, and they deem the test more important they are able to cope with increased anxiety and do their best. When students give into this increased level of anxiety caused by their reaction to high stakes tests their level of performance can unfortunately decrease.

A study on the perspective of standardized test prep shows that students desire a more engaging learning experience. Wassenburg (2018), in a study, found that students were disengaged in the new test prep curriculum that the school had implemented. Students instead voiced a desire to have a better connection with their teachers and more interactive learning versus the heavy focus on test prep. As a result, the students were going through the motions but detached from the learning process. Wassenburg's (2018) study differs from Howard (2010) and Kmeta (2017) studies due to the focus on students' feelings related to curriculum and teacher relationships. A significant factor in this study similar to Kmeta (2017) is the motivational factor. In Kmeta's (2017) study student motivation affected student levels of performance as well as anxiety levels. Students within the Wassenburg (2017) study were considered going through the motions which can suggest possible motivation issues due to the disinterest students expressed in the test-based curriculum and lack of teacher connection. Wassenburg's (2018) study connects to Maslow's theory on humanism related to human need to belong or be loved. Students desire a connection with teachers. In Maslow's theory, before a person can reach a certain level of self-esteem, they desire to be loved and feel as if their belonging needs are initially met. Through the use of confidence counseling the school culture will evolve into an atmosphere of support and connection between students and staff that will help build student self-esteem and increase their performance.

Confidence Counseling

Assisting in the development of student confidence is essential to student success. This is done by providing students with the ability to communicate how they feel about themselves as

well as their life experiences. Research shows that confidence counseling has a positive impact on student performance on standardized tests. A study conducted by Villares et al (2012) highlights school counselors' contribution for the positive gains by students on high stakes tests. The program implemented in this study is called Student Success Skills which is similar to the Growth Mindset program. Through the reception of encouragement, confidence building, and provision of components for success the students in this study showed gains on the Reading and Math standardized tests. The need for confidence counseling for minority students helps them reach their full potential. As in Maslow's theory on humanism before reaching their full potential other basics must be met. Confidence counselling not only helps build student self-esteem but also provides students with a sense of belonging and care, which is part of Maslow's theory. By first showing care, concern and support to students, educators will create a climate for effective instruction and student academic growth to occur.

Growth Mindset

A commonly known confidence counseling tool is Carol Dwecks' Growth Mindset program. This tool which is used to change students' perspective will help African American and CLD students adjust to the academic difficulties they may face. Students who lack exposure to Mainstream English underperform on standardized tests that are created using Mainstream English and American culture. By adjusting students' mindsets and providing them tools to help them face difficulty students persevere as they proceed through school. Changing the impact of failure with the "power of yet" is what a growth mindset is all about. McCutchen et al (2018) used the Growth Mindset program as their confidence counseling tool for student success. They

found that students in classes that implemented the growth mindset program experienced gains on standardized tests while in contrast those who were not exposed to the growth mindset were labeled to have the fixed-mindset group performance was lower. Brougham and Kashubeck-West (2017) conducted a similar study implementing Growth Mindset and found the program significantly improve participants' attitudes. Unlike McCutchen's study on Growth Mindset which resulted in gains on standardized assessments, Brougham and Kashubeck-West (2017) study did not result in any significant changes to students' core grade point averages. Both studies are vital in showing that student mindsets are positively affected using Growth Mindset, yet they also reveal that this program alone is not enough for a drastic change in academic performance for all students. These studies relate to Maslow's theory due to connecting the idea that a high self-esteem is needed to reach self-actualization. It is imperative that student self-esteem be built and educators can do their part to help students in this area.

Meeting Language Needs

It is essential that educators understand that students with different backgrounds have different needs. African American students and CLD students have different language needs than their White peers. This is believed because of the differences in culture and language dialects within these various communities. As educators it is important to know that these different language dialects and language needs exist and be up to the challenge of meeting the individual needs of each student with a universal approach.

Authors Gatlin et al (2015) conducted a study connecting African Americans and Socioeconomic status (SES) to language abilities. The author found that African American students in spite of their SES performed lower than their non-African American peers on the oral language measures used in the study. In a similar language study by Edwards et al (2014), authors found that children with lower levels of mainstream English dialect have more difficulty understanding words in Mainstream American English. Gatlin's et al (2015) study included Kindergarten subjects from various races and (SES). The need for mainstream language exposure for African American students is suggested by Gatlin et al (2015) based on their lower oral language performance compared to students of other races. In contrast Edwards et al (2014) study included only African American children ages 4-8 and focused on mainstream dialect awareness and comprehension. Edwards et al (2014) approach is significant due to the comparisons made between students of the same race while Gatlin's (2015) takes a more common approach and compares student performance based on races. These studies connect back to sociolinguistics and its effects on different cultures. Though various subjects and approaches were used, both studies are significant in supporting the need for a focus on language instruction for African American students. As shown in these studies exposure to Mainstream American English is important for student comprehension and language use. Higher success rates for African American students can be assisted with a direct focus on language instruction to meet their needs.

