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Ninth Grade Student and Teacher Perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationship

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

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MA, University of Maryland University College, 2005

BS, Central State University, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The challenge of transitioning into high school is associated with social anxiety, decreased grades, increased absences, and overall motivation to learn. Based on anecdotal evidence from 9th grade teachers in the Ohio School District, teachers had poor rapport with some of their students, and 9th graders were being retained more often than were students in any other grade. Grounded in Noddings's care theory, the purpose of this mixed methods sequential case study was to explore perceptions of rapport between 9th graders and their teachers. Guiding research questions were used to discover student and teacher perceptions about their relationship as it relates to care, respect, and communication. Archived data from Gallop Poll surveys given to 9th grade students at 3 schools (n = 163) demonstrated student perceptions of their relationships with teachers. Additionally, 15 teachers were randomly selected for a focus group interview about rapport with students. The interview transcripts were coded for emergent themes related to the guiding questions. The analysis of the Gallup Poll data included calculation of the mean, standard deviation, median, item score range, mode, and raw-data frequencies/percent for responses to answer the respective research questions. Responses on the survey showed that students perceived a moderate level of bonding with teachers, while the interview data showed that there were issues related to communication with students, administrative support of teachers, and sincerity of teacher care for students. The project outcome is a professional development about communication amongst teacher and students, teachers and teachers, and teachers and administration to improve rapport and reduce the prevalence and impact of adverse events such as dropout and other forms of disengagement.

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Dedication

Throughout life God places people in your life that help you along the way, even when you don't ask or even notice. Through them he speaks words of wisdom, gives great advice, and inspires beyond words. For this reason, I have to first thank God. Without my faith I could not have made it through to the end. Without him my world could not, as the people in my life say, be filled with "rainbows and gumdrops."

Next, I would like to thank my husband and children. They keep me grounded and have always believed in me even when I lost hope in myself. They continue to make me laugh, cry, and enjoy life beyond words, and now have to refer to me as "Doctor."

Finally, I would like to thank my friends. Many of them didn't even know I was going through this process, but now that it is over I am sure they now understand why I cancelled so many friend dates. For those who did know what I've been going through, thanks for all your patience and words of encouragement.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to acknowledge my chair Dr. David Falvo. After changing chairs twice I wasn't very hopeful, but Dr. Falvo changed my whole outlook on things. He made sure I was on the right track, listened to my cries, and kept me moving throughout this process. For that, I am truly grateful.

I would next like to acknowledge all my co-workers who proof-read, participated in my study, listened to my complaints, or had patience with me as I tried to move through the statistics. To each and every one of you I am grateful. Words cannot express how thankful I am to have you in my life!

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Teachers and ninth-grade students in the Ohio School District (OSD) located in the Miami Valley Region, a low-income, urban district in Ohio, are suffering from a lack of positive rapport. Student and teachers in this district have expressed in meetings and in surveys a concern over the widespread lack of understanding and positive communication between teachers and students (Hampton, 2014; Mayfield-Brown, 2014). Principals in the district have used professional development days to bring in outside help to promote positive teacher-student rapport (Nalls, 2011, 2012, 2014). This may be because the two groups find it difficult to communicate, the ninth-graders in this district tend to have negative perceptions of teachers' expectations of them inside and outside the classroom.

Students tend not to believe that their teachers care about them. This lack of rapport has implications; ninth-grade students in this district are retained more than students at any other grade level (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2013). Although the lack of rapport is not the only cause for retention, it can be a contributing factor to why ninth-graders in this district are failing. Adolescents' attachment to teachers is a part of healthy development and in fact unhealthy teacher experiences can compromise the transition to high school (Benner & Wang, 2014).

The purpose of this sequential mixed methods case study was to explore ninth-grade teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student rapport. I also examined how teachers perceive ninth graders' experiences, and how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. A mixed methods design

allowed the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data about a bounded system, thereby collecting a more comprehensive data set than may be accomplished by using one single method (Yin, 2014). The areas of rapport I focused on were care, respect, and communication between ninth-grade teachers and ninth-grade students. Using a social constructivist framework, I gathered quantitative and qualitative data to investigate ninth graders' experiences and the potential implications for academic performance. Although improving the relationship amongst students and teachers in the district may not solve the retention rates this district is facing, it can be the key to improving those rates by understanding what these ninth graders are experiencing.

The district in this study is not alone in experiencing a high retention rate amongst its ninth-grade students. Only 22 states in the United States have an average freshman graduation rate of 80% or higher (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The average ninth grader enters into high school at age 14 or 15. At this age, teenagers engage in riskier behavior, are susceptible to environmental influences, and are more influenced by emotions (Konrad, Firk, & Uhlhaas, 2013). Teens at this age are also struggling with the need to be independent, but need to relate to others (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). The complexity of this transition can play a part in the difficulties that teachers experience in persuading ninth graders to focus on their academics and perform at the level of which they are capable. Understanding the ninth-grade experience from actual ninth graders and their teachers can open dialogue to improve the experience.

The relationships that a teacher forms with students in the classroom can be vital to academic outcomes. A teacher can be a role model, mentor, or leader to students, as

Mayfield-Brown expressed in her speech addressing teacher student- relationships in the OSD at the 2014 beginning of the year convocation. Mayfield-Brown expressed how she was not a perfect student; but, the relationships some of her teachers took the time to build shaped her to be a great now eleventh-grade student in the OSD (Mayfield-Brown, 2014). Teacher-student relationships have an impact on student achievement (Bryan et al. 2012, Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Hughes 2012). The research ranges from elementary school, high school, court-appointed school to college. When students are transitioning from middle to high school, they experience problems that have an effect on their achievement (Benner, & Graham, 2009; Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Langenkamp, 2010; Nield, 2009). However, little research has yet been focused on how the relationships built between teachers and students directly relate to ninth-graders teacher-student relationship and their transition to high school.

Definition of the Problem

Educators in the OSD have expressed difficulties understanding the ninth-grade population (Holt, personal communication, October, 2014; see Appendix A for documentation of communications). Teachers expressed concern with ninth graders' maturity level and their need or desire to socialize constantly; teachers also noted their own difficulty in establishing relationships with the ninth grade population (Holt, personal communication, October, 2014). Holt expressed that the problems in the classroom include students talking too much, boys passing gas and thinking it was funny, and an overall lack of respect for classroom structure. These behaviors have given rise to a disciplinary dilemma because Holt does not believe in punishing the whole class for

talking too much or laughing at peers' immaturity. In this context, teachers and ninth-grade students in the OSD are finding it difficult to build rapport. The teachers are having trouble understanding why their ninth-graders cannot rise to the social, academic, and other demands of high school (Meyer, Personal communication, October, 2014).

Principals in the OSD have also found concern with teachers understanding and forming relationships with their students. Because of the lack of relationship building, the OSD offered a half-day professional development (PD) session to discuss positive teacher-student rapport, the advantages of rapport, and how to develop rapport (Nalls, 2014, personal communication). Many of the PD opportunities offered by the OSD include the idea of advocating for time to build relationships (See Appendix B for evidence of school/district PDs). At the recent back to school convocation the superintendent addressed teacher-student relationship in her speech to the entire school district (Ward, 2014).

Ninth-grade students have themselves expressed concern through the use of a ninth-grade survey. A survey conducted by a ninth grade transition coordinator found that 74% of ninth grade students feel lonelier in ninth-grade than they had in middle school, that 66% of ninth-grade students feel that teachers do not respect them, and that 72% of ninth-grade students feel that teachers do not understand them as a whole. The survey also showed that although students recognize that teachers claim to care about them, some kids felt the teachers in fact teachers only care about the smart kids (Nalls, personal communication, 2014). Another survey conducted at a different school in the district found that 67% of ninth-grade students felt confusion about what was expected of them

outside of the classroom, and that many of them did not understand why teachers were always yelling at them in the hallways (around 40% of the surveys had the word *yell* or *yelling* in the explanation box). In the same survey, when asked whether teachers *liked them*, 54% of ninth-graders said no (Nalls, personal communication, 2014).

Nationwide, ninth-graders fail more than students in any other grade (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009; Neild, 2009). Jackson and Schulenberg (2011) reported that the causes may be the transition from middle to high school; high school provides students with more freedom, introduces social differences, and presents more opportunities to hinder or elevate students' academic achievement, depending upon their choices. I proposed a sequential mixed methods case study to explore ninth-grade teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student rapport. I also explored how teachers perceive ninth-graders' experiences, and how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. The findings may lead to an understanding of what constitutes a lack of student-teacher rapport, according to archival data and teacher interviews. Student-teacher relationships are just a part of many reasons for ninth-grade retention. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the ninth-grade experience as it relates to student-teacher relationships, so that a starting point may be provided for the district to move forward in identifying major causes of ninth-grade student retention.

For this sequential mixed methods case study quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analyzed, and reported. Archival data informed quantitative data collection and teacher interviews informed qualitative data collection. Using these data, perceptions from ninth-grade students and teachers on the problems with communication

that lead to perceptions of not caring, lack of understanding, and lack of respect amongst the ninth-grade teachers and ninth-grade students in the OSD were gathered.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Teachers in the OSD have expressed their concerns with their ninth-grade students in school and in district-wide professional development sessions (Holt & Meyer, Personal communication, 2014). One teacher (Hampton, 2014) reported that of all the grade levels, she most dreaded her ninth-graders. Another teacher (Rowland, 2014) reported that she never wanted to teach ninth-grade because she saw these students as a disruption to the whole school. A third teacher (Meyer, 2014) explained that ninth-graders packed classes with crazy behaviors and that she did not know how to handle these students. Although these teachers are having issues with these students, they all expressed the opinion that if they could better understand how to address these students they could better serve them (Meyer, personal communication, 2014). Knowing how ninth graders perceive their ninth-grade experience, and what motivates them can help teachers in building rapport and having an impact in the classroom.

The lack of student-teacher rapport in the OSD is a hindrance to ninth-grade student achievement. The OSD is an urban city school district comprised of 13,549students (ODE, 2014). Of those 13,549 students, 100% are economically disadvantaged, 64.7 % are Black. Those students are served by teachers 64.1 % White and 32.6% Black (ODE, 2014). Ninth-graders in this district are retained more than any other grade level (ODE, 2012). Not only are ninth-graders more likely to fail than

students in any other grade, but students are at greater risk who attend urban school districts, and who are Black, and who are poor (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009; Neild, 2009; Weiss Smith, 2010). The ninth-graders in this study have a particularly acute need for strong relationships with teachers. The purpose of this mixed methods project study was to explore how teachers perceive ninth graders' experiences, and how the issues present a challenge to ninth grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. The areas of rapport this study focused on were care, respect, and communication between ninth grade teachers and ninth-grade students.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The transition from middle school to high school is associated with feelings of loneliness, increased absences, lower academic performance, more behavioral disturbances, more social demands, and many other issues for ninth grade students (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). However, students perform better when they have a positive teacher-student relationship (Benner, 2014; Christie 2013; Hughes, 2011; Hughes et al., 2012; Jerome et al., 2009; Roffey, 2012). Students are less likely to drop out when they have a positive perception of the overall school environment and that overall, students perform better when they experience positive student-teacher rapport.

The importance of these relationships extends from early childhood through adult education. Christie (2013) found that high-performing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students and low-performing or underprepared students dropped out of STEM programs at the same rates. Christie found that the level of academic performance did not matter, but that students learn better when their instructors

are supportive, encouraging, and feel a connection with their instructor. In secondary classrooms, student-teacher relationships also have an effect on academic achievement.

A student's classroom engagement is likely to be influenced by a relationship with the teacher, including whether the student feels supported, respected, inspired, and cared for by the teacher (Corso et al., 2013). Mottern (2013) found that even students who attended court-mandated educational programs (general education development and adult basic education) wanted more one-on-one time and more personal connection with teachers. These connections motivated the students because they saw the teacher as a helper, that is, as someone who cared (Mottern, 2013). No matter the age or academic level of the student, the positive rapport the teacher fosters amongst students can be expected to benefit students' academic performances.

Difficulty of the Transition into High School

Transitioning into high school can be hard for many ninth-grade students. The transition is marked by increased graduation requirements, a more rigorous schedule, rigorous coursework, and more homework (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Students not only have to deal with being in a new, broader environment, but also with everything else that comes along with it. Besides the demands in the classroom, transitioning into high school brings more social demands. Moving from middle to high school involves more freedom and more complex social contexts as students from various schools are combined in one school (Jackson & Schulenberg, 2013). Ninth-grade students are thrown into a new environment and expected to excel regardless of the difficulties they may encounter.

Definitions

Teacher-student relationship: The relationship, positive or negative, between teacher and student (Hughes, 2011).

Teacher-student rapport: A positive, high-quality relationship or connection between teacher and student (Ali & Ndubisi, 2011). This relationship has effective communication, is respectful of feelings, and is overall positive (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2012).

Economically disadvantaged: This term refers to a person's or family's economic status. When a person is economically disadvantaged they make or come from a family, minors, who make little to no money. Economically disadvantaged individuals and families include those who receive some form of government assistance; who receive free lunch at school; who live in government housing; and who need help providing food, clothing, housing, and basic household needs because they do not make enough to provide these essentials for themselves (ODE, 2013).

Engagement: Ability of a student to be involved emotionally and socially in school and also to actively involve himself or herself in being a successful student in all aspects of school. When students are engaged, they tend to like school, complete their work, socialize with their peers, stay out of major trouble, and have the desire to do well (Corso et al., 2013).

Caring: A connection or encounter between two human beings that allows the one caring to display full empathy and really hear, see, respect, and/or feel what the other, the cared for (Noddings, 2005).

Significance of the Study

This topic is significant because of the domino effect that ninth-grade failure can have on students within the OSD. If the stakeholders in this district can understand the causes of poor ninth-grade retention rates, then the district's administrators can better understand how to solve the problem. The high rates at which ninth graders are failing does not only have short-term effects, requiring students to play catch-up the next year, as stated above; failure also has the long-term impact of making students more likely to drop out of high school altogether (Neild, 2009). Students who drop-out are ultimately less likely to be able to support themselves financially because of the lack of a high school education.

Studying the problem of teacher-student rapport in the ninth-grade, which has implications for ninth-grade retention and dropout rates, will allow teachers to understand the perceptions and realities of ninth-grade students in a particular school district, and what they believe are some of the problems they are experiencing as ninth-graders. This will provide a starting point for further researchers who can use the findings for further investigations of student-teacher rapport and of how rapport can be repaired or established within the classroom.

Theoretical Significance

The work of Noddings served as the major theoretical underpinning for this study (e.g. Noddings, 2005, 2012, 2013). Noddings developed a framework for teaching practices that are grounded in caring relationships between teacher and student. The theoretical significance of this study is its basis in pedagogical practices of care. The

theories presented in this study provided insight on how to address students with care and respect, and can help teachers understand the importance of relationship-building with their students. This attachment between teacher and student can promote better attendance and high academic achievement. Pedagogical practices of care formed by the basis of this study provided practical intervention strategies for possible future PD.

Practical Significance

The practical significance of the present research was to provide an evidence base for the development of a new PD opportunity for teachers and staff at the OSD. The synthesis of relevant evidence-based literature, as well as its quantitative analysis of data collected from ninth graders and ninth-grade teachers in the district, is the basis of a program that will help teachers in the OSD to understand the importance of caring for ninth graders and demonstrating particular care as these students navigate the transition into high school. As a result of this PD opportunity, ninth grade teachers in the OSD will be able to form their classroom practices around ninth graders' specific sets of needs.

Guiding Research Question

A single overall research question was addressed in this study.

What are ninth-graders' and their teachers' perceptions of their rapport with each other, particularly with regard to the ninth-grade experience?

To answer this question, my first step was to formulate quantitative questions, seen below, and then collect quantitative data to address those questions. I then generated interview questions from that data that addressed my qualitative questions, also found below. The qualitative questions assisted in understanding the generalizations found in

the quantitative data. The tentative qualitative questions and the quantitative research questions that drove this study were as follows.

Qualitative Questions

1. What are ninth grade teachers' perceptions of their ninth graders and their overall ninth grade experience?
2. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their communications with their students?
3. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their rapport with ninth their students? What strategies are effective and what strategies are ineffective when building rapport?
4. How well do ninth grade teachers feel they communicate with eighth grade teachers concerning incoming ninth grade students?
5. What are ninth grade teacher's perceptions of administrative support during the transition period and during the school year?

Quantitative Questions

1. How did ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the Gallup Student Poll that is designed to measure perceptions of teacher care and respect towards them as it relates to daily interactions amongst teachers and students?
2. How did ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the ninth grade First Semester survey designed to measure

student perceptions of teacher-student relationships as it relates to bonding?

3. Do ninth graders' race, gender, and ninth grade readiness affect their perceptions of teachers on the Gallup Student Poll and First Semester survey?

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this sequential mixed methods case study is to explore how ninth-grade students and teachers perceive their rapport, and how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. The areas of rapport this study focused on are care, respect, and communication between ninth-grade teachers and ninth-grade students. This review of literature summarized research that is most essential to the project study. Although there is a large body of literature on student-teacher relationship and the effects of not having good student- teacher relationships, the research is limited when the student-teacher relationship focuses on perceptions of respect, care, and communication with ninth- grade students. I drew on theories that focus on interpersonal relationship, peer-reviewed articles, and studies on the benefits of student- teacher relationship, and rapport, transition to high school and its effects on the students transitioning, and ways to improve student-teacher rapport. The literature review presented will lay the groundwork for why this project study is necessary.

This literature review includes theories of interpersonal relationships as well as peer-reviewed articles and studies on the following: the benefits of good student-teacher relationships and rapport, the transition to high school and its effects on the students

transitioning, and ways to improve student-teacher rapport. The literature review includes context for the study and show why this project study is novel and significant. In order to conduct research that adequately addressed the problem the search was divided into three areas: the conceptual framework, teacher-student rapport and achievement, and transitioning into high school.

I developed ideas for exploring theorist for the study by looking at similar studies. Dissertations that included the search terms *student-teacher relationships* and *high school* were analyzed and references from those dissertations produced further results. The conceptual framework for this study focused on theorist who recognized that interpersonal relationships are important for any human to be successful. Maslow (1968) stated "man's need for love or respect is quite as 'sacred' as his need for the truth" (p. 3). Maslow felt that besides the most basic needs for food and water, the needs for safety, belongingness, love and respect can only be satisfied by other people. Noddings (2006) believed that when one cares one has to display a sense of empathy. In a care encounter, the one providing care listens, observes, and receives information from the cared-for (Noddings, 2012). Because of these beliefs on human relationships, Noddings shaped the framework for this study. The rest of the literature review is focused on literature that was relevant to the school district studied, and the project study. The OSD is 98% economically disadvantaged and 64.7% African American (ODE, 2014). I presented a small but significant amount of research on these subjects.

To conduct a thorough review for this study the Walden library, Thoreau and Eric databases, and google scholar were used. The following search terms provided results:

student-teacher rapport, teacher-student relationship, and teacher-student relationship and achievement. Articles and studies were discovered, read, and analyzed for their findings and references they used. In analyzing, I discovered information about ninth graders transitioning into high school, and the search for articles on the ninth-grade retention began. The Walden Library and google- scholar was used. The following search terms were used: *ninth-grade transition, ninth-grade retention, transitioning into high school* and *effects on ninth-grade transition.* Peer reviewed articles from research presented and understanding of possible issues seen in the OSD.

The conceptual framework of this literature review has three major components. The first section is a description of a theory that establishes the importance of student-teacher rapport, Noddings's concept of care. According to Noddings's (2006) theory of care, caring involves displaying a sense of empathy, and in a care encounter, the carer listens, observes, and receives information from the cared-for (Noddings, 2012). The second section surveys the relevant literature on students' difficulty in transitioning into high school. The third section discusses literature that investigates ways of smoothing students' transition into high school, specifically the role of teacher-student rapport at this crucial point in students' education. The prior research reviewed here will help to answer the research questions that drove this study.

Theories Supporting the Need for Rapport

The main theory underlying this study is Noddings's care theory. However, other theories support the human need for rapport and positive relationships (Bandura, 1996; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Maslow, 1943, 1967). These theories are relevant to the

present study because when understand students and their perspectives on care, respect, and communication, they can encourage dialogue and positive interaction between teacher and student. Parish and Phillip (1982) conducted a study in which they found that when teachers understand which level of Maslow's hierarchy their students are on, teachers can better encourage and support their students and help students to move up to the next level. Gobin (2012) argued that educational systems should focus on the entire being because if lower-level needs are not met, students will not be motivated to reach self-actualization. With teachers facing state academic mandates, much of their focus in the classroom must be on academics, leaving little time for teachers to ensure that students' other needs are being met.

Teachers who build rapport with their students are better able to be aware of students' needs. Only teachers who are aware of students' needs can help students reach self-actualization, a state in which students were self-motivated to achieve. Students in the OSD, because of low economic status, may be stuck on the basic needs. When teachers form relationships with their students and understand the cause of student disruption, lack of interest in class and overall lack of motivation, hunger, safety social acceptance, lack of self-esteem, and so on, they can understand how to address these needs, and students can begin the journey to self-actualization.

Another theory of relationships by Bandura (1996) supports the notion that teachers' rapport with their students influences students in many ways. According to Bandura, a strong sense of self-worth results from having experiences of success. People develop their likes and dislikes for certain activities through their success rates. This

success rate is not defined by rewards for completion, but rewards based on whether the task was performed in the way it was supposed to be performed (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). When teachers have high expectations of their students and allow students to set small goals in order to reach a larger goal, this allows them to gain a better sense of self-worth.

Because around 94% of the students in the OSD are economically disadvantaged (ODE, 2013), many of them may gain a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth from other adults in their lives. Their teachers can help to form a good sense of self-efficacy, which in turn will help them academically because high efficacy can result in a student's ability to manage their own learning (Elias, 2009).

Noddings' Care Theory

In building rapport with students, teachers should understand that rapport consists of positive, high-quality relationships between teachers and students (Ali & Ndubisi, 2011). This relationship is characterized by effective communication and respect for others' feelings, and it is positive overall (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2012). This relationship must involve caring.

Caring is often defined through an example of an action; caring can also be defined as an involvement with another person that takes time, has mutual trust, and as a mutual experience between all parties involved (Mayeroff, 2011, Noddings, 2006). In a caring relationship, the cared-for can experience growth and self-realization, and can feel safe enough to have these experiences (Mayeroff, 2011). Noddings argued that in order for students to be successful in school, the adults who are involved must listen and show

they care. Students must listen and treat one another with sensitivity; but, it is also important for teachers to listen and care for their students (Noddings, 2006). This caring can build rapport that may be lacking in class.

Building rapport can take time. The same principles and social skills that are taught to students must be modeled by teachers themselves. The teaching of care in the classroom can add to better classroom management. Noddings (2005) argued that although the classroom is full of slogans that promote caring, students can see right through the slogans and often feel that their teachers do not care. In order for a person to show they truly care, they must display true empathy by clearing their minds and really seeing, hearing, listening, and feeling what others are trying to get across (Noddings, 2005). Noddings offered the following description of what it means to really care:

> Caring, in both its natural and ethical senses, describes a certain kind of relation. It is one in which one person, A, the carer, cares for another, B, and B recognizes that A cares for B. As described earlier, A's consciousness during the interval of caring is marked by (1) engrossment or nonselective attention, and (2) motivational displacement or the desire to help. A genuinely listens, feels, and responds with honest concern for B's expressed interest or needs. When we say "B recognizes," we mean that B receives A's caring and reacts in a way that shows it. A relation of caring is complete when B's recognition becomes a part of what A receives in his or her attentiveness. (p.91)

Often, teachers expect students to be the listeners and receivers of information; but, Noddings suggested that these receptive actions need also to be performed by the teacher.

The act of caring is hard to fake, and sometimes teachers think and claim they care, but students do not feel the same way.

Researchers on caring emphasized how teachers should show they care to each individual student (Rabin, 2012). Noddings (2006, 2010) believed that how well a person treats another signifies or depends a little on how well one is treated. Researchers on applying ethics of care in different pedagogical practices used in the classroom revealed that performing these practices requires consistency, cultural intelligence, respect, and the ability to communicate well through listening and action (Noddings, 2010; Perold, Oswald, Swart, Rabin, & Roberts, 2012; Mckenzie & Shevalier, 2012; Roberts, 2010). These qualitative studies involving teachers currently in the field provide insight on how care practices or the lack thereof can affect the classroom in general (Perold et al., 2012). The only limitation found in these studies is that there are only a few to choose from. Of those few, researchers report varying demographic characteristics of their participants. That is, researchers seem to focus only on a narrow demographic range. Because of this, it was hard to find multiple studies focused on the demographics related to the OSD that is being studied in this research.

In a qualitative study focused on teaching the pedagogical strategies of care ethics, Rabin (2012) gathered and analyzed data produced from three teachers. Rabin collected journals from the classroom and playground, wrote field notes, conducted interviews, and listened to teacher-reflected recordings during this study. The teachers in this study committed to teaching care ethics through a practice that required all students to participate. The process was student-centered and allowed students to dialogue in

written and verbal form about the care they saw displayed in the classroom. The purpose of the study was to have students experience pedagogical care practices in the classroom. Rabin found that having a classroom of care takes practice and consistency, but can produce results. “Teachers and students said they had to focus on noticing moments of empathy, of cooperation, and of mutual understanding” (Rabin, 2012, p. 154).

Rabin’s (2012) study involved students of all races who came from poor economic backgrounds in a rural area. Rabin produced many findings, one being that the students’ and teachers’ perceptions were documented, another being the diversity in age, gender, and ethnic background; finally, the study was open-ended, meaning that throughout the whole process students and teachers could dialogue on care and its effects on the classroom. The limitations of the study included the fact that only one school and four classrooms were used in the study. This study can give insight to what care really means, and things to consider when ethics of care in the classroom, school, or district.

In two other studies, care was also examined through the lens of teacher perceptions. These researchers focused on African American and economically disadvantaged students (Roberts, 2010; Perold, Oswald, & Swart, 2012). The act of caring included preparing students academically and socially; but, in order to prepare for caring for these students, they had to get to know these students personally. Perold et al. focused on the perceptions of three teachers and found that they had differing perceptions of care and the meaning of care. Perold et al. also highlighted how the actions of care can be difficult to measure and interpret even in a South African, impoverished, war-inflicted, community school were teachers had a stake in the community; care can be hard to

accomplish in such a setting because of the high demands of the job. Perold et al. gave insight on what to consider when developing pedagogical care practices to implement in the classroom.

There are publications where the authors discussed the ethics of care and how care adds to theories already used in the classroom (Owens, 2005; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012), as well as researchers who discussed the implementation of care theory and practices in the classroom (Hamington, 2012; Perold et al., 2012; Oswald & Swart, 2012). These studies are limited in that there are not enough of them to make a strong argument for practical use. The studies that extend and put Noddings's theories into practice provide insight on what to take into account when attempting to implement pedagogical practices of care (Hamington, 2012; Perold et al., 2012; Oswald & Swart, 2012). Noddings's theories on care emphasize the need for building positive relationships with students. Mayeroff (2011) described this care by highlighting how to create this relationship of care through helping the cared-for to grow, receiving the care, committing oneself to the process of care, being consistent, remaining individualistic, and recognizing that the process should take precedence over the product. Infusing care into a classroom can be a complicated process, but it can only add to the need for positive teacher-student rapport.

According to Noddings (2005), educators should not attempt to promote caring in the classroom by relying on slogans such as "every child can learn," to convince students to engage in the classroom. Everything that educators do, from feeding students to busing students, is intended to make them ready to learn, but teachers should instead be making

sure they are forming a sense of community and belonging (Noddings, 2005). In school districts across the country, teachers are bogged down with education mandates and find that everything they are doing in the classroom deals with less care and more on student capabilities to pass mandated tests (Perold et al., 2012).

Schools also focus on individual student capabilities that make them separate from the group instead of promoting a community of care in which every child is involved (Rabin, 2012). Noddings (2006) found that in order for students to feel cared for no matter their intellectual capacity, teachers must get to know every student and build rapport, resisting the urge to value students according to their academic abilities. If teachers are serious about promoting social, emotional, and ethical development, they must spend time nurturing relationships (Noddings, 2006). These relationships will shift the value from academic ability to a more holistic valuing, which may, in turn, encourage better attitudes among students transitioning into high school.

No matter how much a teacher says he or she cares, if the recipient of the caring does not feel he or she is being cared for, then on some level the accusations of not caring have some validity (Noddings, 2005). When a teacher cares about a student, the teacher listens to the student's interests and passions and relates those passions and interests to the subject matter that is being taught (Noddings, 2005). With all the difficulties of transitioning into high school, a classroom environment that promotes caring can create an outlet for students to talk and work out their issues instead of feeling alone and out of place. This, in turn, may help with attendance rates, academic failure, social issues, and other difficulties that ninth graders encounter during the transition into high school.

Noddings (2005, 2006, 2012, 2013), and other researchers described above, help to explain why the OSD should consider carefully how ninth graders perceive their overall ninth grade experience, including experiences with teachers inside and outside the classroom. Noddings believed that by caring for another person, one begins to understand the person's needs and interests, developing empathy for the person that enables both parties to react in positive ways to one another. Noddings's theory, as well as the studies cited above, all support the case for investigating how eighth and ninth graders perceive their transition into high school, both within and outside the classroom. Such an investigation can promote positive communication, positive student–teacher rapport, and a better overall transition into high school.

The Challenges of the Ninth-Grade Transition

Ninth-grade students are at a challenging point in their social development. On average, ninth-grade students are 14 or 15 years old, an age at which adolescents deal with role confusion as they seek self-identity and self-understanding (Erickson, 1968). As adolescents try to develop their identity, they often experience self-consciousness, insecurity, and a sense of inferiority (Erickson, 1968). According to Erickson (1980), adolescents at this age struggle not only with the question of who they are, but also with the question of who they are in their social context. This means that many of these students are still trying to find themselves and are confused in the process.

Adolescents at this age begin to care more about what their peers think than what the adults in their lives think (Beland, 2014; Meschke & Bartholomae, 2011). This causes conflict with the adults in teenagers' lives as they begin to rebel and talk back more

(Beland, 2014; Meschke & Bartholomae, 2011). The peer relationships that ninth-grade students develop can be a hindrance to their well-being because adolescents at this age engage in risky behavior to impress their peers (Meschke & Bartholomae, 2011). These forces can, if not adequately managed, create a negative ninth-grade experience and a difficult transition to high school.

A few researchers made the argument that the ninth-grade experience can be stressful and cause anxiety, academic failure, depression, and social issues. Benner and Graham (2009) and De Wit, Karioja, Rye, and Shain (2011) both conducted longitudinal studies that measured student perceptions of the transition into high school. Both sets of researchers recruited over 1500 students from various backgrounds and cultures and followed students from middle to tenth grade. The results from the questionnaires found that "overall transitioning to larger schools was detrimental to student outcomes" (Benner & Graham, 2009, p. 369) and those students perceive less support from teachers and classmates when comparing middle and high school (Benner & Graham, 2009; De Wit et al., 2011). Both also found that students experienced more academic failure, more anxiety, less support, and more loneliness in high school than middle school (Benner et al., 2009, De Wit et al., 2011). Researchers involved in longitudinal studies examining large samples of adolescents transitioning from middle to high school found that (a) students increased their use of alcohol over that time period, and (b) students reported a wide range of transition experiences based on different circumstances surrounding the transition (Benner & Graham, 2009; Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009).

Transitioning into high school is a challenge for many adolescents in the United States. The transition can be correlated with lower academic achievement for some students (Holcomb-McCoy, 2011) because students at this point are required to deal with (a) the departmentalization of subjects; (b) increasingly rigorous instruction and assignments; and (c) continuous reminders of their academic ranking and graduation requirements, with fewer emotional supports, all while trying to understand their personal identities (Beland, 2014; Benner & Graham 2009). Transitioning from middle to high school can also bring feelings of anxiety because students are thrown into a larger and more complex social environment. Ninth graders have to deal with leaving their friends and finding new friends in a larger social environment (Ganeson & Ehrich, 2009; Langenkamp, 2010). These and other factors contribute to low ninth-grade retention rates.

In the United States, ninth-grade is the grade with the highest level of enrollment because on average, 22% of ninth graders are retained in a given year (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Any given ninth-grade class thus includes a significant proportion of repeat students. The retention of a student in ninth-grade continues to affect the student throughout his or her high school career. Grade retention is one of the most accurate predictors of a student's likelihood of dropping out (Bornsheuer et al., 2011).

Students who are retained in ninth-grade are more likely to drop out of school and not graduate than students who only take ninth-grade once (Neild, 2009). Students who fail ninth grade are more likely to experience further academic difficulties because they fall behind, and more likely to then drop out (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009). This can have an

impact on not only their lives but also on society as a whole, as the larger community misses out on the potential human capital that was never realized.

According to data for the 2009-2010 school years, which is the most recent data available, the average freshman graduation rate was 78.2% (NCESE.gov, 2013). This means that about 22% dropped out, left to face the challenges of life without a high school diploma. Students who drop-out of high school tend to experience higher rates of unemployment, rely more heavily on government assistance, are more likely to be in and out of prison, and earn less over a lifetime than those who do graduate from high school (Bornsheuer et al., 2011). Even when high school dropouts gain employment, they tend to earn minimum wage, and many still rely on government assistance to supplement their incomes (Bornsheuer et al., 2011). Many factors, including socioeconomic status and ethnic minority status, make the transition more difficult and therefore put these students at a greater risk of failing or dropping out of school (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012).

Disadvantages for African American Students

Although the transition to high school is hard for many students, minority students may find it even more difficult. Of the 22% of the students who dropped out of high school in 2009, the dropout rates were highest among African American students (NCESE.gov, 2013). The averaged freshman graduation rate for Blacks was 66.1%, versus 83% for Whites (NCESE, 2013). Proposals presented for the gap in education between minorities students and their white counterparts provide explanation. For example, most teachers are White, and these White teachers may find it difficult to form relationships with African American students. White teachers may find it easier to

tolerate students who are of the same ethnic background as themselves and thus be more likely to attend to white students' needs (Split et al., 2012). Black students also find themselves the victims of well-meaning stereotypes that are held by teachers and administrators.

Holcomb-McCoy (2011) reported that teachers, administrators, and counselors tend not to expect Black students to excel academically, but do expect them to achieve in other areas such as sports. These stereotypes follow students into the classroom. When teachers refer to the African American experience in class, they often highlight the negative aspects of this experience, that is, crime, violence, broken families, and poverty (Gay, 2010). Teachers and administrators may also perceive Black students as hostile, academically inferior, or even emotionally disturbed (Holcomb-McCoy, 2011).