Implementation Strategies

Universal strategies on language development are commonly studied. With there being so many methods and suggestions, it can be difficult to decide what is the best approach to take. Strategies that focus on the overall students' academic growth of students are essential to every classroom. It is an educator's responsibility to implement tried and tested strategies that best fit the needs of their students. Due to the differences in dialect that minority students have, purposeful language instruction is necessary for their overall growth. The following research-based strategies can be used to provide students with a rich linguistic environment that will provide them with the needed exposure to American Mainstream English and a deepening of their language usage and comprehension.

Discussion/Dialogue: Dialogic teaching has been researched and discussed for decades. The key component to dialogic teaching is getting students involved in classroom discussions. From experience, a good way to get someone engaged is to get them talking. Reznitskya and Gregory (2013) conducted a study on dialogic teaching and found decades of empirical research supporting this technique. From the research Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) concluded that, "dialogic teaching appeals to educators who are concerned with empowering their students to become independent thinkers and active citizens' ". This study, though filled with a vast amount of empirical evidence supporting dialogic teaching, is limited due to the lack of information related to student academic growth. Piazza et al (2015) conducted a similar research study referencing the use of dialogue in the classroom. Piazza et al (2015) conclude that dialogue is an effective approach to culturally responsive teaching. Piazza et al (2015) suggest that dialogue is used in two ways, the first being interactions between teachers and students and the second between students and their peers. Examples of these two interactions suggested by Piazza et al

(2015) include the use of higher order thinking questions during the teacher student interactions and the intentional collaboration and discussion of a topic when students are talking with peers.

As a result of the lack of findings on student growth through the use of dialogue, dialogic teaching alone is not enough. As suggested in the study by Piazza et al (2015) the teacher student interactions should consist of higher order thinking questions. This intentional approach to dialogic teaching is essential to target student growth. Higher order thinking questions are a notable strategy from Bloom's Taxonomy. The revised Bloom's Taxonomy is used to increase student cognitive development. Tofade et al (2013) conducted a study on the development of questions by teachers. Tofade et al (2013) found that teachers used lower-level questioning during discussions and struggled to use higher order questions. As a result, Tofade et al (2013) developed strategies for teachers to develop high order questions for classroom discussions. Piazza (2015) suggests the use of higher order questions while Tofade et al 2013 identifies the common use of lower-level questions by teachers and provides strategies for the infusion of higher order thinking questions. These studies are similar in their promotion of higher order questioning within the classroom. Barjesteh and Vaseghi (2012) conducted an empirical study using Bloom's Taxonomy to examine its effects on students' critical thinking skills. Students within the study placed students in two groups with one group receiving critical thinking training through the implementation of Bloom's taxonomy while the second group experienced a traditional approach to reading comprehension without any focus on critical thinking skills. The author's found that post test results for the critical thinking group were higher than their pre-test results as well as their peers who did not receive critical thinking training. This study is vital in displaying the positive effects that Blooms taxonomy has on critical thinking and reading

comprehension. These studies combined show the importance of questioning in connection with dialogue. Dialogue is connected to Labov's theory on linguistics and will bring a greater focus on language and discussion in the classroom while the inclusion of Bloom's taxonomy relates to Vygotsky's theory on constructivism due to the learner engaging the learning process when exposed to questions. Dialogue coupled with Bloom's questioning will assist teachers of African American and CLD students in providing a rich linguistic environment that encourages the sharing of thoughts and meaning making.

Small Group/ Collaboration: Collaboration through the use of small groups is a highly recommended strategy to use in many classroom settings. Collaboration is not only used in grade school settings but is also embraced in post-secondary programs. The sharing of learning and ideas plays an important role in the learning process. From experience, collaboration through small groups creates a more intimate setting for students where they may feel more open to sharing and participating in activities. Solis et al (2012) conducted a study on collaborative models and found that students enjoyed and even preferred alternative groups settings such as small groups. This is a significant finding because it shows that students were engaged in the learning process while in small groups. Small group instruction also adds a variety to the classroom. Instead of going through a 7 hour school day with whole group instruction students are able to switch gears and experiences to increase their engagement and excitement while learning. Kardon et al (2010) conducted a study using the Leveled Literacy Instruction program (LLI). LLI is an intervention system that is implemented through small group instruction for grades K-2. Kardon et al (2010) found that students in the LLI groups for each grade showed an increased amount of growth on the end of the year benchmark assessments as well as their end of

the year Dibels assessments, compared to students in classrooms that did not use the LLI system. These findings are significant in showing the direct effect of small group instruction on student achievement. Solis et al (2012) highly recommends small group instruction due to a high level of student engagement, while Kardon (2012) focuses on student achievement linked to small group instruction. In Piazza et al (2015), multiple studies were researched, and authors concluded that student collaboration in the classroom is an effective strategy. These multiple studies establish collaboration through small group instruction positively affects classroom instruction. Collaboration is connected to Vygotsky's theory. Vygotsky (1978) expresses that, "Literacy as a social practice emphasizes that learners construct meaning through social interactions, which allows them to exchange ideas and learn alongside more knowledgeable or experienced others (Vygotsky, 1978)". To conclude, small group instruction is a great way to support African American and CLD students' language development.

Framer Model: The Frayer model is a tool that has been implemented in many classrooms around the world. Dazzeo and Rao (2020) state that "providing effective strategies to engage learners and support them in the acquisition of new words is a good place to begin the conversation on increasing literacy skills across the curriculum". This connects to social linguist theory due to the emphasis on exposing students to new words. In the beginning stages of learning students learn sight words. This foundational process should not be completely abandoned once they have transitioned from learning to read to reading to learning. As students excel throughout school they are exposed to more complex texts. As they encounter more complex texts, implementation of the Frayer Model will increase their comprehension by

targeting unknown words that they are not commonly exposed to. As students grow their vocabulary grows in academic settings.

The Frayer model is a graphic organizer of four sections. Each section helps students better understand the meaning of the central vocabulary word. The four sections of the organizer include define, characterize, example and non-examples. Students can use words or even draw pictures to help them understand the vocabulary word provided. This strategy can be used in multiple subjects and is shown to be effective. A study by Wanjuru et al (2015) used the Frayer model to help build student math vocabulary. Wanjuru et al (2015) study focused on vocabulary instruction in math and used the Frayer model versus the definition only method to build student vocabulary. Wanjuru et al (2015) found that subjects who used the Frayer Model during their study outperformed subjects who used the definition-only method to build vocabulary. In a comparative study by Panjaitan et al (2020) the Frayer Model was compared to the use of concept mapping strategy. Panjaitan et al (2020) found that students who used the Frayer Model outperformed students who used concept mapping. Both Wanjuru et al (2015) and Panjaitan et al (2020) suggest the use of the Frayer Model over other strategies. This information is significant to showing the effectiveness of the Frayer Model compared to other vocabulary building strategies. Panjaitan et al (2020) used the Frayer Model to build student vocabulary for English Language Arts while Wanjuru (2015) used the Frayer model to build math vocabulary. The differences in the use of the Frayer Model in these studies adds to the effectiveness of the Frayer Model and its suggested use in multiple subjects. The Frayer Model has been implemented in classrooms for the past 50 years and current research still established this teaching tool as effective. This direct vocabulary instruction tool connects to social linguist theory as well

constructivism by focusing on word meaning and meaning making throughout the multiple cognitive stages that students go through as they develop. The Frayer Model can be used in any subject as well as grade level making it such an effective instructional tool.

Games: Effective instruction occurs when students are engaged in the learning process. Games are a great way to get students involved, engaged and excited. Incorporating games within the learning setting is a great way to ensure focus on the activities given to students. In a study conducted on using games to teach vocabulary for younger learners Bakhsh (2016) states, “Using games not only enhances students’ motivation, but also provides an incentive and stimulus to use the language”. This points out how games are seen as an incentive for students which motivates them to engage in learning through games. Bakhsh (2016) makes suggestions on game play such as students playing in small groups as well as the provision of sound instructions before students play. Though the author promotes game play, Bakhsh (2016) points out that there are challenges that teachers may face when incorporating games into the classroom. Some noted challenges by Baksh (2016) include noise and unorganization, and sustaining student attention spans. This shows that teachers must have a well managed classroom before incorporating games to alleviate chaos. Game selections must also be considered to ensure the games will target the skill being applied as well as sustain student engagement. In a similar study Kaur (2019) found that teaching vocabulary games attracted students to the learning process and heightened their interest in language learning. Both Kaur (2019) and Bakhsh (2016) identified the increased interest and engagement when learning vocabulary through games. In contrast Kaur (2019) found that students within the study who used games post- test results increased in the area of recalling new words learned. This is a vital and needed finding that

shows the effectiveness of the use of games to teach vocabulary due to the students' increase of vocabulary acquisition post study. This helps promote the use of games within the classroom from student engagement, which is a more obvious purpose for incorporating games, to games positively affecting academic growth. Clark et al (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 32 studies on the impact of games on learning. Clark et al (2016) found there was a 0.33 improvement of standard deviation on learning for students who used games in the classroom versus those who did not use games. This is an important finding because it shows the effectiveness of game-based learning found across multiple studies. Though Clark et al (2016) and Kaur (2019) both found an increase of student achievement when implementing games in the classroom, there are limitations due to lack of evidence providing what type of games are positively effective academic growth. Game based learning connects to constructivism due to its ability to engage the learner in the learning process. To conclude, all three studies show an increase in student engagement and motivation which can be used as an additional motivating factor along with academic achievement to motivate educators to implement game-based learning into the classroom.

Summary

Even though students speak English, they speak various vernaculars that can make it difficult for them to comprehend Mainstream American English. These challenges can be countered by implementing strategies that directly focus on language development to expose students to more vocabulary as well enhance their awareness of Mainstream American vernacular. Due to the hardship's students may experience when taking standardized tests,

providing students with the Growth Mindset program helps alleviate stress and anxiety related to testing and allow students to succeed in spite of the hardships they may face.

Brunn-Bevel & Byrd (2015) and Duncan expose an issue with minority students performing lower on standardized assessments versus their White peers. Howard (2010) and Knetz (2017) show that higher levels of stress and anxiety have a negative effect on students when testing. Though these problems exist they can be targeted, and student growth is necessary when effective strategies are implemented.