Teachers and students tend to have difficulty forming relationships with people who do not have the same cultural background because they do not understand one another (Gregory et al., 2010). This may be because of their strained relationships with teachers; African American students are more likely to be suspended, which further weakens their bonds to school (Gregory et al., 2010). This lack of bonding can exacerbate any academic struggles the student may be having. Students who do not like school tend to experience more problems with academic failure than students who like school (Gregory et al., 2010). African American students are one of the most significant at-risk sub-groups of students in America today.

Disadvantages or Students of Low Socioeconomic Status

In addition to African Americans, students living in poverty are also at risk of poor academic achievement in school. Compared to students of high SES, students of low SES have a greater chance of suffering from depression, anxiety, poor health, attention problems, and emotional and cognitive development issues (Hackman et al., 2010). Students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds also have fewer educational resources at home and are more likely to drop out of high school (Education Week, 2011). Students who are economically disadvantaged not only deal with their own challenging circumstances, but are also stereotyped by others. These stereotypes range from the assumption that their mothers are lazy and inattentive, to the assumption that poor people are morally and intellectually deficient (Gorski, 2012).

On top of all this, students who are economically disadvantaged usually attend public schools where the majority of the population is economically disadvantaged, meaning that the entire community lacks resources. Poor students, similar to African American students, also suffer from negative stereotypes, which often leave these students feeling disconnected from school. The participants in this study, who are both African American and economically disadvantaged, face a doubly challenging set of obstacles in school.

Student-Teacher Rapport in the Transition to Ninth Grade

Rapport can be defined as a positive human relationship that is characterized by effective communication, respect for one another's feelings, and a mutual sense of connection (Ali et al., 2012). Ample researchers have shown the benefits of rapport in a

wide variety of relationships. Ali and Ndubisi (2011) studied retaining customers in a dental clinic and found that both respect and rapport are important in gaining and retaining customers. Both parties benefit from rapport; customers feel connected and return to the business, and businesses werenefit economically (Ali & Ndubisi, 2011). Researchers found that good relationships between doctors and patients are established when an understanding of oneself and of other cultures is involved (Roe et al., 2012). When patients feel that doctors understand their culture and where they come from, good relationships are established. Because of this understanding, patients who have better relationships with their doctors receive better treatment and have better health outcomes (Roe et al., 2012).

Researchers have investigated the role of rapport in conducting research. Litchman (2013) described an interview setting where the researcher includes enough time to establish rapport before conducting the interview. This rapport was found to allow the interviewee to be more comfortable and generate a more meaningful interview. In these and many other cases, research has shown the value of establishing rapport in order to have a productive relationship.

Factors Affecting Student Teacher Rapport

Many ninth graders have difficulty transitioning into high school, and experiencing a positive ninth-grade experience. This in turn may be a part of the reasons why ninth-grade retention rates are so high. Of the ninth graders who are affected, minorities and students of low economic status are the majority. There may be many reasons why the transition is so difficult, but researchers on this subject suggested that

these students are misunderstood, do not communicate properly with their teachers, and often feel their teachers do not care for them. These problems can be solved by fostering positive student-teacher rapport. With this rapport, teachers can build better communication and begin to have empathy for their ninth-grade students.

Attesting to the need of positive, respectful, and caring student-teacher relationships in multiple context (e.g. Bryan et al., 2012; Bergeron et al., 2011; Cavel et al., 2009; Hughes, 2011; Tosolt, 2009; Yildirim, 2012), Bryan et al. conducted a study using a nationally representative sample of over 10,000 students from various high schools. Upon analyzing the effects of school bonding on academic achievement, Bryan et al. found that school bonding can have significant effects on academic achievement. Bryan et al. discovered that 10^{th}-and 12^{th}-grade math achievement scores improved by over 3% in students who reported higher levels of bonding with their schools. Bryan et al. examined the emotional attachment these students had to their teachers and found that that such attachment was associated with 1% greater mathematics achievement scores after controlling for other variables.

In another study involving 2,360 French Canadian secondary-level students (between the ages of 12 and 15), Bergeron et al. (2011) investigated the nature of the relationship with their teachers, SES and achievement motivation, and drop-out intention No matter what the students' family's reported SES level was, a negative relationship with teachers is the strongest predictor of high intentions to dropout for most of the students in the study.

The factors that can affect the relationship between a teacher and a student are multifarious; I focused on three: lack of support at school (Trask-Tate &Cunningham, 2010), teachers' failure to understand students' culture (Becerra, 2012), and students' perceptions of teachers' respect or disrespect for them (Anderson et al., 2011).

Lack of support at school. The relationship that the teacher has with a student can impact the entire school experience for that student (Kenyatta, 2012). Students are motivated by their perceptions of teachers' behaviors and attitudes towards them (Yildirim, 2012). When students do not feel connected to school, they are more likely to fail (Bryan et al. 2012). By contrast, students who feel connected to school have better attendance rates and perform better academically (Bryan et al., 2012).

One of the factors that affect a student's feeling of being connected to school is the student's attachment to the teacher. The student's level of attachment can stem from the amount of praise and support the student receives from the teacher (Bryan et al., 2012). When students are more engaged in the classroom, they tend to have greater academic success (Dotter & Lowe, 2011). This engagement can be impacted not only by peers but also by teacher support (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). By recognizing the support that students need in school, teachers can build on the relationships they have with their students. Teachers can connect effectively even with students who feel disconnected, provided that they, the teachers, respond effectively to students regardless of how the teachers perceive the students (Espinoza, 2012). Rapport may not happen overnight because of the lack of common ground between teacher and student, but it can be established over time.

Teachers' failure to understand students' culture. In addition to being impacted by students' lack of support, teacher-student rapport can also be affected by the teacher's failure to understand the student's culture of origin. Many different cultural groups are represented in America today; the U.S Census Bureau reports that in 2012, 37% of America was made up of minority groups (Census.gov, 2013). These statistics showed how diverse America has become. Because of this diversity, teachers must recognize and understand different cultures. In a study of student-teacher relationships, Phillippo (2012) found that not only do teachers need to show that they care, but they also need to demonstrate knowledge of students' cultures and communities. Phillippo discussed many instances where students felt their teachers cared when they recognized cultural differences and the difficulties they may encounter in their communities. When teachers fail to understand and appreciate different cultures, they tend to show less support for and have lower expectations of students (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2013). This in turn can cause lower academic achievement among students.

Tosolt (2009) focused on the differences of perceived teacher caring as it relates to the students' minority status, minority in number, voluntary immigrant minorities, and involuntary immigrant minorities. In the study, where student minority status was the independent variable and students' perception was the dependent variable, Tosolt found that depending on minority status students' perceptions of caring behaviors differ. According to Noddings (2005), caring relationships consist of two parties. If one party does not feel cared for then there is still a relationship; but, not a caring one. In order for

teachers to engage in caring relationships with minorities they have to understand cultural differences and build caring actions based on those understandings.

Teachers show students they care by listening to them, encouraging them, making them feel safe and secure, and respecting their families and cultures (Hallinan, 2009). A study conducted by Becerra (2012) involved data from 1,508 adult participants who identified themselves as being Hispanic or Latino heritage. Becerra found that their perceptions on the success rates of K-12 Latino students was hindered by the lack of cultural understanding, and labeling Latino students as having learning disabilities and behavioral problems. These stereotypes can contribute to the performance gap between Latino and White students. Becerra also found that when teachers do not understand or appreciate minority students, particularly their cultures outside of school, it directly impacts the teacher-student relationship which in turn impacts the academic achievement of these Latino students. When African American students feel respected, free to be themselves, and proud of whom they are, their achievement in school increases (Williams, 2011). When teachers understand that every culture is important, teachers can build on the relationship they have with all students within the classroom.

Students' perceptions of respect or disrespect. Teachers can begin to improve their relationships with students by understanding and respecting students as individuals. Teachers ought to perceive students in the context of their socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds (Kenyatta, 2012). Students who come from different economic backgrounds may have a different approach to learning, and students' attitudes may differ because of gender difference. When teachers understand individual backgrounds and demographics,

they can understand and respect how education is approached by that student. This will allow the teacher to differentiate teaching and begin to build individual relationships with students.

The ability to relate to students is a critical aspect of teaching. Students in today's world access so much information from the Internet that they do not see why they need the teacher for information (Espinoza, 2012). Establishing rapport can allow students to understand the crucial role that teachers play in the classroom: "Wherever there are competing values, there is an opportunity for confusion and discord, and the classroom [is] no exception" (Espinoza, 2012, p. 33). Rapport brings understanding of cultures and values, as well as mutual respect between the teacher and the student.

Mentoring Programs to Improve Student-Teacher Rapport

One method for improving teacher-student rapport is the establishment of mentoring programs. Mentoring programs can provide the social support that students in transition need and can give students power to make the transition much more smoothly, stay in school, prepare for the future, and maybe even seek higher education (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012). Mentors can also equip students with the tools necessary to develop skills in problem-solving, decision-making, goal-setting, or resource-seeking through modeling or guiding (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012).

Mentoring programs have led to an increase academic achievement, increased social and emotional well-being, and are found to be a great support system to at-risk youth in urban school districts (Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014). Komosa-Hawkins (2012) studied the impact of a mentoring program for ninth and tenth graders

and concluded that mentoring can contribute to improved personal strength, improved functioning, and improved career strength. Because of the need for peer acceptance, mentors provide an adult for students to talk to without the backlash of their peers (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). In a similar study by Karcher (2009) involving 46 teen mentors and 45 comparison classmates, data pointed to the fact that peer mentoring can also have positive effects on mentees' academics, self-esteem, and school connectedness.

Given the additional challenges that some African American students face, it is beneficial to have mentoring programs designed to accommodate these students, programs that use mentors who understand racial identity and the unique challenges of the African American community (Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). Mentors who are of the same ethnic background and who have similar cultural experiences as their mentees are more likely to relate to, empathize with, and have a positive impact on their mentees (Hurd & Sellers 2013). One method is to assign counselors to hold small group meeting for incoming ninth graders; these groups specialize in academic support and ethnic identity exploration (Holcomb-McCoy, 2011).

Of all the studies just described that showed problems with the middle to high school transition experience, there were some limitations. For example: (a) none of the researchers discussed perceptions ninth graders had on how their relationships with their teachers, correlates with a positive ninth-grade experience; and (b) none of the researchers focused on only ninth grade students. The literature discussed in the foregoing review establishes the need for positive relationships amongst teachers and students, because these relationships can also help students academically. The researchers

made a strong case for the fact that caring plays an important role both within and outside of the classroom.

The literature also demonstrates that transitioning into high school can be difficult for many ninth-grade students, especially those in high-risk subgroups such as ethnic minorities and low-SES groups. The transition can be so difficult, in fact, that many who do not succeed in high school drop- out. However, researchers also suggested that mentorships and other positive relationships can help to establish student-teacher rapport, and thus help students even in high-risk groups to succeed. The literature review supports the notion that stronger rapport, as it relates to care, respect, and communication with teachers in ninth-grade may have a positive effect on ninth graders and maybe even their overall ninth grade experience.

Implications of this Study

Once data were collected and analyzed, the results were used to present a plan as to why it is important for teachers to build relationships of care, mutual respect, and effective communication with their students. With the results from this study, the district can offer professional developments that expose teachers to pedagogical practices that cultivate teachers' and students' capacity to care. With the results, the district can also research strategies, based off of the issues the students provided during the study, and provide teachers with the findings from their research and suggest strategies to use in the classroom to improve teacher-student rapport amongst ninth-grade teachers and students in the district. It is imperative that the teachers in the Ohio School District build rapport

with the ninth-grade student population. Such rapport can be expected to impact the academic achievement of these students in positive ways (Anderson et al., 2011).

In presenting the findings with the district, teacher's names were not revealed for confidentiality purposes. Teachers were referred to as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and so on. Teacher's individual schools were not exposed and all information concerning all teacher participants was kept confidential.

Summary

Teacher-student rapport can have a positive impact on student achievement (Baroody et al., 2014; Capern, & Hammond, 2014; Dziubinski, 2014; Urhahne, 2015). When students and teachers can build positive relationships that include clear communication with and respect for one another, these relationships have a direct impact on student achievement. Although this is true, previous researchers have not yet studied teacher-student rapport with respect to the overall ninth-grade experience into high school.

As in many other districts, ninth graders in the OSD are struggling with the transitioning to high school. Teachers and ninth-grade students are finding it difficult to build rapport. The purpose of this sequential mixed methods case study was to explore ninth-grade teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student rapport. I also examined how teachers perceive ninth graders' experiences, and how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. Once teachers in the district understand that their rapport with their students can profoundly impact students' experiences in ninth grade, then they, the teachers, may be motivated to make changes in

the classroom that will improve teacher-student rapport. Section 2 is a description of the methods used to gather and analyze the data.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

I aimed to explore ninth-grade teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student rapport as it relates to care, respect, communication and overall ninth-grade experience. As the preceding literature review established, there is a need to understand whether ninth-grade students and teachers perceive their relationships with teachers as positive. Although researchers have studied different transition stages and the teacher-student relationship overall, none have focused on the transition to high school. The purpose of this project study is to explore how teachers and ninth-grade students perceive their relationships with each other.

For this study, a mixed-method case study approach was appropriate because this approach allowed me to gather both qualitative and quantitative data about a bounded system, thereby collecting a more comprehensive data set than may be accomplished by using one single method (Yin, 2014). In qualitative case studies, a researcher collects data through an inductive process in order to find meaning and understanding (Merriam, 2009), while in quantitative study a researcher aims to find connections between variables Creswell, 2012). The variable examined in this study was ninth-grade teacher-student relationships as it relates to care, respect, communication and overall ninth- grade experience.

This section is a description of the research method and an explanation on how the research design best suited the needs of the study. This section begins with a justification of the use of a sequential mixed-methods data collection procedure and then

includes an explanation of why a mixed-methods approach best fits the needs of this study.

Research Design and Approach

Mixed Methods Research

I used a sequential mixed methods case study approach with an emphasis on the qualitative component. Yin (2014) stated, "mixed methods research can permit researchers to address more complicated research questions and collect a richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone" (p. 66). A mixed methods approach was chosen for this case-study because the research question involves multiple perspectives, and in order to get a true understanding of these perspectives, both quantitative and qualitative data collection must take place.

I collected quantitative data first, and out of the findings I generated interview questions to collect qualitative data (Appendix E). In this project study, the qualitative data aided in understanding the generalizations found in quantitative data. This section is a description of the quantitative and qualitative research methods, and then a justification why both methods are appropriate for this study. Next, I will present the setting, sample, instrumentation, research questions, data analysis, assumptions, limitations, scope, and finally, ethical considerations.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative researchers use deductive reasoning to investigate a problem (Creswell, 2012). Descriptive researchers seek to describe the current status of an identified variable (Creswell, 2012). The variable examined in this study is ninth-grade

teacher-student relationships. In descriptive research, I aimed to provide information about a variable. I sought to offer a description of ninth-grade teacher-student rapport as it relates to care, respect, communication and overall ninth- grade experience. The archival surveys in this study were used to focus my qualitative inquiry. The results from the quantitative analysis narrowed the focus from student perceptions of care, respect, and bonding, to finding reasons why these negative perceptions exist with any student.

The quantitative data collected from the surveys provided through archival data will provide explanations to quantitative questions. The explanations derived from the quantitative analysis will come in the form of generalizations that arise through calculating descriptive central tendency statistics. I used Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS version 21) software to generalize information based on themes of care, respect, communication, and student-teacher relationships overall, discussed in further detail below.

Quantitative research allows a researcher to develop generalizations based on numerical data. For this study, I calculated the mean, median, range, mode, standard deviation, and frequencies from survey item results to gather statistical data. Because I wanted to form generalizations on a large number of ninth-grade students in the OSD, quantitative descriptive data were used in this study to describe ninth-grade student-teacher relationship. The data gathered provided insight about what ninth graders are experiencing with their ninth-grade teachers. The information allowed me to modify qualitative questions as needed and drive the focus of the group discussion. The quantitative results yielded some understanding of teacher-student bonding, but I needed

more clarification, so I developed questions that were more specific to what may affect student-teacher bonding. Research from my first literature review and quantitative data findings aided in the adjustment of the interview questions.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative research aims to gain a better understanding of the world, group, or person being studied. In qualitative research, a researcher tries to understand people's experiences and perceptions within their context or natural setting, that is, the meaning that people construct for their experiences (Lichtman, 2013). After analysis of quantitative student archival data, the qualitative component of this study was presented. The qualitative data came from interviewing 15 ninth-grade teachers. In order to get a complete picture of the ninth-grade teacher-student relationship this data collection occurred through conducting a focus group interview. In qualitative research, a researcher moves inductively from the specific to the general (Litchman, 2013). I then used those findings to modify qualitative questions as needed.

Setting and Sample

This study took place at four out of six high schools in the OSD; Ohio School One (OS1), Ohio School Two (OS2), Ohio School Three (OS3), and Ohio School Four (OS4). Only four out of six schools were used in this study because administrators in two of the schools seemed reluctant to participate. All schools are 100% economically disadvantaged, located in an urban school district in the city, and receive Title I funding. All schools within the district have the same economic demographics and have high rates of ninth-grade retention (ODE, 2014). Other demographics can be found in Table 1.