Villares (2012) shows that student academic growth is possible through confidence counseling. McCutchen (2016) along with Brougham and Kashubeck-West (2017) provide evidence of the effectiveness of increasing student belief in themselves. In these studies students gained more confidence and academic growth as a result of confidence counseling. This provides a foundation for students to begin to reach their full potential by understanding that their potential exists. Brough and Kashubeck-West (2017) also pointed out that Growth Mindset is not enough alone. This leads to the need for effective instructional strategies that will boost academic performance.

Studies by Gatlin (2015) and Edwards (2014) both concluded that African American students need additional linguistic support to increase their academic growth. While Gatlin (2015) found that African American students within the study on language and vocabulary performed lower than all other races, Edwards (2014) found that African American students who spoke deeper English dialects comprehended Mainstream English less. Students within these studies show a need for a direct focus on language development within the classroom.

Reznitskya and Gregory(2013) along with Piazza (2105) highly recommend the use of dialogue to engage students in classroom discussion. Piazza (2015) suggests the use of higher order questioning during classroom discussions. Barista and Veseghi (2012) showed student growth through the use of Bloom's questioning while Tofade (2013) presented strategies to develop higher order questions. These studies show that dialogue combined with Bloom's questioning is an essential strategy to positively affect student language use and cognitive development.

Piazza (2015) highly recommends small groups based on empirical research of its effectiveness. Solis (2012) shows that students prefer and are excited about small group instruction pointing out the use of this alternative grouping as a way to keep students engaged. Kardon (2012) shows the positive effects of small group instruction through the higher level of performance results compared to students who did not use the LLI small group interventions.

Direct vocabulary instruction using the Frayer Model has shown to increase student overall academic performance. Dazzeo and Rao (2020) found that a good and effective language program is a good starting point for students to learn new words across the curriculum. Due to the lack of exposure that African American and CLD students have to Mainstream American language and culture the Frayer Model is a tool that can be used to support student vocabulary growth. This standard model benefits students in all grades, of all ages and can be used in all subjects. Studies by Wanjiru and O'Connor (2015) and Panjiatan (2020) show that the Frayer model provides a position increase to students' growth and knowledge of content. Using this method puts an emphasis on broadening student vocabulary which helps them comprehend

subjects better. African American and CLD students will benefit from a vocabulary infused school culture that promotes and supports overall student success.

Learning games are a way to get students motivated and engaged in the learning process. Clark (2016), Kaur (2019) and Bahksh (2013) developed studies showing an increase of motivation and engagement when game-based learning was implemented in the classroom. Kaur (2019) and Clark (2016) extended their information to show academic increases as a result of game based learning compared to students who did not use games in the classroom. These findings support the notion that game based learning will increase student engagement which is necessary to increase students performance. Incorporating games into classrooms with African American and CLD students is a way to help them focus on necessary skills to increase student achievement.

Conclusions

African American and Culturally linguistically diverse students grow up in homes that are infused with their own culture and English dialect. Standardized assessments are developed using Mainstream American English and culture. As a result, minority students experience lower performance on standardized tests than their White counterparts. Due to their lack of success on their assessments in comparison to other students, minority students are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and lack of confidence in themselves. Though these issues exist there are solutions that can help increase minority student confidence and academic achievement.

Through the use of Growth Mindset coupled with implementation strategies focused on language development educators can help minority students increase their academic

achievement. The Growth Mindset program will be used to create a culture where students value and believe in themselves providing them with a self-esteem boost. Strategies such as dialogue combined with Bloom's questioning, small group collaboration and the Frayer Model will be effectively implemented across the curriculum to provide students with the linguistic support needed to increase their comprehension in various subjects in order to help them reach their full academic potential. Games will be used as an additional motivating factor in classrooms to engage students in the learning process. The language development strategies support Labov's and Vygotsky's theories on languages and meaning making through experience. Language development and Growth Mindset both support student growth within the two highest points in Maslow's theory on Humanism by supporting student self-esteem and student self-actualization.

Chapter 3: Project Description

Introduction

African American and Culturally diverse students are suffering adverse effects to standardized tests. The adverse effects that these students are suffering include a lack of confidence, anxiety, and underperformance compared to their White peers. The purpose of this project is to combat these adverse effects of standardized testing through the implementation of confidence counseling and strategies focused on the language development of these students. The implementation of a school wide confidence counseling program will be used to target low levels of confidence and high levels of stress students experience, while a combination of teaching strategies that target student language development will be implemented within the classroom.

The following will provide a blueprint for this project. This blueprint will begin with the components of the project, an overview of the objectives, and the rationale behind the project. The second section will include a preview of the project elements, and conclusions related to the literature supporting this project. The final section will include insight on the project's implementation, recommendations.

Project Components

Local Context: Warrendale Charter Academy (WCA) is a local Kindergarten through eighth grade charter school in the city of Detroit, part of the National Heritage Academies schools. The school's demographics are 96% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 1% of students identifying as mixed-race. 98% of the students within the school are from low-income families and receive free or reduced lunch. Student Academic performance on M-Step shows 33% of students proficient in ELA compared to the state average of 44%, and 25% proficient in Math compared to the state average of 38%. The school is currently combating student absenteeism which is at 55% for all students and combating misbehaviors and has lowered the suspension rate to 22%.