Using samples from these schools as subgroups gave the study a diverse set of samples from students and teachers in schools with a variety of demographics.

Table 1

Overview of Schools in Study

School	Number of Students	% African Americans	%Whites	% Hispanic	% Males	% Females	% IEP	% LEP
OS1	784	73	12.9	3.2	44.9	55.1	15.4	1.8
OS2	482	93.5	3.8	--	43	57	28.3	--
OS3	654	93.4	3.1	--	57.2	42.8	19.9	--
OS4	950	34.6	52.5	6.6	44.3	44.3	25.8	13.6
Mean	717.5	73.625	18.075	4.9	47.35	49.8	22.35	7.7

Note: Original data from Ohio Department of Education (2014).

Table 2

School	Number of Teachers	% African Americans	%Whites	% Hispanic	% Males	% Females
OS1	63	34.9	60.3	3.2	31.7	68.3
OS2	31	67.7	32.3	--	35.5	64.5
OS3	39	35.9	61.5	2.6	35.9	64
OS4	73	16.4	83.6	--	42.5	57.5
Mean	51.5	40.75	59.42	1.45	36.4	63.575

Note: Original data from Ohio Department of Education (2014).

I used purposeful sampling, because in this type of sampling, a researcher chooses a particular site and a particular set of individuals to gain an accurate understanding of what is being researched (Creswell, 2012). Within purposeful sampling are 15 to 17 different strategies (Glesne, 2011; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). For the purpose of this study, I used a type of purposeful sampling called homogeneous sampling, because in homogenous sampling, cases are selected according to subgroup (Glesne, 2011). This study's subgroup was 163 ninth-grade students acquired through 163 surveys and 15 ninth-grade teachers.

Student samples came from answers to prior survey questions. Two surveys, one measuring health and wellness, The Gallup Survey, and one measuring overall ninth grade experience, The Ninth Grade Survey, was previously given to 163 ninth grade students in order to acquire my student samples. Teacher samples came from 15 teachers participating in a focus group. In order for teacher participants to have been eligible for the study, they had to have taught at least one or more ninth-grade classes in the OSD. School administrators gave permission to access teachers. Participants were reached through a number of steps. I first gained permission from school administrators.

After administrators gave permission, I accessed teachers through the monthly staff meeting and/or an email. During this time, I explained my study, participant qualifications, consent forms, and how the study may affect the district. I then gave teachers the opportunity to view the information and reply. Teachers had the ability to sign consent forms after discussion or to take time to review the information. After receiving consent forms I set a date for the focus group interview. The focus group took place after school in one of the school's libraries or classrooms. Archival data from previous surveys taken in the 2013/2014 school year and 2014/2015 school year provided information for student data.

Ethical Considerations and Protection of Participants' Rights

Principals in the OSD gave access to teacher participants. In order for teachers to participate in this study they had to be an employee of the OSD and teach at least one ninth-grade class in their daily schedule. I made a brief announcement about my study at the end of the monthly staff meetings and hand out a flyer describing my study and

purpose. Teachers were able to write down questions and notes as the meeting proceeds. After the meeting, I handed out consent forms and ask teachers to contact me if and when they are ready to participate in the study. I used the first 15 eligible teachers that choose to participate in the study. I asked principals to sign a statement that states they will not disclose the name of participants to anyone, or risk confidentiality of the participants.

I performed a number of actions in order to maintain the privacy of each participant. Focus group interviews took place in a quiet section in the library after school. All documents and recorders remained with me at all times in a secured, locked container. At no time did I record participants' names, or any characteristic of the participant that may disclose participant identity. Anonymity of the survey results addressed confidentiality issues with archival data. Access to archival data came from the survey administers. They provided me with the results and the actual survey questions.

My affiliation with the school is that of a curriculum coach. The curriculum coach's job is to provide teachers with educational resources that will help in collecting data, as well as maintaining curriculum that is beneficial to their students. I am on a regular teacher contract, similar to the participants I am interviewing. I do not evaluate teachers, discipline teachers, or have any jurisdiction to perform any related tasks. Because of this, the participants did not have to worry about me having authority over them.

Research Questions

In this study, I used both methods in a mixed-methods approach to investigate the answer to the following central research question:

What are ninth graders' and their teachers' perceptions of their rapport with each other, particularly with regard to care, respect, communication and the overall ninth grade experience?

Qualitative Questions

1. What are ninth grade teachers' perceptions of their ninth graders and their overall ninth grade experience?
2. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their communications with their students?
3. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their rapport with ninth their students? What strategies are effective and what strategies are ineffective when building rapport?
4. How well do ninth grade teachers feel they communicate with eighth grade teachers concerning incoming ninth grade students?
5. What are ninth grade teacher's perceptions of administrative support during the transition period and during the school year?

Quantitative Questions

1. How did ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the Gallup Student Poll that is designed to measure perceptions of teacher care and respect towards them as it relates to daily interactions amongst teachers and students?
2. How did ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the ninth grade First Semester survey designed to measure

student perceptions of teacher-student relationships as it relates to bonding?

3. Does ninth grader's race, gender, and ninth grade readiness affect their perceptions of teacher care and respect on the Gallup Student Poll and First Semester survey?

These questions and the data that were used and analyzed to answer each question can be found in Appendix F in a data analysis table.

Data Collection Strategies and Analysis

Instrumentation and Materials

In order to collect ninth-grade student perceptions of teacher- student relationship, archival data were analyzed. Archival data came from previous surveys given to ninth-grade students by various employees in the district. Access to archival data came from the previous ninth-grade transition coordinator, now counselor and a ninth-grade career exploration teacher. The first survey, a 20 question Gallup student poll, was administered by ninth-grade transition coordinators in the OSD in the middle of the 2013/2014 school year (Gallup, 2014).

The Gallup Student Poll is given to high school students across the nation. It "measures student hope for the future, engagement with school, and well-being - factors that have been shown to drive students' grades, achievement scores, retention, and future employment" (Gallup, 2015, p. 1). The Gallup survey was used by the schools to collect information about wellness, safety, and school environment from ninth-grade students at various high schools in the OSD.

The driving force behind this survey was to understand how ninth graders are adjusting to high school. The chief of school improvement suggested the survey be administered. The transition coordinators administered the 20-item Gallup Likert-scale survey to ninth grade survey through Naviance (computer software provided by the OSD district) using a laptop computer. The Gallup survey's anchored items are based on a five point Likert scale where response items are scored from a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to a 5 (*strongly agree*). Results and interpretation come from a comparison of scores from other schools in the OSD and the national average, and are used to help develop programs or provide services to areas that are considered deficient.

The second survey used in this study was administered this school year to ninth-graders at the end of their first semester by the schools' health teacher and the ninth-grade career exploration teacher located at one of the other schools in the OSD. This first semester survey (FSS) gathered information about ninth-grade teachers, ninth-grade student preparation for careers, and ninth-grade teacher-student relationship. Students respond to 20 questions on the FSS by selecting items scored as a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to a 5 (*strongly agree*). The survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

The Building Leadership Team (BLT) discussed FSS results and also discussed how to improve answers on the survey that produced unfavorable responses. Out of the discussion came ideas on how to better serve the ninth graders. I used the answers from Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in this survey to answer research questions about care, respect, communication and overall ninth-grade experience.

Teacher perceptions about overall rapport, communication and support during transition, ninth graders and what they are experiencing, and their communication with ninth graders came from a focus group interview with 15 ninth-grade teachers (see Appendix D for the list of interview questions). Focus group questions were based/grounded on what we know from the research about transitions between middle to high school. The interview consisted of five or six questions and occurred for 20 to 30 minutes. Interviews took place in the library or classroom at one of the schools. There were no follow-up interviews.

Quantitative Data

I collected quantitative data in the form of archival data (Surveys located in Appendix C). With permission from the survey administers (see Appendix G for Letter of Cooperation), I used answers from previously administered Gallup and FSS surveys to aid in my research. Various employees administered these surveys to ninth-grade students in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 school year in the OSD. The surveys collected information about ninth-grade student–teacher rapport, health and wellness amongst ninth-grade students, and questions about transitioning into high school. These data remain in data folders on the district's hard drive created by each of the administrators. I analyzed previous survey results by creating a table and inputting the results. I calculated the mean, standard deviations, median, range, mode, and frequencies. I reported these results using an APA data overview table. I then compared these results with teacher responses.

With each survey I used only the questions that would answer or relate to the quantitative research questions used in this study. The other questions were not relevant so they were not used. Questions from the surveys identify perceptions of teacher care, respect, communication, and ninth grade experience. Together, they all addressed teacher- student rapport. The following survey questions were used.

Survey 1: Gallup Student Poll (20-item survey)

10. My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
11. At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
14. I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.

Survey 2: Ninth Grade First Semester Survey (17-item survey)

1. I believe my teachers have an interest in what I like
2. I believe my teachers understand me
3. My teachers make it easy to adjust to ninth grade
4. I can talk to my teachers about what is happening in my life
5. I can talk to my teachers about my plans after high school
6. I believe my teachers respect my culture
8. I can stay after school for tutoring if I need help
9. Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher
10. Sometimes I don't want to come to go to class because of a teacher
11. I believe I can talk to my teachers if I am having difficulties in class

After identifying the relevant questions, I categorized each survey question according to which research question that survey question addresses. The materials that

were used to analyze software were a textbook, software, and the Walden University SPSS tutoring service. I used the textbook SPSS for Windows and Macintosh (Green & Salkind, 2011). The textbook aided me in inputting data in the software and creating visual aids for my data summaries. After I identified the data, I summarized the data by means of central tendency (Lodico et al., 2010). Using central tendency, I calculated the mean, standard deviations, median, range, mode, and frequencies/% of each item using SPSS.

I also created a table to report the standard deviation and item frequencies for raw data. For example, I took surveys from the OSD's archival data and pulled every question that addresses how ninth graders feel about care, respect, communication, and the overall student-teacher relationship. I then calculated the mean, standard deviation, median, item score range, mode, and raw-data frequencies/percent for responses to answer the research question. I completed this process for all quantitative research questions.

Qualitative Data

After the collection and analysis of quantitative data, I gathered qualitative data through a focus group interview. The interviews consisted of semi structured questions. I followed an interview guide in which questions were open-ended (Meriam, 2009). Interviewing teachers gave me a fuller understanding of the relationships among ninth-grade teachers and students. I interviewed 15 district high-school teachers to assist in understanding communication with ninth-grade teachers and administrators, eighth grade teachers, and ninth grade students, understanding ninth grade student-teacher relationships, and how ninth grade teachers perceive the ninth grade experience.

Tentative questions include questions regarding rapport, respect, care, and communication among ninth-grade teachers and students.

An open invitation allowed teachers the chance to participate in the study. Principals in each building gave me permission to announce the study at their monthly staff meetings, or by email. During each staff meeting, I briefly explained the study and handed out information about the research, my contact information, and consent forms. Teachers had the opportunity to think about involvement in the study and contact me if they are interested. I encouraged teachers by explaining the importance of addressing the problem. Once contact was made and all quantitative data were collected, I scheduled the focus group session.

Interviews took place before or after school, or during teacher planning time. There were four focus group interviews with 3 to 5 teachers in each in the school library or classroom. Before each interview, I established rapport with participants by re-explaining the study and allowing the participants to ask any questions he or she may have. Each interview consisted of 5 to 10 open-ended questions and lasted approximately 30-40 minutes. I recorded all interviews and take notes during each interview. Interview analysis took place after each interview is complete.

Analysis began after every focus group interview. I first made notations about the interview as soon as possible to be sure to document any items that may not have been captured by the audio recording. The audio tape was then transcribed as soon as possible. I used a coding system that assigns a short-hand description to pieces of data so it can be found easier later in the analysis (Merriam, 2009). With the assistance of Nvivo software

created for qualitative research, I coded the entire transcript after each interview. Once transcripts were coded, I used the software to identify emerging themes. Nvivo assisted in bringing together common themes and issues that emerged from the coded transcripts. A table also assisted in summarizing the data in addition to using example quotations in the narrative about the results.

In order to become more familiar with this software I attended webinars provided by the Walden writing center. The following tentative categories were proposed: (a) teacher perceptions of teacher caring, (b) teacher perceptions of teachers' respect for students, (c) teacher perceptions of teacher-student communication, and (d) teacher perceptions of overall teacher–student rapport. After quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, I compared the data, established themes, and categorized information. From this, I produced a summary of the data.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity issues with qualitative research can take place throughout the study. A researcher in qualitative research collects data, shifts through the information, and constructs realities all from their perspective (Litchman, 2013). To address validity and reliability issues for qualitative data I used member-checking, which is described as "respondent validation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). After data from each interview were analyzed, I took my preliminary findings back to each teacher. Teachers had the opportunity to view my summaries and suggest changes, I made changes to ensure participants recognize their experiences from the summaries I created (Merriam, 2009). To address reliability and validity issues I also had another person independently

analyze the data collected and compare the findings. This process is known as triangulating analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Validity and reliability issues with quantitative data can lie in the survey administered. For this study the archival data came from a nationwide Gallup survey. A pilot study (Gallup, 2009) was conducted with over 70,000 Grades 5 through grade 12 students from 335 schools and 59 districts across the country. Also in 2009 and 2010 the survey was successfully tested for reliability and validity (Appendix I).

To address other validity and reliability issues with archival data I compared all answers to questions pertaining to care and see if they produced the same results. I then compared answers to questions that deal with communication to determine if they produced the same results. I did this for questions in each category. I also addressed validity and reliability issues with archival data by using inter-observer reliability of occurrences. In order to complete this task, had another individual tally up the raw data to determine if the same frequency/tally/score totals are the same.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

Assumptions

Concerning assumptions, it was assumed that teachers answered the questions in an honest, careful manner and had sufficient knowledge and experience with students to be able to give accurate responses to interview questions. Archival data from the OSD were from only ninth-grade students, and those students who provided information on the surveys will have answered in an honest careful manner. Those students also will have understood English enough to provide accurate information.

Limitations

Archival data may not represent every ninth-grader in the OSD. Each quantitative research question can only be answered through the archival data provided; there were no follow-up to clear up any confusion. There are also limitations in finding the validity in the first semester survey. The survey was produced by teachers in the OSD; but, testing for validity did not take place. Limitations in qualitative data came with including all the high schools in the district. Administrators at certain school were reluctant to participate.

Scope

The scope of the study was the students' and teachers' perceptions of teacher care, respect, communication, and overall teacher-student relationship. The study focused on ninth grade students in high school setting in an urban Ohio school district. The study also focused on 15 teachers from the same school district. The results of the study only applied to school districts facing the same problem as this district.

Delimitations

Ninth grade is the only grade included. There are numerous teachers who teach ninth-grade students within the OSD; but, not all of them had the opportunity to participate in this study. This study was limited to 15 ninth-grade teachers in the OSD.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this portion of the section is to present the qualitative and quantitative findings of the study. The qualitative and quantitative findings were presented separately. In each case, the processes of data analysis and presentation were aligned with the research questions of the study and, where appropriate, supported with

tables, graphics, or other supporting material as necessary. The main quantitative findings of the study were as follows: (a) Students (*N*=163) had a moderate level of bonding with teachers. For example, the scale had a minimum value of 12 (indicating the minimal level of teacher bonding) and a maximum value of 60 (indicating the maximum level of bonding). The neutral value for the scale was 36. This indicated that students felt neutral or had a moderate bonding level with their teacher, as discussed further below; (b) the level of student bonding with teachers was not significantly affected by gender, race, and ninth grade readiness. An ANOVA test was conducted in order to gain insight on whether or not the moderate level of bonding (which was measured as a continuous variable and therefore suited to ANOVA rather than to a Kruskal-Wallis test) was affected by gender, race, and ninth grade readiness, as reported in Table 2 below. At a two-tailed α of 0.05, neither the demographic variables nor the readiness variable had an effect on index scores. Gender, race, and ninth grade readiness were ruled out as factors associated with significant differences in mean values of the student-teacher bond: and (c) bonding appeared to be decomposable into two distinct factors, one related to willingness to attend school, and the second related to aspects of daily interaction quality between the teacher and the student. The results will be discussed in more detail below.

The main qualitative findings of the study were as follows: (a) The ninth grade was a time of growth, with the experiences of ninth grade students determined largely by the magnitude of growth they faced and as part of the transition and how they chose to handle the challenges associated with growth; (b) teachers were dissatisfied with their administrators for providing inadequate support; (c) there was no communication

between eighth grade and ninth grade teachers; (d) teacher perceptions of rapport with students centered on a kind of sincerity that was projected through a combination of engagement and caring behaviors; and (e) teacher perceptions of communication with their students centered on empathetic, open communication, which was described as a crucial part of the teacher-student bond.

Quantitative Findings

There were three quantitative questions in the study. The responses to these scales indicated that students were inclined to have moderate bonding levels with teachers, and that bonding levels were not significantly higher or lower on the basis of race, gender, or academic readiness. Exploratory factor analysis also provided some reasons to believe that the construct of bonding can be decomposed into the factors of (a) willingness to attend school, and (b) aspects of daily interaction quality between the teacher and the student. Factor analysis was conducted in order to determine whether the bonding-related questions in the study could be conceptually grouped into a smaller number of categories, offering potential insights into whether there are distinct types of, or attitudes towards, bonding. Scale responses were responses to various prompts about how positively students felt about diverse aspects of teachers' caring behaviors, the quality of the teacher-student relationship, student enthusiasm, and other relevant factors.