WCA is considered an at-risk school due to student performance, socioeconomic status. Though this may be how the school is labeled there is more than meets the eye. The school is filled with students who are partially proficient on the state standardized assessments. If these students were to reach proficiency the schools test scores would rise above the state average. As a result student growth is vital to the further success of the school. WCA has been making strides in the areas of student achievement, lowering absenteeism, and suspensions rates. To add to the

solutions that have been implemented, confidence counseling and language development of students is necessary to continue to drive student achievement.

Objectives: The objective of this project is to increase students' vocabulary acquisition and efficacy in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade. These objectives are to be met through the initial implementation of a series of professional development sessions for teachers related to each topic. The purpose of the series is to not overload or overwhelm teachers at once. The professional development session topics include confidence counseling, dialogic teaching with Blooms, Small group implementation, The Frayer Model, and Game based learning. Each professional development will offer strategies to enhance classroom instruction and will encourage teacher dialogue related to the topics. These topics will be revisited throughout the school year in order to determine any possible improvements that can be made through discussions on what is going well and what needs to change.

Rationale: Warrendale Charter Academy has shown significant growth over the past 7 years since a change in the school administration has occurred. The school is now aiming to meet and exceed the state of Michigan's test score averages. The rationale of this project is to increase overall confidence and performance of the students of Warrendale Charter Academy. Through positively affecting these two areas student academic growth will be shown through an increase in their standardized tests scores. WCA is focused on beating the odds which is what this project helps the school focus on achieving.

Project Elements

Confidence Counseling - The school-wide confidence counseling tool that will be adapted is Growth Mindset. A school calendar will be presented to staff with an overview of how

to implement the program throughout the course of the school year. Each month of counseling will align with the company's moral focus program and school's second step sel program. The official growth mindset program will not be purchased to minimize cost. Appendix A will include school calendars for implementation of confidence counseling throughout the school year. There will be an overview of the focus of every month and how it aligns to what is happening during the school year. For example September's focus will be on goal setting while October will focus on making good decisions and working with others. The calendar will include indicators for testing which can cause increased levels of stress and anxiety school wide. The second calendar will be more detailed and for each grade level. This calendar will include a scope and sequence of lessons to implement. Each lesson will be implemented over the course of two weeks. The calendar will include the weeks of implementation for the lessons.

Dialogic teaching with Bloom's Taxonomy- A presentation on classroom discussion and blooms taxonomy will be delivered to teaching staff. The purpose of the presentation is to get teachers to increase student talk within their classroom through effective questioning. Teachers will be given a Bloom's taxonomy observation tool to know what administrators are looking for in the classroom. During the presentation time will be given to the development of higher order questions connected to objectives that the teacher will be teaching. Appendix B will include the presentation overview and additional components for this professional development.

Small group implementation - A professional development session on small group will be delivered to provide teachers with an understanding of the effectiveness of these learning formats. The presentation will include knowing when students are ready for small group

instruction, as well multiple setting arrangements for small group instruction. These components of the presentation are necessary to provide support to teachers who have difficulties implementing small group instruction in the classroom. The presentation will also have multiple small group approaches and best practices related to small group instruction. Appendix C will include a presentation on ideas for small group implementation.

The Frayer Model- Staff will be provided a presentation for implementation of the Frayer Model as an instructional tool to increase student vocabulary. The purpose of this presentation is to get teachers onboard with the implementation of this tool. During the professional development teaching staff will practice implementing the model. Vocabulary lists to increase students overall Mainstream American language and vocabulary content knowledge will be provided for teachers to limit their search for materials. Appendix D will include a Frayer model template as well as a short presentation on how to implement the model.

Game based learning- A professional development on game-based learning will include implementation strategies for teachers. The purpose of this presentation is to provide teachers with ideas related to how to launch game-based learning in their classrooms. A focus on classroom management and the right time to implement game-based learning will be of importance. Appendix E will include a review of game-based learning and suggested games for students. Game lists will be based on grade level. Games will include hands-on and computer games.

Pre-test/ Posttest Schedule - Appendix F will include an overview of the testing schedule for the school year. This calendar will be used to check the progress of students as well the implementation of both confidence counseling and language development strategies.

Project Evaluation

Two evaluation tools will be used for this project. The main evaluation tool will include Interim/ Benchmark Assessments and State Test results. These results will be collected throughout the school year to determine the effectiveness of both the confidence counseling and language development strategies. Decisions on adjustments or adaptations will be made based on the data collected. The goal is to see a steady increase in overall academic performance and decrease in absences due to suspensions. The second evaluation tool will be multiple surveys or pulse checks given to teachers related to the programs. These check-ins will give teachers a chance to discuss what is going well or not so well and make adjustments if necessary. This survey will be administered and discussed during staff meetings throughout the school year. An initial survey will be given to teachers after each professional development. Two surveys will be given throughout the course of the school year and the final survey will be given at the end of the school year. Every survey will include a section for teacher input on suggestions on what is working for them. The survey will track Teacher buy-in throughout the course of the school year.

Project Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to apply implementation strategies as counter actions that target a lack of student confidence and the lack of exposure to Mainstream American English. Research has shown that standardized test results of African American and Culturally linguistically diverse students are significantly lower than those of their White peers. The need for specific research based strategies to increase the achievement of minority students is necessary for the success of this country as whole. As a culturally diverse country the United States' further success is dependent on the advancement of all its people. This success is

connected to the understanding, comprehension and exposure of Mainstream English as the universal language.