Quantitative findings, Q1. In order to determine how ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the Gallup Student Poll that is designed to measure perceptions of teacher care and respect towards them, the following steps were taken. First, students were asked to respond to each of the following prompts:

- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.

These questions were transformed into a single index value to measure the construct of positive teacher-student relationships as understood through the Gallup data. Each of the questions in the scale was scored according to a Likert-style scheme using the following values:

1 = *Strongly disagree*

2 = *Disagree*

3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*

4 = *Agree*

5 = *Strongly agree*

This scale, because it was composed of three items on a 5-point Likert scale, had a minimum value of 3 (indicating the minimal level of perceived care and respect) and a maximum value of 15 (indicating the maximum level of perceived care and respect). The neutral value for the scale was 9; a score of 19 indicated a student's neutral evaluation of perceived care and respect, with scores higher than 9 indicating a positive view and scores lower than 9 indicating a negative view.

Once this variable was created, it was analyzed in numerous ways. The first step in analysis was to calculate measures of central tendency for the Gallup index value. There were 163 valid values for the index (M = 8.39, SD = 4.226). The skewness (skewness = -0.247) and kurtosis (kurtosis = -0.632) were close to 0, which, along with

the mean, suggested a fairly Gaussian distribution (Wallis, 2014). This assumption was checked with the construction of a histogram in Figure 1 below.

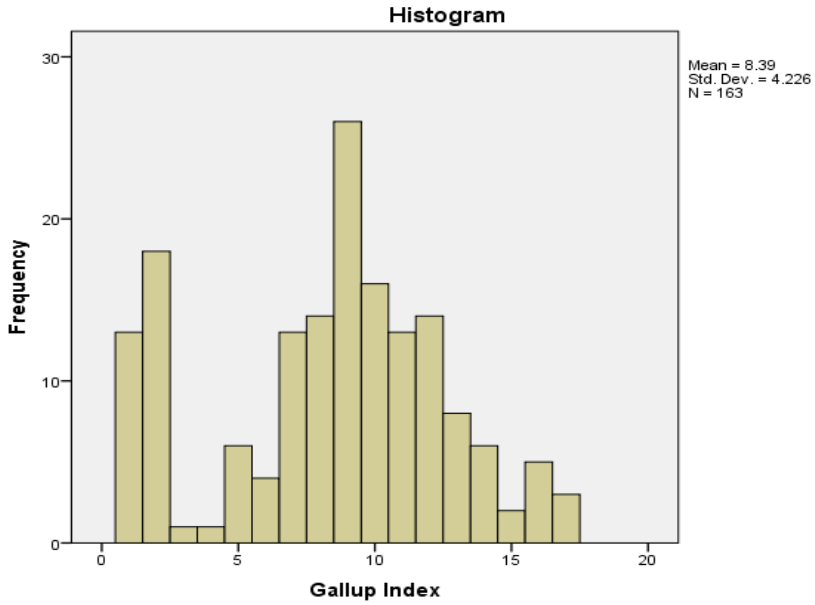

Figure 1. Histogram, Index of Student Perceptions of Teacher Care.

The distribution appeared Gaussian with an unexpectedly large number of values close to the very bottom of the scale. However, given the large standard deviation in relation to the mean, there were no outliers.

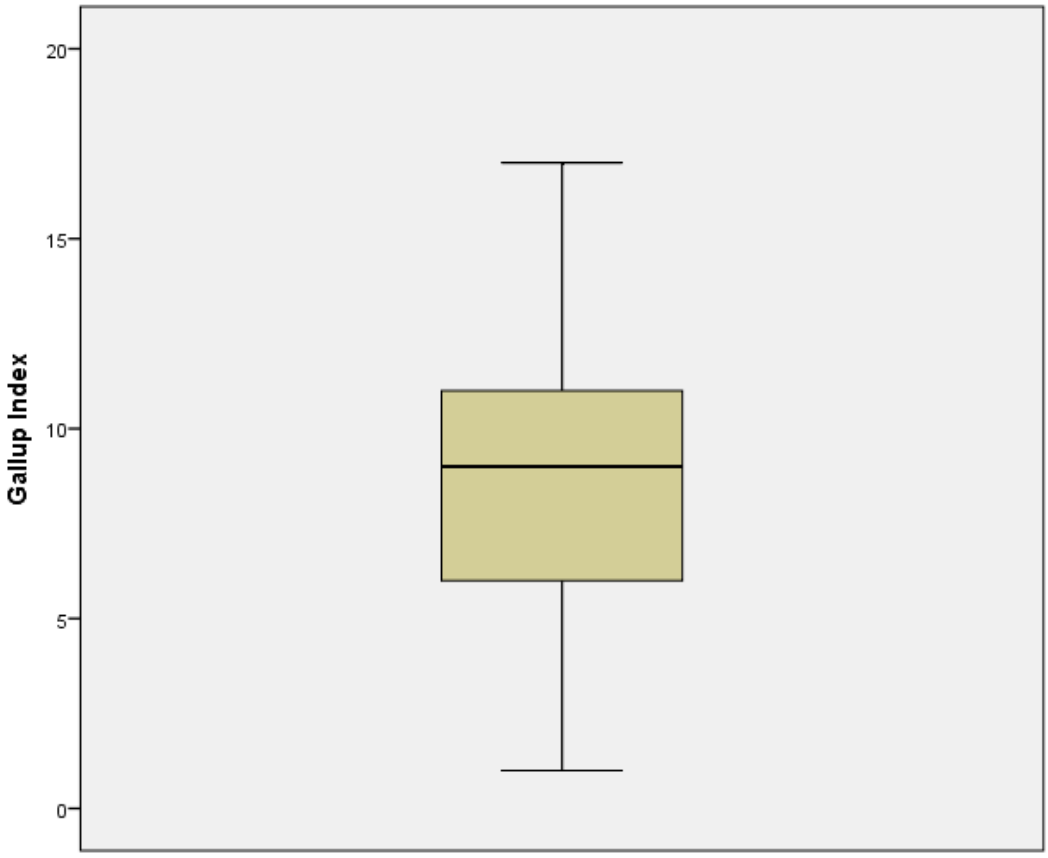

Figure 2. Boxplot, Gallup Index of Student Perceptions of Teacher Care.

Because there were only three questions in the Gallup Index, no factor analysis or Cronbach's α calculations were carried out. However, ANOVA was used to determine whether there were effects of race, gender, and ninth grade readiness on the Gallup score. An ANOVA model was appropriate because the Gallup score was continuous, and because the predictors were categorical. Although gender was dichotomous and could have been included in an independent samples *t*-test model, it was included in the ANOVA for purposes of interaction testing with the other polytomous variables.

The ANOVA, results of which are presented in Table 2 below, was not significant, $F(20) = 1.009$, $p = 0.457$, and the effect size was minuscule, adjusted $R2 = 0.001$.

Table 3

ANOVA: Race. Gender, and Ninth Grade Readiness Gallup Index, Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*
Corrected Model	378.731	20	18.937	1.009	.457
Intercept	1901.975	1	1901.975	101.329	.000
Gender	7.130	1	7.130	.380	.539
Race	65.108	4	16.277	.867	.486
Readiness	76.195	4	19.049	1.015	.402
Gender * Race	18.036	2	9.018	.480	.620
Gender * Readiness	1.771	2	.886	.047	.954
Race * Readiness	113.191	4	28.298	1.508	.204
Gender * Race * Readiness	80.237	3	26.746	1.425	.239
Error	2327.517	124	18.770		
Total	13191.000	145			
Corrected Total	2706.248	144			

At a two-tailed α of 0.05, neither the demographic variables nor the readiness variables affected index scores. Gender, race, and ninth grade readiness were therefore ruled out as factors that influenced student perceptions of teacher care. The ninth grade First Semester survey analysis that follows supported this result.

Quantitative findings, Q2. In order to determine how ninth graders enrolled in the OSD respond to items on the ninth grade first semester survey designed to measure

student perceptions of teacher-student relationships, the following steps were taken. First, students were asked to respond to each of the following prompts:

- I believe my teachers have an interest in what I like
- I believe my teachers understand me
- My teachers make it easy to adjust to ninth grade
- I can talk to my teachers about what is happening in life
- I can talk to my teachers about my plans after high school
- I believe my teachers respect my culture
- I believe my teachers understand teenagers
- I can stay after school for tutoring if I need help
- Sometimes I don’t want to go to class because of the teacher
- Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher
- I believe I can talk to my teachers if I am having difficulties in class
- I believe my teachers are preparing me for 10th grade

These questions were transformed into a single index value to measure the construct of positive teacher-student relationships. In order to do so, two of the questions (a) Sometimes I don’t want to go to class because of the teacher, and (b) Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher, had to be transformed. Each of the questions in the scale was scored according to a Likert-style scheme using the following values:

1 = *Strongly disagree*

2 = *Disagree*

3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*

4 = *Agree*

5 = *Strongly agree*

In order to accommodate the two questions that were worded negatively, the scale was altered to the following for those two questions:

1 = *Strongly agree*

2 = *Agree*

3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*

4 = *Disagree*

5 = *Strongly disagree*

This transformation made it possible to create a single scale from the items. This scale, because it was composed of 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale, had a minimum value of 12 (indicating the minimal level of teacher-student bonding) and a maximum value of 60 (indicating the maximum level of teacher-student bonding). The neutral value for the scale was 36; a score of 36 indicated a student's neutral evaluation of teacher-student bonding, with scores higher than 36 indicating a positive view and scores lower than 36 indicating a negative view. Because this scale was continuous, it was suitable for use in an ANOVA instead of a Kruskal-Wallis test.

Once this variable was created, it was analyzed in numerous ways. The first step in analysis was to calculate measures of central tendency for the index value. There were 163 valid values for the index (M = 36.6258, SD = 8.26049). The skewness (skewness =

-0.276) and kurtosis (kurtosis = 0.049) were close to 0, which, along with the mean, suggested a fairly Gaussian distribution. This assumption was checked with the construction of a histogram in Figure 4 below.

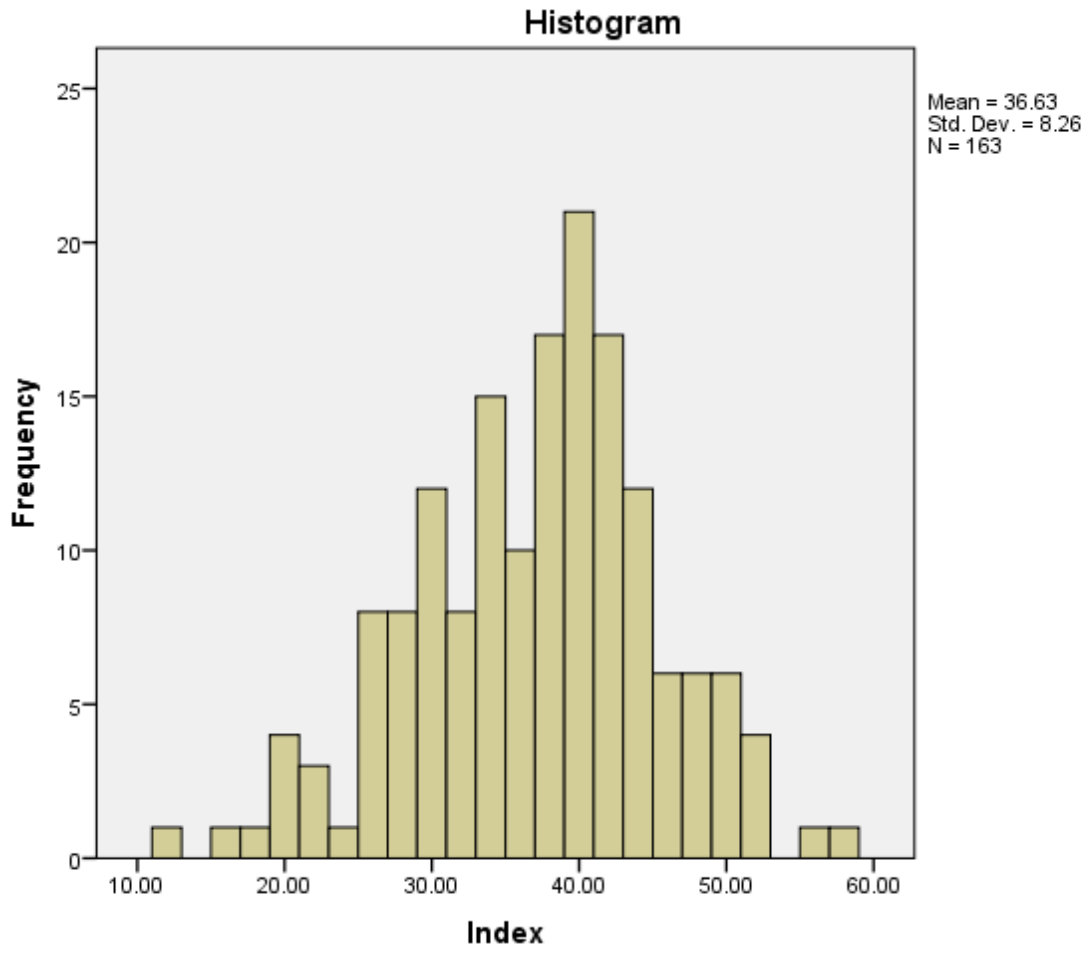

Figure 3. Histogram, Index of Student-Teacher Bonding.

As expected, the distribution was Gaussian. A boxplot was utilized to identify any outliers in the data set. There was one participant (#52) who was an outlier, with a bonding score more than two standard deviations below the mean.

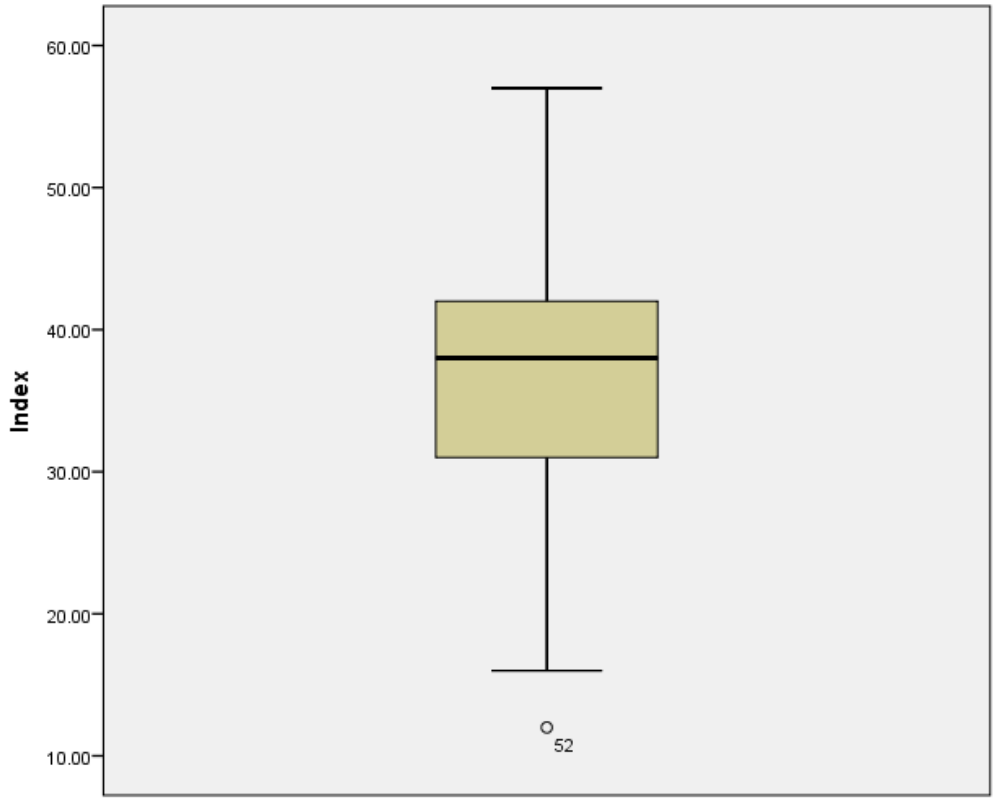

Figure 4. Boxplot, Index of Student-Teacher Bonding.

Because there was only one outlier in a sample of 163 students, the outlier was not removed for purposes of further analysis.

The next step in analysis was to determine whether, through the application of principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation, the construct of bonding could be decomposed into other factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy for the Index was 0.844 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi 2 = 642.816$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the sample was large enough to validate factor analysis. The rotated component matrix, presented in Table 3 below, indicates the existence of two factors in the index.

Table 3

Rotated Component Matrix, Index

	Component	
	1	2
I believe my teachers respect my culture	.716	
I believe I can talk to my teachers if I am having difficulties in class	.696	
I can talk to my teachers about my plans after high school	.694	
I believe my teachers understand me	.691	.450
My teachers make it easy to adjust to ninth grade	.639	.388
I Believe my teachers have an interest in what I like	.637	.300
I can stay after school for tutoring if I need help	.637	-.150
I believe my teachers are preparing me for 10th grade	.636	
I believe my teachers understand teenagers	.563	.400
I can talk to my teachers about what is happening in life	.444	.401
Sometimes I don't want to go to class because of the teacher	-.177	.818
Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher		.808

The negatively worded questions, (a) Sometimes I don't want to go to class because of the teacher, and (b) Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher, weighted heavily on their own factor. The second factor appeared to be related to willingness to attend school whereas the first factor was related to aspects of daily interaction quality between the teacher and the student. After the PCA, the index scale's internal reliability was measured through Cronbach's α, which was calculated as 0.822, a fairly high value. The index scale therefore had internal reliability.

Given that the mean value of the index (M = 36.6258, SD = 8.26049) was very close to the scale midpoint of 36, a one-sample t test was conducted in order to determine whether the observed mean was significantly different from the scale midpoint of 36. The observed mean was not significantly difficult from the scale midpoint of 36, p = 0.335. However, further analyses were carried out on the scale based on following covariates: (a) gender, (b) race, and (c) readiness for ninth grade. The first analytical approach taken was to treat race, readiness for ninth grade, and gender as categorical independent variables and apply them in an ANOVA with the index score as the dependent variable. In the ANOVA model, effects of gender, race, and ninth grade readiness, along with interactions between these variables, were all considered for their effects on mean index score. The results of the ANOVA, whose results are presented in Table 4 below, were not significant, $F(22) = 1.285$, p = 0.194, and the effect size was minuscule, adjusted $R2$ = 0.041.

Table 4

ANOVA: Race. Gender, and Ninth Grade Readiness Index, Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*Df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*
Corrected Model	1774.407	22	80.655	1.285	.194
Intercept	35795.563	1	35795.563	570.217	.000
Readiness	524.933	4	131.233	2.091	.086
Gender	59.648	1	59.648	.950	.332
Race	399.544	4	99.886	1.591	.181
Readiness * Gender	65.118	2	32.559	.519	.597
Readiness * Race	243.127	5	48.625	.775	.570
Gender * Race	104.714	2	52.357	.834	.437
Readiness * Gender * Race	197.238	4	49.309	.785	.537
Error	7846.917	125	62.775		
Total	212974.000	148			
Corrected Total	9621.324	147			

At an α of 0.05, neither the demographic variables nor the readiness variable had an effect on index scores. Gender, race, and ninth grade readiness were ruled out as factors that influenced student perceptions of the student-teacher bond. Because the ANOVA was not significant, there was no pressing need for post hoc tests, but, in case there was some level of readiness or race for which index scores were significantly different, Tukey's post hoc test was carried out for these two variables. Because gender had only two possible values, it was not eligible for Tukey's post hoc test (Natrella, 2013).

The Tukey's post hoc tests for readiness are presented in Table 5 below. The results indicate that, at a two-tailed α of 0.05, there was no level of readiness significantly different from any other level of readiness in mean index value. This finding, in

conjunction with the findings presented in Table 4, implies that student readiness upon entering a grade is not a prerequisite for understanding the quality of the teacher-student bond.

Table 5

Tukey's Post Hoc Test, Effects of Readiness Level on Index Value

(I) I was not ready for ninth grade	(J) I was not ready for ninth grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	-3.0385	1.55385	.294	-7.3395	1.2626
	Neither disagree nor agree	2.0934	1.94785	.819	-3.2982	7.4851
	Agree	5.2363	3.12613	.453	-3.4169	13.8894
	Strongly Agree	-.1923	4.66154	1.000	-13.0954	12.7108
Disagree	Strongly Disagree	3.0385	1.55385	.294	-1.2626	7.3395
	Neither disagree nor agree	5.1319	2.14451	.124	-.8041	11.0679
	Agree	8.2747	3.25231	.088	-.7277	17.2771
	Strongly Agree	2.8462	4.74708	.975	-10.2938	15.9861
Neither disagree nor agree	Strongly Disagree	-2.0934	1.94785	.819	-7.4851	3.2982
	Disagree	-5.1319	2.14451	.124	-11.0679	.8041
	Agree	3.1429	3.45792	.893	-6.4287	12.7144
	Strongly Agree	-2.2857	4.89024	.990	-15.8219	11.2505
Agree	Strongly Disagree	-5.2363	3.12613	.453	-13.8894	3.4169
	Disagree	-8.2747	3.25231	.088	-17.2771	.7277
	Neither disagree nor agree	-3.1429	3.45792	.893	-12.7144	6.4287
	Strongly Agree	-5.4286	5.46745	.858	-20.5625	9.7053
Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	.1923	4.66154	1.000	-12.7108	13.0954
	Disagree	-2.8462	4.74708	.975	-15.9861	10.2938
	Neither disagree nor agree	2.2857	4.89024	.990	-11.2505	15.8219
	Agree	5.4286	5.46745	.858	-9.7053	20.5625

Note: The index values were calculated on J. The I-J variable is a calculation of difference for the purposes of post hoc testing.

Tukey's post hoc test on a race's effect on the index value yielded non-significant results as well. As a final check on the reliability of the two scales utilized in this study, they were included in a linear regression model, with Gallup index score regressed on the ninth grade survey index (see Figure 5 below). A least squares regression line indicates that the relationship appeared to be both positive and significant.

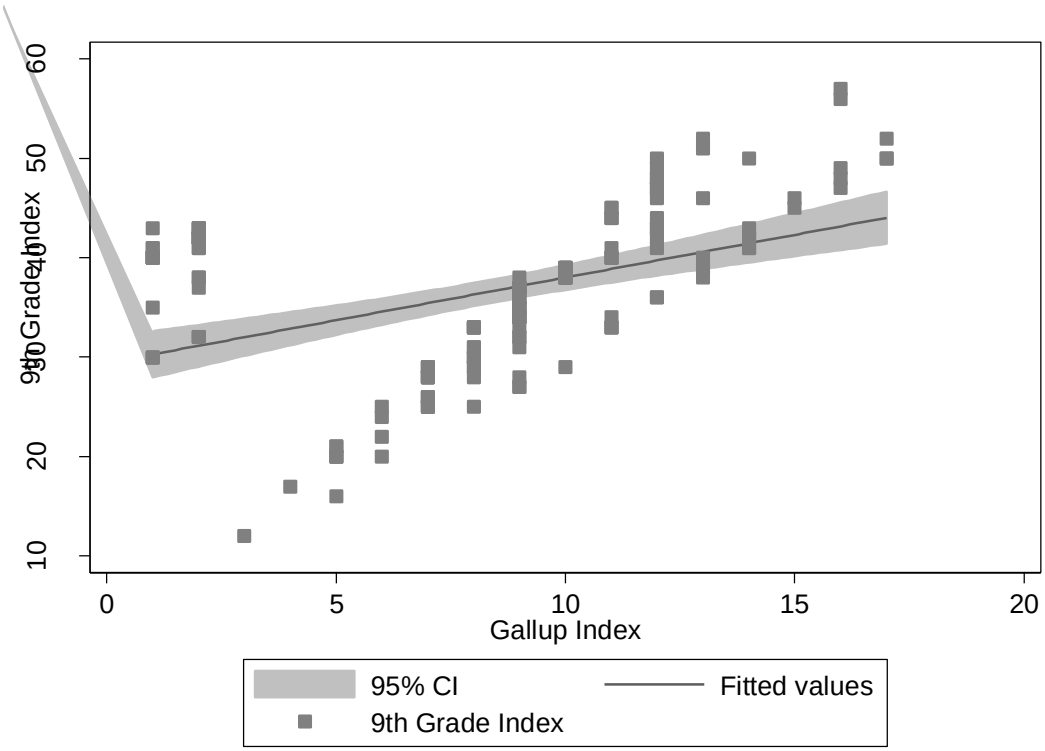

Figure 5. Scatterplot of Gallup Index on ninth Grade Index.

The regression was significant ($p < 0.001$) but had a weak effect size, adjusted $R2 = 0.1879$. There is some evidence that these two scales are measuring a related concept. The regression equation was as follows:

$$\textit{Ninth Grade Index} = (\textit{Gallup Index})(0.858) + 29.426$$

The main quantitative findings of the study can be summarized as follows: (a) Students had a moderate level of bonding with teachers; (b) the level of student bonding with teachers was not significantly affected by gender, race, or ninth grade readiness; and (c) bonding appeared to factorize (in terms of weighting distinctly on two distinct components emerging from factor analysis), one related to willingness to attend school and the second related to aspects of daily interaction quality between the teacher and the

student. These quantitative findings provided a means of understanding student perceptions of the teacher-student bond. The qualitative findings of the study provided teachers' perspectives on the phenomenon of bonding.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings of the study have been presented as follows. The major themes arising from the analysis are summarized. Each theme is described in a subsection with supporting examples and discussion.

There were six qualitative questions in the study:

1. What are ninth grade teachers' perceptions of their students and their overall freshman experience?
2. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their communications with their students?
3. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their rapport with their students?
4. What strategies are effective and what strategies are ineffective when building rapport?
5. How well do ninth grade teachers feel they communicate with eighth grade teachers concerning incoming ninth grade students?
6. What are ninth grade teacher's perceptions of administrative support during the transition period and during the school year?

Data to answer the qualitative questions was obtained from focus groups. Answers were provided separately for each question. The following themes emerged from qualitative analysis: (a) The ninth grade was a time of growth, with the experiences

of ninth grade students determined largely by the magnitude of growth they faced as part of the transition, and how they chose to handle the challenges associated with growth; (b) teachers were dissatisfied with their administrators for providing inadequate support; (c) there was no communication between eighth grade and ninth grade teachers; (d) teacher perceptions of rapport with students centered on a kind of sincerity that was projected through a combination of engagement and caring behaviors; and (e) teacher perceptions of communication with their students centered on empathetic, open communication, which was described as a crucial part of the teacher-student bond.

Qualitative findings, Q1. The focus of this question was on teachers' general perceptions of their students and their students' experiences in the ninth grade. This question was answered through the use of line-by-line coding that revealed keywords that, in turn, were used to identify themes. Each theme was associated with representative quotes. The keywords, themes, and representative quotes for this question have been summarized in Table 6 below. Overall, the findings suggest that students tended to improve over the course of the year and that there were many possible reasons for such improvement. These reasons can be grouped into categories regarding student development, teacher management, administrative support, and the other dynamics listed in Table 6. The overarching theme to emerge from this question was that of growth. The experiences of ninth grade students were determined largely by (a) the magnitude of growth they faced and as part of the transition, and (b) how they chose to handle the challenges associated with growth.

Table 6

Analytical Table, Qualitative Q1

Keywords	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Getting used to high school	Adjustments to high school: eustress / distress	"We are throwing a lot at them. For example, start thinking about your future, where do you want to go what do you want to be?"
		"It takes them a while to adjust."
Transition Change	Changes in personal accountability, self-efficacy, self-direction	"I have to do something now. I can't just ride along."
		"They have to take charge of what they are doing in class and that's a big deal for them."
Peer pressure Mature Grow Culture shock	Developmental maturation and associated challenges	"It's a lot of trying to find or coming to a sense of who they really are so they kind of experiment with a lot of different things a lot of different attitudes."
		"Some of them I think a lot of them have really come into who they really are."
		"We start dealing with the drugs and alcohol and tobacco and sex so it brings out all kinds of issues so it hits a lot of nerves. A lot of them got to make decisions."
Behavior Change Work ethic	Intellectual maturation and associated challenges	"I would say being better organized. I would say being able to articulate their thoughts a little bit better…work ethic. Higher- level questioning."
		"They are more focused now at least in my class in terms of quality of work."
		"To know academically what was coming, study skills, study habits, you know how hard the work was going to be and how difficult it was going to be from the elementary and middle school setting to the high school setting. How demanding things were going to be for them. I just don't think they transitioned well."

Qualitative findings, Q2. The focus of this question was on teachers' perceptions of communication with their students. As with the first qualitative question, a table was used to analyze and evaluate the data. The most important theme to emerge from this question was of empathetic, open communication. These were described as a crucial part of the teacher-student bond.

Table 7

Analytical Table, Qualitative Q2

Keywords	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Culture Immigrant	Cross-cultural / immigrant communication challenges	"We have some students who are immigrants and their experience is that the teacher is way up here and I don't ask that teacher questions."
Questions	Difficulties in calibrating the appropriate quantity / quality of communication	"I had students ask me a million questions in class. I had students say I don't want to ask a question in class because it makes me feel dumb."
Caring Natural Comfortable Nurtured Open Counseling Counselor	Empathetic, open communication	"If you just say you know 'hey man I know you're going through a tough time right now but you really need to calm down because you're distracting the whole class with your behavior.' That tone really calms them down, they respond well to it." "Well I had to make them comfortable enough to be able to open up to me, so now that they know me they know they can come to me with anything and they can openly ask questions and not be afraid of being embarrassed or of asking a dumb question, so my kids will pretty much ask anything now." "I call counselors directly myself to get kids the help they need so I've become a counselor even though I'm not a counselor in many cases." "We as teachers need to make sure we open the line of communication."

Qualitative findings, Q3. The focus of this question was on teachers' perceptions of rapport with their students. As with the first and second qualitative questions, a table was used to analyze and evaluate the data. The main underlying theme was sincerity, projected through a combination of engagement and caring behaviors.

Table 8

Analytical Table, Qualitative Q3

Keywords	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Just talk Find out Open the door Open Approachable	Sincere, open engagement	"Just talk to them, I mean to try and build relationships with them, just talk to them.' "I think just finding out about the kids, a little bit about, you know, about their background." "Once you open up that door it makes be a lot more smoother, a lot of things more smoother because they feel that I can trust you. They feel good with it." "We have a lot of dialogue, we do a lot of dialoging." "The kids know they can come to me for anything and everything." "I try to be open and transparent and approachable."
Relationships Care	Projection of authentic, warm feelings	"They gotta know that you like them, you care about them." "I try to be consistent, I try to care, I try to be committed, let them know that I am here for them."

Qualitative findings, Q4. The focus of this question was on teachers' perceptions of communication with eighth grade teachers regarding incoming ninth grade students. As with the first, second, and third qualitative questions, a table was used to analyze and evaluate the data. There was a consensus between all of the teachers in that there was no communication between eighth grade and ninth grade teachers. There was one slight exception, as one of the teachers noted that, if there were particularly difficult eighth grade students transitioning to high school, a teacher from eighth grade might call.

Table 9

Analytical Table, Qualitative Q4

Keywords	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Another world No communication Never Doesn't happen	Absence of communication	"It's like they're really in another world over there." "Communication is zilch." "How well do we communicate? Not at all." "We have never had the opportunity, never been asked to." "I've been here 20-some years and never had the opportunity to speak to another teacher." "No one's ever asked me to." "It doesn't happen."

Qualitative findings, Q5. The focus of this question was on teachers' perceptions of administrative support during the transition period and during the school year. As with the first, second, third, and fourth qualitative questions, a table was used to analyze and evaluate the data. The main theme to emerge was teacher dissatisfaction with administrations, which were portrayed as doing little to provide adequate support.

Table 10

Analytical Table, Qualitative Q5

Keywords	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Worst class	Administrative Actions Related to Expulsion / Discipline	"We got rid of some of the bad apples."
Transition Orientation	Administrative support for transition and orientation programs	
Absent	Absence or insufficiency of administrative support	"Administrative support has been willfully absent. Noticeably different with the current administration. There's no way around it. It's gone downhill. We are not the same school we were five years ago, not even close to it." "There is more support for the students than the teachers. There is no administrative follow up on the rules." "There should be consequences for behavior. There used to be consequences for the rules." "no consistent expectations no consistent consequences."

Summary of Results

I focused on how ninth-grade students and teachers perceive their rapport with each other and provide insight on how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. I first collected and analyzed archival data in order to address ninth graders' experiences. Archival data helped to focus qualitative inquiry. I then took the results of the quantitative analysis and developed interview questions for ninth-grade teachers. I interviewed 15 teachers. It is important to get a clear understanding of the ninth-grade experience and rapport amongst ninth-grade teachers and students. In order to get a clear picture of the entire relationship, data were collected from both teachers and students.

The main quantitative findings of the study were as follows: (a) students had a moderate level of bonding with teachers; (b) the level of student bonding with teachers was not significantly affected by gender, race, or ninth grade readiness; and (c) bonding appeared to be decomposable into two distinct factors, one related to willingness to attend school and the second related to the quality of daily interaction between the teacher and the student.

The main qualitative findings of the study were as follows: (a) the ninth grade was a time of growth, with the experiences of ninth grade students determined largely by the magnitude of growth they faced, as part of the transition, and how they chose to handle the challenges associated with growth; (b) teachers were dissatisfied with their administrators for providing inadequate support; (c) there was no communication between eighth grade and ninth grade teachers; (d) teacher perceptions of rapport with

students centered on a kind of sincerity that was projected through a combination of engagement and caring behaviors; and (e) teacher perceptions of communication with their students centered on empathetic, open communication, which was described as a crucial part of the teacher-student bond.

Synthesized with each other, these findings suggest that the formation of a bond is probably best understood as the outcome of individual teacher-student interactions, with demographics (race and gender) as well as academic preparedness playing no significant role. This finding appears to be at odds with empirical studies in which demographics have been found to be predictors of bonding. However, there are likely to be many different ways in which bonding can be achieved based on considerable variation in (a) teachers' approaches, (b) the overall supportiveness of the environment in which bonding takes place, and (c) local factors impacting the student-teacher dynamic. Given this context, the importance of the research literature lies in its illumination of the circumstances under which teaching-student bonding thrives. The research literature can thus be read as shedding light on how and why the problem, failed student-teacher bonding, occurs and what might be done to remediate it.