Labov's sociolinguistic theory suggests that the stronger a dialect the less exposure one has to the mainstream language. As a result of this lack of exposure there also lies a lack of comprehension when the mainstream language is encountered. Vygotsky's constructivist theory suggests that meaning is constructed and based on the experiences that you have. From these theories one can conclude that students with stronger English dialects will benefit from experiences through the use of language development strategies that will expose them to Mainstream English and Culture. As a result of this exposure students with stronger dialects will become more successful in the society where they live.

Maslow's theory on humanism suggests that people possess an internal hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied for them to be successful. This hierarchy of needs includes physiological needs such as food, water and shelter, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Research from Howard (2010) and Kmeta (2017) shows that higher level of stress and anxiety have a negative effect on students when testing. This highlights that standardized test affects such as anxiety and stress boost a lack of confidence and esteem. These effects on one's esteem limits a person from reaching self-actualization or their full potential. Based on Maslow's Theory of Humanism it is necessary to target student confidence or esteem. This can be done through strategies such as growth mindset.

Plans of Implementation

The confidence counseling will start with a meeting during the August Professional development weeks. This whole staff P.D. will include a presentation on the importance of

confidence counseling for the students that we serve. The presentation will include teacher discussions related to common behaviors related to stress, anxiety and a lack of confidence. The later slides will include the implementation plan to boost student confidence throughout the school year. Staff members will be provided with a school-wide calendar as an overview of topics for the school year. Grade level teams will be provided with a scope and sequence for lessons related to confidence counseling for the school year. Teaching staff will work along with social workers and the behavior specialist on implementation of lessons. Each grade level wing which is K-2, 3-5 and 6-8 will decide on how they will implement the lessons. Options will include individual classroom implementation, Grade level implementation, order wing implementations. School assemblies will also be tailored based on the school-wide calendar topics as reinforcement of the confidence counseling program. The P.D. will be delivered by the school social workers, the school behavior specialist, and lead teachers. The purpose of the collaborative presentation is to emphasize that this is a school wide approach to confidence counseling.

After the initial whole staff confidence counseling meeting there will be three more confidence counseling check-in meetings throughout the school year. These meetings will be used to do a pulse check as well as have staff members take surveys related to the confidence counseling program. Survey results from two of the meetings will be used to provide staff with suggestions as well as support in specified areas needed based on survey results.

The language development professional development sessions will also be delivered during the August P.D. sessions. These sessions will be tailored to each grade level wing and teachers will attend based on what grade level they teach. Teaching staff will attend each session

as a wing. Lead teachers and specialists will deliver the individual presentations. The introductory sessions for dialogic teaching with blooms, small group instruction, and the Frayer Model will run simultaneously. The final game-based learning session will be implemented in October once the first three components of language development have been implemented and classroom culture and procedures have been established.

Dialogic teaching with blooms will be presented by one lead teacher and one specialist. The presentation will begin with the purpose and effects of classroom discussion. This will be followed by teacher input on how they include students in classroom discussions. Following this discussion suggestions on how to engage students in classroom discussion will suffice. Reviewing the Blooms observation tool and question levels will then occur. This will lead into the development of Bloom's higher order questions for each subject they teach. These standard questions will be developed as a grade level team. The session will end with teachers sharing standard questions with the whole group and a brief survey.

During the small group presentation one lead teacher and one special education teacher will present. The presentation will begin with a discussion on the effectiveness of small group instruction. This discussion will be followed by teacher input on how they conduct small group instruction in the past. The next stages of the presentation will cover when to incorporate small group instruction and how to prepare you students for this style of learning. Following this discussion implementation strategies will be discussed along with various styles of small group instruction.

During the Frayer Model presentation one lead teacher and one specialist will present. This presentation will begin with the importance of a vocabulary rich environment and its effects

on student achievement. This will lead to a brief discussion to gain teacher input on how staff creates a vocabulary rich environment for students. Post discussion the presenters will provide an overview of the Frayer Model and survey how many teachers are familiar with and have implemented to model. An overview of the model in action will be given then the teacher will break into grade level teams to practice implementing the model. This practice will lead back to the whole group discussion where the teacher will share how they implemented the strategies and how they introduce this to their students. The final portion of the presentation will be dedicated to possible implementation strategies. Teachers will receive a copy of the Frayer Model template as well as vocabulary words for each subject they teach.

The game-based learning professional development will be implemented to the entire teaching staff at once. This presentation will start with effects of game-based learning. This will be followed by indicators that students are ready for game-based learning. The next steps will provide implementation strategies for games into the learning environment. The final stage of the presentation will include suggested game styles and recommendations for teachers based on grade level wing.

Each professional development presentation will end with a survey which will be used to gauge initial staff buy-in as well retrieve input on suggestions for the school wide approach to confidence counseling and language development.