A possible barrier to forming positive student-teacher bond could be a lack of communication. Because students scored a rather neutral scale score when it came to student bonding, it can be concluded that maybe the communication between teachers and students is not clear. Some students are getting what they need (perhaps in terms of clarity, affective signals, or other desiderata of communication) and some are not. When it came to the teacher responses most of them said that they try to communicate, but that

sometimes culture and language can be a barrier. This can be a possible conclusion to the neutral scale score. Another possible barrier may be support. Overall, many of the teachers felt that they had no support from other teachers or administration. Teaching can be difficult, and without support the classroom environment will be effected. Creating a system that includes better communication and support may allow for a better chance of catering to the needs of students and therefore creating a better student teacher bond. The empirical literature (Bondy, Ross, Hambacher, & Acosta, 2013; Bonner, 2014; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Houchen, 2013; Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008; Xu, Coats, & Davidson, 2012) suggests that a strong bond can influence students to work harder, become more engaged, and achieve other appropriate behavioral goals within an academic setting.

Summary

Teachers and students in the OSD are finding it hard to build rapport with each other, for reasons that are likely to be rooted in communication satisfaction. The purpose of this sequential mixed methods case study was to explore ninth grade teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student rapport. A sequential mixed method research design was used in this study because the question that this inquiry seeks to investigate was answered through both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2012). In this study, both methods were utilized to investigate questions relating to ninth graders' and their teachers' perceptions of their relationship with each other, particularly with regard to perceptions of care, rapport, respect, and overall ninth grade experience. The data for this study was both quantitative and qualitative, derived from archival data and a teacher

focus group. Participants included 15 teachers from various schools in the OSD. Qualitative data were categorized based on themes and quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The findings in Section 2 indicated that student-teacher bonds appear to be rooted in the quality of teacher-student relationships, which are themselves subject to the dynamics of school settings and other background factors. Based on this central finding, the main issues to explore are (a) what determines the quality of teacher-student bonding, and (b) what can be done to improve the quality of teacher-student bonding.

Based on the research results, the OSD can further investigate what professional developments can be put into place. The potential for social change can come from the ways teachers approach ninth graders differently. Section 3 consists of a project, and evaluation plan for the project, with particular focus on (a) the relationship between the project and the problem, (b) a review of the literature relevant to the project and the problem, (c) implementation of the project, and (d) evaluation of the project.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The outcome of this project study is a comprehensive and detailed professional development plan (see Appendix A for a white paper detailing the plan) to be implemented within the school. The PD will address communication amongst teacher and students, teachers and teacher, and teachers and administrators. The PD will also address interaction issues that are sometimes found in teacher-student relationships. In addition to being supported by the findings of my research, the project genre was chosen for two primary reasons.

First, there is evidence that making changes to teachers' orientations vis-à-vis their students, peers, and principals requires the support of a community (Bonner, 2014; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Newton, Leonard, Evans, & Eastburn, 2012; Sullivan, Rothwell, & Balasi, 2013). Teacher orientation can consist of a variety of subsections which include: views on different cultures, how economic status effects learning, how to communicate with students, and the like. These orientations suggest the appropriateness of professional development seminars as a project.

Second, there is evidence that the determinants of teacher-student bonding, teacher-teacher communication, and teacher-principal communication depend on local factors and dynamics (Bondy et al., 2013; Bonner, 2014; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Houchen, 2013; Ross et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2012), which means that teacher change ought to be guided not only by what is generally known but what has been demonstrated to be true within the context of a specific school.

The results of the research provided specific insights about issues that may be impacting a positive bond between teachers and students in the OSD. A review of the literature indicated that such insights were best applied in a collaborative, community-oriented manner such as professional development, with the content of this intervention shaped by OSD student and teacher perceptions about student bonding. It is important to make sure the findings from the data collected in the OSD are reflected in the PD offered, so that the PD can offer relevant information that can offer possible solutions to the lack of communication, and support discussed by the teachers, the moderate level of student bonding presented by the students, and the overall student-teacher relationship.

Description and Goals

The goal of the PD plan is to provide information to better assist educators in order to positively affect the teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher principal communications by applying effective communication skills in and outside the classroom, applying warm demanding with their students, and understanding the keys to emotional intelligence. The project is a comprehensive professional development plan that consists of a training plan with individual modules. These modules were designed to build knowledge and skills among teacher participants to help them: (a) to utilizing effective communication skills, (b) to administer level setting and accountability, (c) to change management, and (d) to understand systems theory. By the end of the training teachers should have the tools needed to interact and communicate with their students in a warm demanding manner and students should, therefore, have a more positive perception of their relationship with their teachers. This objective is supported by the

findings for my project because literature in my second literature review indicate that when teachers communicate with students in a caring, yet demanding way they push themselves to do better (Bonner, 2014; Davis, Gabelman, & Wingfield, 2011; Ford & Sassi, 2014). By the end of the training, teachers and administrators should also have the tools to communicate with each other what supports are needed to ensure best practices learned in the training sessions are reflected in the classroom.

All teachers will be required to undergo training in eight modules, with a total commitment time of four hours per module. There are eight training sessions and one continuous learning session in the professional development plan. The purposes of the first eight training sessions are to (a) disseminate findings about observed best practices in teacher-student bonding, teacher-teacher communication, and teacher-administrator communication based on a combination of research consensus and findings from the research described in Section 2; (b) gather further inputs from teachers, including critical discussion related to the literature as well as the study findings; (c) specify ways in which the study findings and research best practices can be applied to the school environment; (d) build teacher consensus for, and administrative support of, change; (e) create and execute a change plan designed to improve teacher-student, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administrator interaction best practices; and (f) report on, and maintain accountability for, changes in teacher practice. The purpose of the ongoing module, which occurs twice a year, is to ensure that teachers who have already been trained return to sessions in which novice teachers are continuing to pass on their knowledge, be accountable, serve as guides and mentors, and adding to the conversation.

Rationale

The data analysis in Section 2 revealed that there are some specific strategies, approaches, and orientations that appear to work best in terms of teacher-student, teacher-teacher, and teacher-principal communication. Accordingly, a PD approach was chosen in order to share these empirical findings, ground them in the existing literature, and take practical steps towards understanding and improving the overall communication climate at the school, from within a supportive community structure. This method was chosen based on its ability to be designed based on the specific educational needs of the teachers within the school system studied. Creswell (2013) rationalized this method by acknowledging that, although broad research utilizing the theory of nomothesis is scientifically necessary in some cases, utilizing an idiographic approach is more suited for a project where in the environment may have overwhelming external influence. When local influences have the potential to heavily influence the data, a broad conclusion regarding the overall population has the potential to be incorrect. The literature review supports these findings because communication was stated as a hurdle.

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature is intended to (a) be an analysis of research and theory with a view to explaining how the genre was appropriate to the problem, (b) provide an explanation of how criteria from research and theory were utilized to guide development of the project, and (c) analyze how recently published theory and research support the content of the project and findings. Each of these aims will be addressed in a separate section of the literature review. The review of the literature was framed by the results of

my research (explained in Section 2) and was intended to provide critical information to help me define and develop the project outcome of the project study.

In my research I learned that there was, in fact, problems with rapport among staff and students and some communication issues amongst staff members and administration. The results drove the development of my project, and the where to start my second literature review. The review gave me insight on warm demanding and emotional intelligence, discussed further below. Reviewing the data from my research, the first literature review, and second literature allowed me to develop a Professional development to address the initial problem discussed in section one.

How Research and Theory Guided Project Development

The research including, first literature review, data collection and analysis presented in section one and two guide project development because the project goals and outcomes are a direct reflection of what was learned during research. During the research process I learned that a lack of rapport affects students in many negative ways including: how they communicate with teachers they do not trust, their attachment to school, classroom, and sometimes work ethic in the classroom. Because of this, the data collection focused on those same topics. After receiving the results from the data analysis I knew that the district did in fact lack in the areas of teacher student communication, creating a classroom environment of trust and caring, and other aspects of rapport. This framed my thoughts and helped me to begin to develop my project. I next had to ensure my second literature reflected the findings in Section 2.

Connection Between Previous Research and Theories and Section 2 Findings

In order to explore the connections between previous research and theories and the Section 2 findings, it was useful to summarize the findings and then examine them individually in the light of previous scholarly work. The quantitative and qualitative findings were explored separately. Both research and theory will be brought to bear on the results. The following search strings were used in the identification of appropriate literature: *warm demanding, warm demanding AND teaching, professional development AND teaching, communication AND professional development AND teaching, professional learning community AND teaching, nonviolent communication, student engagement, student-teaching bonding, teacher-administrator communication,* and *student engagement AND teaching.*

Warm demanding. The first quantitative question in the study was as follows: How did ninth graders enrolled in the Ohio School District respond to items on the Gallup Student Poll that is designed to measure perceptions of teacher care and respect towards them. The finding associated with this question was that students had a neutral view of teachers, meaning that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the sum of the following prompts:

- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.

It was found that gender, race, and ninth grade readiness did not influence student perceptions of teacher care.

The research literature contains a great deal of material on the topic of teacher care and respect. One of the most relevant findings from both the theoretical and empirical literature is that the concepts of care and respect can be collapsed into a single category, that of warm demanding (Bonner, 2014; Davis, Gabelman, & Wingfield, 2011; Ford & Sassi, 2014). The orientation of warm demanding, as its name suggests, combines the teacher's caring and demanding behaviors. Students respond best to the combination of these two orientations (Bonner, 2014; Davis et al., 2011; Ford & Sassi, 2014). Students who perceive a high degree of care from the teacher, but not enough demanding, will not necessarily push themselves to higher levels of achievement. Similarly, students who perceive that much is being demanded from them by teachers who are not caring have little incentive to work harder or to take other actions associated with academic success.

The three chosen questions from the Gallup poll seem to measure a rudimentary form of warm demanding. The first prompt, "My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important," appears to measure the teacher's demanding behaviors, whereas the third prompt, "I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future," appears more aligned with caring. The second prompt, "At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day," might reflect either warmth or caring, depending on how it is interpreted by the student.

There is substantial variability in students' perceptions of warm demanding (Bondy et al., 2013; Bonner, 2014; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Houchen, 2013; Ross et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2012)). The same teacher might be identified as a warm demanded by one student but not by another. This kind of variability is apparent in both the qualitative and

quantitative Section 2 findings. Although there were no outliers, there were only three questions in what might be considered warm demanding scale. It is important to note that the students who provided data for this question have a common core of teachers. The variability in their responses illustrates the likelihood that a teacher's warm demanding orientation is recognized differentially by some students.

The same kind of variability was observed in the questions that were taken to constitute the student-teacher bonding scale, which were as follows:

- I believe my teachers have an interest in what I like
- I believe my teachers understand me
- My teachers make it easy to adjust to ninth grade
- I can talk to my teachers about what is happening in life
- I can talk to my teachers about my plans after high school
- I believe my teachers respect my culture
- I believe my teachers understand teenagers
- I can stay after school for tutoring if I need help
- Sometimes I don't want to go to class because of the teacher
- Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher
- I believe I can talk to my teachers if I am having difficulties in class
- I believe my teachers are preparing me for 10th grade

There is substantial variability in the bonding of teachers and students. This aspect of the research literature was confirmed by the Section 2 qualitative findings. However, the findings in themselves were not sufficient to determine why some students

experienced a higher level of bonding than others. There are numerous possibilities discussed in the literature, some of which can be used by the research site in order to better understand the nature of student-teacher relationships.

Ford and Sassi (2013) related teacher-student bonding and warm demanding to the issue of shared ethnicity, which is itself a component of the theory of warm demanding. American social and educational environments remain racialized, and students can often feel vulnerable towards, or mistrusting of, teachers of a different ethnicity. Ford and Sassi pointed out that there are specific ways of expressing both warmth and caring among African Americans; non-African American teachers who lack this aspect of cultural literacy might fail to build bonds with their African American students.

Ethnicity is not the only possible predictor of variability in teacher-student bonding and warm demanding. Some scholars have placed an emphasis on teachers' own inability to be war demanders because of a lack of familiarity with this orientation. Salkovsky and Romi (2015) discovered that teachers felt their ability to project caring beliefs and uphold demanding standards was compromised by general stress, a lack of time, and a high workload. Bonner and Adams (2012) found that it was not merely external pressure, but also an internal failure to adopt the right kinds of communication, knowledge, trust, and constant reflection that was responsible for teachers' difficulties in bonding strongly with students. Bonner and Adams called attention to teachers' improper use of syntax and body language, a lack of personal knowledge of students, lowered trust, and non-reflective approaches to practice as compromising the teacher's ability to bond

with students. The Section 2 quantitative findings indicated that some students have very low bonding levels with teachers. There are many possible reasons for such low levels of bonding explored in the empirical literature. These reasons can be understood under the larger theoretical heading of warm demanding, which teachers might be failing to provide or students to appreciate.

There is a consensus in the empirical literature that warm demanding is an orientation that can be taught as part of professional development (Bondy et al., 2013; Bonner, 2014; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Houchen, 2013; Ross et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2012). The presumption behind developing warm demanding is that both (a) attitudes and inner orientations, and (b) external manifestations of behavior that reflect warm demanding can be taught and developed. There are likely to be cases in which, because of factors such as burnout or bias, teachers do not feel warmth. However, except in extreme cases, warmth has been noted to be a quality that can be developed through systematic means. In other cases, teachers have been noted to engage in less demanding behaviors because of burnout, disengagement from work, or other factors. In such cases, too, professional development can assist teachers in recognizing and implementing the appropriate demanding orientations and behaviors.

In doing so, an important point to bear in mind is that warm demanding is not only a personal quality but also a component of the larger educational system. PD activities that are disconnected from the larger school setting are most likely to not succeed (Gusky & Yoon, 2009; Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013). PD activities have to engage participants in activities that relate to what they are experiencing and their

colleagues within their school setting. This means that principals and other administrators need to be included in professional development activities involving warm demanding, so that they can better understand how to support teachers (Bonner, 2014).

Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) appears to play an important role in short- and long-term trust-building between students, school personnel, and principals (Moore, 2009). Theories of EI will be examined and applied to these relationships. Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) provided a concise but insightful definition of EI as

> the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. [EI] includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (p. 297)

Based on this definition, Mayer et al. supported the so-called four-branch theory of EI, in which EI is conceptualized as consisting of (a) perceiving and expressing emotion, (b) assimilating emotion in thought, (c) understanding emotions, and (d) reflectively regulating emotions. The branches can also be thought of as sequential steps to the master of EI. In order to be emotionally intelligent, it is necessary first to be able to both perceive and express emotion, second to be able to think about emotions, third to be able to understand how emotions work, and fourth to be able to regulate emotions depending on the needs of a particular situation.

Foo, Elfenbein, Tan, and Aik (2005) argued that school-related interactions can be highly emotional encounters and can reward EI in each stage of the four-branch model. In order to understand the role of EI in schools, and particularly in trust-building situations, it is necessary to discuss and define some of the parameters of negotiation itself. Without such a discussion, EI's applicability to improving school relationships and bonding cannot be properly understood.

Hyder, Prietula, and Weingart (2000) conducted a negotiation experiment designed to detect the circumstances under which negotiators achieved optimality (that is, the best solution for all parties) as opposed to mere efficiency (any non-optimal agreement). Hyder et al. manipulated two variables, those of negotiation tactics and negotiation content, and found that solution optimality was predicted only by changes in negotiation content. This experimental finding is highly relevant to any discussion of the role of EI in schools, as it implies that not all negotiations can be positively or negatively influenced by the EI of the participants. There are some encounters in which the positions of the parties are so hardened, or the solution space so limited, or both, that EI is unlikely to make a difference. However, EI is likely to be an important factor in other negotiations, that is, negotiations in which there is some room for both parties to maneuver and in which an optimal or at least an efficient solution exists.

One of the main characteristics of teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal encounters is that obtaining insights into the other party's decision-making strategy can confer an advantage. Emotion recognition, the first of the four branches in the Mayer et al. (2009) model of EI, can allow individuals to discern or even predict the

intentions, behaviors, and other internal mental states of others (Elfenbein et al., 2007). For example, a teacher who can read a student's emotion might be able to formulate a more accurate prediction of a student's inclination to accept discipline or guidance; on the other hand, teachers and students who lack relevant insights into each other's emotions might have to undergo a long and taxing negotiation process, one that can create ill-will between the parties that will needlessly complicate their relationship.

One of the points made by scholars who have studied the influence of EI on negotiation is that negotiations are not closed emotional systems (Elfenbein et al., 2007). The negotiating parties' dispositions are to some extent dynamic and can change over the course of the negotiation, depending on factors such as whether one party feels respected by the other. It is interesting to observe that the human limbic system, the part of the nervous system responsible for emotion, evolved prior to what is known as neopallium, which is the seat of cognition in humans (Denton, McKinley, Farrell, & Egan, 2009). The limbic system evolved before, and functions distinctly from, the neopallium (Denton et al., 2009).

Negotiations involve both emotion and cognition, which function in an intertwined way (Elfenbein et al., 2007). Even the most cognitively oriented negotiator, for example, is capable of feeling emotions such as disrespect and insult, both of which can trigger aspects of the limbic system that interfere with cognitive decision-making. This phenomenon is well understood in conflict theory, in which the phenomenon of affective conflict is the name given to disagreements that arise for emotional rather than rational reasons (Parayitam & Dooley, 2009).