Recommendations: School administrators, social workers, and the behavior specialist should work together to observe the effectiveness of the confidence counseling program. All staff should use moral focus and growth mindset language. This will create a school culture focused on growth for students. The suggested growth mindset phrase to be coined is “ Not yet”

to adjust a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. School-wide assemblies should reinforce the confidence counseling program. Evidence of confidence counseling lesson implementation should be displayed inside classrooms and around the school building. Evidence such student writing topics discussed, or projects related to building confidence can be used to display the growth mindset culture inside classrooms and around the school building. Confidence boosting posters placed in hallways, and even restrooms will work as a reminder for students.

The effectiveness of the language development component will be observed by school administrators and specialists. The purpose of the observation is to provide support to those who may need support and find exemplary teacher implementation that can be used as a model for other staff members. Find exemplary teachers for each topic and have them share strategies/mentor others. Make time for teachers to observe these practices in exemplary classrooms. Leadership conducts informal classroom observations related to topics to provide support. Leadership should make time to model and help teachers who need implementation support. Appendices review of how elements will look during P.D.

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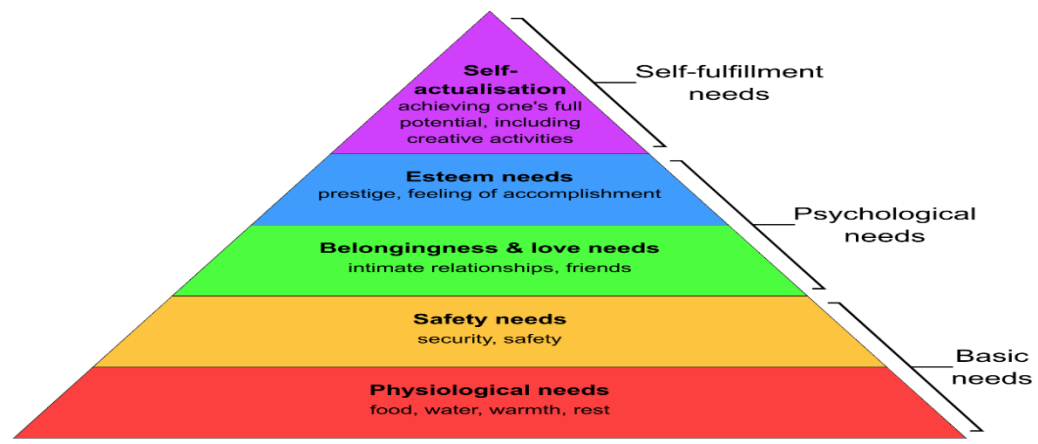
Appendix A

Confidence counseling P.D. Outline Introduction to confidence counseling

Why confidence counseling?
 Research says
 Building relationships with students
 Growth mindset vs Fixed Mindset
 Moral Focus
 School year calendar
 Putting it into practice
 Review
 Questions/ Survey
 Launch

WCA Staff Confidence Counseling Calendar			
Month	Moral Focus	Growth Mindset/ SEL	Second Step Activities
September Medium Stress	Wisdom	Growth vs Fixed Mindset	Goal Setting and student portfolio development. 1. Academic Goal 2. Social Goal
October (High Stress)	Respect	The power of yet -Making Good decisions/ working with others	Group activities and discussions on emotional management and kindness
November Low Stress	Gratitude	Who helps me reach my goals	Reflection on goals and who helps achieve them
December (Possible Stress)	Self-Control	Dealing with my feelings	Discussion and activities on staying calm, and problem solving
January (High Stress)	Perseverance	Overcoming my feelings	Discussion and activities on resilience and perseverance
February Low Stress	Courage	Facing Challenges	Discussion and activities on positive approaches to facing challenges.

March Low Stress	Encouragement	Motivating myself and others	Discussion and activities on how to motivate oneself and others.
April (High Stress)	Compassion	Expressing my feelings and helping others	Discussion and activities on positive ways to express any feeling.
May (Highest Stress)	Integrity	Reaching my goals	Focus on goals and review of plans to reach them.
June No stress		Celebrating my achievements	Reflection of accomplishments



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Grade level scope and sequence handouts provided during wing level P.D.

Appendix B

Dialogic Teaching P.D. outline

- Dialogic teaching
- Why discussion
- Bloom's taxonomy/ DOK
- Why blooms
- Research ways
- Testimonials from staff
- Review of Observation tool
- Creating high level questions
- Putting it into practice
- Takeaways
- Review
- Questions Survey
- Launch

Blooms/DOK Observation Tool

Warrendale Charter Academy
DOK Analysis

Teacher: _____ Observer: _____

Date: _____ Time In: _____ Time Out: _____ Subject: _____

DOK Level	Rating
1: Recall <input type="checkbox"/>	Ineffective <input type="checkbox"/>
2: Skill/Concept <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>
3: Strategic Thinking & Reasoning <input type="checkbox"/>	Effective <input type="checkbox"/>
4: Extended Thinking <input type="checkbox"/>	Exemplary <input type="checkbox"/>

Student Outcome: _____

Questioning Techniques:

				Synthesis	Evaluation
				Arrange	Appraise
			Analysis	Assemble	Argue
			Analyze	Collect	Assess
		Application	Appraise	Combine	Choose
		Apply	Categorize	Comply	Compare
		Complete	Compare	Compose	Conclude
		Construct	Contrast	Construct	Estimate
	Comprehension	Demonstrate	Debate	Create	Evaluate
	Compare	Dramatize	Diagram	Design	Interpret
Knowledge	Describe	Employ	Differentiate	Devise	Judge
List	Discuss	Illustrate	Distinguish	Formulate	Justify
Recall	Explain	Interpret	Examine	Manage	Measure
Record	Express	Operate	Experiment	Organize	Rate
Restate	Identify	Practice	Inspect	Plan	Revise
State	Recognize	Schedule	Inventory	Prepare	Spoke
Tell	Tell	Sketch	Question	Propose	Select
Underline	Translate	Use	Test	Setup	Support
				Value	

Comments: _____

Appendix C Small Group P.D. Outline

- Small group instruction
- Why small group
- Research says
- Staff testimonials
- When to implement small group
- How to implement small group
- Types of small group
- Putting it into practice/ planning strategies
- Takeaways
- Review
- Questions/Survey
- Launch

Small group observation tool

Warrendale Charter Academy
Building Blocks of Workshop Observation Form

Teacher: _____ Grade/Subject: _____
Observer: _____ Observation Date: _____

Set-Up

- Rotating Stations
Y N
- Stationary 1 2 3
Y N

Management of On-Task Behavior

- Objective Awareness
Y N
- Equal Awareness
Y N
- Capital Awareness
Y N

Transitions

- Ck. Exp. of Mvmt.
Y N
- Procedural
Y N
- Opening
Y N
- Closing
Y N

Planning

- Aligned Stations
Y N
- Data Driven Gaps
Y N
- Misconceptions
Y N
- Assessment Clarity
Y N

Organization

- Materials
Y N
- Teacher-Led
Y N
- Student/Group-Led
Y N

Differentiation of Instruction

- Content
Y N
- Process
Y N
- Product
Y N

Conferring/Notes: _____

Scale

0 = Not evident (No attempt) 1 = Basic (Very Little Attempt) 2 = Emerging (Some attempt)
3 = Developing (Intentional attempt) 4 = Advancing (Intentional and strategic attempt)
5 = Superior (Highly visible and successfully implemented)

Appendix D

Frayer Model P.D. outline

The Frayer Model
Why the Frayer Model
Research says
The model in practice
A breakdown of the model
How to implement the model
Putting it into practice/planning
Takeaways
Review
Questions/Survey
Launch

Frayer Model Template

Frayer Model Template

Definition:	Facts and/or Characteristics:
Examples:	Non-examples

Concept

The diagram is a square divided into four quadrants by a central horizontal and vertical line. In the center of the square is an oval labeled 'Concept'. The four quadrants are labeled as follows: top-left is 'Definition:', top-right is 'Facts and/or Characteristics:', bottom-left is 'Examples:', and bottom-right is 'Non-examples'.

Appendix E
Game-based learning P.D. outline

Game based learning
 What research says
 Preparing
 Identifying student readiness
 Implementation of games
 Review of notable game-based systems
 Takeaways
 Questions/ Survey
 Launch

Appendix F

WCA Testing schedule		
Month	Test Type/	Priority Level
September	Benchmark assessments all grades Dibels K-3 NWEA 2-8 BOY Assessments ELA and Math 2-8	High Priority
October	Weekly Assessments All grades all subjects	Medium Priority
November	Unit Assessments	Medium Priority
December	Benchmark Assessments Interim 1 all grades and subjects	High Priority
January	Benchmark Assessments continued Dibels Interim 1 NWEA	High Priority
February	Weekly Assessments	Medium Priority

March	Interim 2	High Priority
April	M-Step grades 5 and 8 PSAT grade 8	High Priority
May	M-Step grade 3-7 Interim 3 grades 2-8 EOY Dibels grade K-3	High Priority

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 693/695 Data Form

NAME: Shanika Y Mcclendon

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Adult & Higher Education | <input type="radio"/> Educational Differentiation | <input type="radio"/> Library Media |
| <input type="radio"/> Advanced Content Specialization | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Education Leadership | <input type="radio"/> Middle Level Education |
| <input type="radio"/> Cognitive Impairment | <input type="radio"/> Educational Technology | <input type="radio"/> Reading |
| <input type="radio"/> College Student Affairs Leadership | <input type="radio"/> Elementary Education | <input type="radio"/> School Counseling |
| <input type="radio"/> Early Childhood Education | <input type="radio"/> Emotional Impairment | <input type="radio"/> Secondary Level Education |
| <input type="radio"/> Early Childhood Developmental Delay | <input type="radio"/> Learning Disabilities | <input type="radio"/> Special Education Administration |
| <input type="radio"/> TESOL | | |

TITLE: Implementation Strategies for Low Minority Student Achievement

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)

SEM/YR COMPLETED: Summer 2021

- Project
 Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL _____

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project. ERIC descriptors can be found online at:

<http://eric.ed.gov/?ti=all>

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--|
| 1. Teaching Strategies | 6. | |
| 2. School Counseling | 7. | |
| 3. Discusion (Teaching Technique) | 8. | |
| 4. Small Group Instruction | 9. | |
| 5. High Stakes Tests | 10. | |



The signatures of the individuals below indicate that they have read and approved the project of Shanika McClendon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education Leadership.

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<name of project advisor>, Project Advisor Date

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