Emotional recognition is important not only because it allows negotiators to find a quicker, more efficient path to solutions; in the context of teacher-teacher and teacher-principal relationships, it is also important because it is the foundation of collegial behavior that allows individuals to feel comfortable with each other (Elfenbein et al., 2007). In the presence of comfort, even conflict-tinged negotiations tend to be resolved more quickly and in a manner that please both parties. For example, negotiations over a teacher's desired forms of support from a principal. When each party can empathize with one another, that conflict can be resolved in a timely manner. Comfort, meanwhile, is only possible if negotiators are able to sense and respond to each other's emotional signals (Elfenbein et al., 2007). In this sense, successful negotiations seem to require alignment with the first of the four branches of EI theory, namely the appropriate perception and expression of emotion.

There are many empirical examples of the applicability of this kind of EI to trust-building in negotiations. For example, cross-cultural communication between American and Japanese individuals often goes awry because Americans can be uncomfortable around, and distrustful of, the emotionally reserved manner of the Japanese (Brett & Okumura, 1998). At the same time, the emotionally voluble manner of Americans is considered uncouth and ill-disciplined by the Japanese (Brett & Okumura, 1998). There are many other examples of such cross-cultural misunderstandings in negotiation that can ultimately be traced to the parties' contradictory styles of emotional perception and expression (e.g. Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011).

These factors also apply in the context of schools and the workplace. In the context of school students, teachers, and principals all bring their own cultures into the context of communication, emotion, and expectation. Students and teachers who have high EI promote a school environment of support, learning development, and positive behaviors (Bracket, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). Having EI in the context of the work place can lead to success in management positions because managers are considered successful when they can manage the business and its employees (Kadriu, 2015). Managing the employees requires one to have high EI.

Assimilating emotion in thought can be understood as becoming consciously aware of the role of emotion. Denton et al. (2009) pointed out so-called primordial emotions such as anger and fear manifest themselves extremely rapidly, often before a person has had a chance to be cognitively aware of the emergence of these emotions. Mayer et al. (1999) suggested that a person of high EI does not lead a life in which thoughts and emotions are parallel currents that never meet; rather, a high-EI individual is capable of thinking about emotions. Historically, negotiations, such as teacher-principal negotiations, have often been observed to break down because one or more party is unaware of how his or her emotions are interpreted by the other party or parties (Graham, 1985, Moor, 2009). Assimilating emotion in thought can prevent negotiations from foundering in the early, trust-building stage; for example, in an intercultural negotiation, a party from one culture can become aware of how his or her emotional responses will be perceived by the other, a necessary first step to both understanding and regulating emotion in the service of gain-maximizing outcomes.

The EI step related to understanding emotion is a natural extension of the concept of assimilating emotion in thought, with one vital difference: Whereas assimilating emotion in thought is a skill that seems to apply more to individuals seeking to understand their own emotions, the skill of understanding emotion appears to be more other-focused. For example, in Yagi and Kleinberg's (2011) ethnographic study of negotiation between American and Japanese people, the concept of understanding emotion was related to observing, analyzing, and to some extent manipulating the emotions of others.

Other studies that focus on EI focus on how EI can help or hinder the educational process itself. For example, Gomez-Keegan (2015) study focused on EFL students and their willingness to learn a new language. She found that when teachers are unable to perceive emotions from their students they hinder their language experience (Gomez-Keegan, 2015). Another example comes from a study on boys and girls EI as it relates to math achievement. The study concluded that teachers must be aware in the differences in how boys and girls control their emotions and how those emotions effect their academic achievement in math (Erasmus, 2013).

From a biological perspective, what it means to understand emotion, particularly the emotion of others, is to apply both emotional and cognitive faculties to other's emotions. According to Denton et al. (2009), experiencing or witnessing others' primordial emotions (such as their anger) tends to trigger equally volatile and emotional responses in the observer. Thus, people tend to respond to anger with anger. However, when emotion is understood, the person who observes anger, or some other powerful

emotion, displayed by another is able to override the initial response, examine or empathize with the demonstrated emotion, and to reply to the emotion with a more constructive response, such as a supportive emotion or a cognition. There is in fact an entire negotiation strategy built around understanding and responding to the emotion of others with support and rationality, known as nonviolent communication.

Table 11

NVC Model (Center for Collaborative Communication, 2010, p. 1)

Components of communication	Expressing with Authenticity	Receiving with Empathy
Observations	Expressing what I am observing (seeing, hearing, remembering, imagining) free or judgment or evaluation. "When I…"	Receiving with empathy what the other person is observing (seeing, hearing, remembering, imagining). "When you…"
Feelings	Expressing honestly by revealing with I'm feeling. "I feel…"	Receiving with empathy what the other person is feeling. "Do you feel…?"
Needs	Expressing with authenticity more core needs and values. "Because I need / value…"	Receiving with empathy the other person's needs / values. "Because you need…value?"
Requests	Expressing my present request in a concrete, positive, and doable way. "Would you be willing to…"	Receiving with empathy the other person's concrete, positive, and doable request. "And would you like me to tell you...?"

The Non-Violent Communication Model, Rosenberg (2010) presumes that a negotiator is able to perceive and express emotion; more importantly; however, the model relies on understanding emotion in order to (a) defuse and discourage destructive emotions, (b)

foster good emotions, and (c) relate emotions to rational thinking and decision-making. The model has been applied in negotiation frameworks that rely heavily on EI, such as those of Shakun (2009).

According to Williams (2007), time-pressured negotiation situations rely heavily on trust-building, which it itself a function of what Williams called interpersonal emotion management. Williams stated that inter-organizational negotiation, particularly when such negotiation occurs across cultural or national boundaries, is extraordinarily fragile; parties involved in such negotiations are highly sensitive to both threat and reward. Given this dynamic, how emotion regulation works in such situations is to (a) defuse the sense of threat and (b) build the sense of reward, for example by promoting values such as transparency, connectedness, and mutual interest (Shakun, 2009).

Emotional regulation does not necessarily mean disguising, manipulating, or denying emotions. Rather, emotion regulation refers to the individual's ability to use emotion, both his or her emotion as well as the emotions of others, as part of a complex interaction. One example of emotional regulation in action was offered by the highly successful American football coach Walsh (2010), who said of his players, "Even though each man had different strengths and weaknesses. . .they all got one fundamental message from me: 'I believe in you'" (p. 156), a message that continues to be highly relevant in schools as well as other organizational settings. According to Walsh's memoir, there were numerous occasions on which he felt disappointed in his players, but he was always certain to regulate his emotion so that he did not project negative feelings on to these

players. Rather, Walsh worked to project confidence, approval, and belief, overriding his instinctive bursts of negative emotion.

Walsh's example illustrates how EI is not a single skill, but rather the sequential exercise of perceiving and expressing emotion, assimilating emotion in thought, understanding emotions, and reflectively regulating emotions. In order to build trust with his players, whom Walsh regularly asked to overcome injury, make enormous efforts on the field, and trust the coach even in difficult circumstances, Walsh had to first be able to (a) sense how his players felt and to be able to express his own emotions, (b) become aware of how his own emotions were related to the team's success, (c) understand how the emotions of his players were effected by his own mood, and (d) regulate his emotion so that he sent out the intended signal of belief and suppressed signals of anger or frustration. In this sense, achieving the full spectrum of EI required Walsh to obtain a sequential mastery of each of Mayer et al.'s (1999) four branches of EI, providing a model that can be adopted by principals vis-à-vis teachers and teachers vis-à-vis students.

There are some negotiation situations in which the parties' interests are black and white and the process of negotiation is largely an issue-oriented, selfish assertion of each party's interest. Some of these negotiations are not even negotiations; they take place to create the false impression of negotiation where none exists. However, in the majority of negotiations, the solution space contains some room for maneuver; there are either efficient outcomes, that is, outcomes that represent an improvement from the starting point, or optimal solutions (Hyder et al., 2000). In such negotiations, the establishment of trust between the parties is the foundation of efficient or optimal outcomes, and the root

of trust has been suggested to be what Williams (2007) referred to as interpersonal emotion management. When emotion is managed properly, that is, when the self's emotion is regulated and when the emotions of others are properly solicited, understood, and appreciated, it becomes easier for the parties in a negotiation to cease seeing each other as threats and to begin to see each other as mutual benefit-maximizing agents. These insights can be related to how, in the current study's findings, teachers reported sensing and responding to their students' emotions as well as to their own emotional needs.

Summary of Literature Review

The two main themes that emerged from the literature review were (a) the importance of the warm demanding orientation; and (b) the importance of emotional intelligence as relevant to teacher-student bonding, teacher-student communication, and teacher-administrator communication in terms of the relevance of these three interactions to the student experience in the ninth grade. In this manner, both research and theory can be related to the main problems and phenomena analyzed and examined in Section 3. The findings from my research found that there was in fact issues surrounding communication amongst faculty staff and students in the OSD. The second literature review linked the research and allowed me to further understand that a PD could assist the district in tackling the initial problem presented in the study. The objective for the PD is for faculty and staff in the OSD to better communicate and assist each other in building rapport with the ninth grade students in the OSD. The PD sessions breakdown how to better

communicate with students and staff through theory analysis and best practices. It was designed to accomplish the goals and objectives previously stated.

Project Description

Implementation

The design of the professional development sessions was structured to provide clear direction for the objections and goals previously indicated. Implementation of new systems is complex and a clear understanding of how the goals of the project will be attained is necessary. The activities of the PD plan have eight sessions (see appendix A) including an ongoing session that will support teachers in mastering the information and skills needed to assist in a positive relationship with their students. The activities include understanding, the concepts and theories behind positive teacher-student communication teacher- administrator communication, teacher- teacher communication, and how they all help in building rapport through the process of gaining information, asking questions, and implementation in the classroom. The activities will be implemented throughout the school year beginning with an initial session before the start of the school year that will cover the concepts of level-setting, warm demanding, non-violent communication, emotional intelligence, and systems theory, discussed in more detail later. These concepts will set the foundation for the activities that will take place throughout the school year including activities that will equip teachers with the information needed to implement concepts learned. The estimated timeline for all activities will be a full school year, but will be ongoing to ensure mastery. The next steps are to determine the content, goals, evaluation structures, roles, and other details of the professional development sessions.

Details on these factors are provided below. The main issues guiding implementation are (a) ensuring that what has been learned from research and theory is included in the plan; and (b) ensuring that the plan aligns with the reality of the school's resources, constraints, and supports. Overall, the implementation will explain detailed steps on the content, construction of the material for the professional development sessions. The activities for the PD will be implemented with the help of the OSD PD team. There will be a total of 8 initial sessions/modules with the last session being ongoing every six months, discussed further in the next session.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The project will draw upon a number of potential resources and existing supports. To begin with, the district conducts occasional professional development seminars throughout the year. Teachers in the OSD access PD opportunities through an online system created by the OSD's PD team. The OSD has over 10 schools/meeting rooms that are available for PDs. These spaces are accessed by calling the location and scheduling with that secretary. If the space is available, it can be used with no cost. The OSD is a public schools district and their schools and spaces can be used, for free, by the public. Once a space is designated, the PD team will have the information needed to create the online registration form and teachers will register for the PD online. The PD team will also provide a small budget for materials, and food if requested. The PD team can put in the plan, if requested, a request for stipends or continuing education credits (CEUs) for teachers who participate. Each OSD school has a media center with 24 computers, three lap top carts, and a computer lab for anyone who needs their participants to access

technology. The OSD media centers, computer labs, and classrooms also come equipped with LCD projectors, monitors, microphones, and elmo document cameras for the use of teachers, principals, and any presenter using the space. As the PD sessions conclude the presenter will submit attendance and any work or reflections created by the teacher participants for review by the district's PD team. They will assist in inputting information online and awarding stipends/ or CEUs. Time and budgeting are available for any Professional Development program that can provide evidence as to why it will be useful. This type of data can be found in Section 2.

Potential Barriers

There are several potential barriers to the project. One important barrier has to do with time. The eight proposed modules are, cumulatively, 20 hours long, and the ninth module requires an additional commitment of 4 hours per year from teachers who have already taken the first eight modules. The PD represents a continuous time commitment, which can pose problems in an environment in which teachers are already pressed for time. Another important barrier to consider is that because principals are an important component of the development and were described in the Section 2 findings as being largely unresponsive to certain teacher needs, the development plan has to be framed in a manner that does not stigmatize any of the intended participants. If the professional development is perceived as a means of naming and shaming certain individuals or job descriptions, then it will likely lack the grassroots commitment needed to grow. Principals in particular are in a position to actively or passively damage the operation of

such a professional development effort if they feel personally called out by it through one means or another.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The implementation proposal uses the school calendar as a basis for developing a training schedule. The outline of training is structured to allow the sessions to build upon one another, allow time for reflection and then circle back to evaluate progress.

August (1-2 weeks before school begins)*		
Session 1	Agenda and Level-Setting	150 minutes
Session 2	Deep Dive into Warm Demanding	150 minutes
Session 3	Deep Dive into Non-Violent Communication	150 minutes
Session 4	Deep Dive into Emotional Intelligence	150 minutes
Session 5	Deep Dive into Systems Theory	150 minutes
September (2-3 weeks after school begins)		
Session 6	Putting it All Together	150 minutes
January (prior to school resuming)		
Session 7	Planning for Change	150 minutes
June (after school concludes)**		
Session 8	Measurement and Accountability	150 minutes

**It is not recommended that anymore than two sessions be completed per day.*

***Session 8 may be repeated, as necessary, for follow-up purposes.*

Figure 6. Comprehensive professional development schedule.

The first training session is to be entitled "Agenda and Level-Setting." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The concept taught will be an introduction to concepts of warm demanding, non-violent communication, and systems theory. The lesson objectives will be to acquaint internal stakeholders with (a) warm

demanding as a paradigm for teacher-student communication, (b) nonviolent communication as a paradigm for teacher-principal communication, (c) importance of systemic thinking and action to bring about change, (d) the desired goal of improved communication quality, and (e) the proposed pathway to the goal. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary encompasses the following points: (a) warm demanding as a paradigm for teacher-student communication, (b) nonviolent communication as a paradigm for teacher-principal communication, (c) the importance of systemic thinking and action to bring about change, and (d) the overall goal of improved communication quality. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The second training session is to be entitled "Deep Dive into Warm Demanding." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The concept taught will be theoretical and empirical evidence for warm demanding, including a systematic exploration of principles, findings, and applications. The lesson objectives will be to acquaint internal stakeholders with (a) warm demanding as a theory, (b) examples of warm demanding from the literature, (c) examples of warm demanding from the study findings, (d) the desired goal of improving warm demanding, and (e) the proposed pathway to the goal. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary encompasses the following points: (a) warm demanding as a theory, (b)

selected highlights from warm demanding as mentioned in the literature, (c) selected highlights from warm demanding as mentioned in the study findings, and (d) the overall goal of improved warm demanding. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The third training session is to be entitled "Deep Dive into Nonviolent Communication." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The concept taught will be theoretical and empirical evidence for non-violent communication, including a systematic exploration of principles, findings, and applications. The lesson objectives will be to acquaint internal stakeholders with (a) nonviolent communication as a theory, (b) examples of nonviolent communication from the literature, (c) examples of nonviolent communication from the study findings, (d) the desired goal of improving non-violent communication, and (e) the proposed pathway to the goal. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary encompasses the following points: (a) nonviolent communication as a theory, (b) selected highlights from non-violent communication as mentioned in the literature, (c) selected highlights from warm demanding as mentioned in the study findings, and (d) the overall goal of improved warm demanding. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The fourth training session is to be entitled “Deep Dive into Emotional Intelligence.” It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The concept taught will be theoretical and empirical evidence for emotional intelligence, including a systematic exploration of principles, findings, and applications. The lesson objectives will be to acquaint internal stakeholders with (a) emotional intelligence as a theory, (b) examples of emotional intelligence from the literature, (c) examples of emotional intelligence from the study findings, (d) the desired goal of improving emotional intelligence, and (e) the proposed pathway to the goal. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary encompasses the following points: (a) emotional intelligence as a theory, (b) selected highlights from emotional intelligence as mentioned in the literature, (c) selected highlights from emotional intelligence as mentioned in the study findings, and (d) the overall goal of improved emotional intelligence. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The fifth training session is to be entitled “Deep Dive into Systems Theory.” It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The concepts taught will be theoretical and empirical evidence for systems theory, including a systematic exploration of principles, findings, and applications. The lesson objectives will be to acquaint internal stakeholders with (a) systems theory as a theory, (b) examples of systems theory from the literature, (c) examples of systems theory from the study findings, (d) the desired goal of improving systems theory, and (e) the proposed pathway

to the goal. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary encompasses the following points: (a) systems theory as a theory, (b) selected highlights from emotional intelligence as mentioned in the literature, (c) selected highlights from systems theory as mentioned in the study findings, and (d) the overall goal of improved understanding of systems theory. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The sixth training session is to be entitled "Putting It All Together." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The lesson objectives will be to explain how warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and nonviolent communication can be put together into a single way of looking at, and approaching, relationships with the school. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. The lesson summary consists of an overview of the previous training session topics, with particular emphasis on how these disparate learnings can be put together into a single orientation. There will be a Q&A session in which participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive answers, both from the faciliators and from other participants in the seminar.

The seventh training session is to be entitled "Planning for Change." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The lesson objectives will be to explain how warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and non-violent communication will be enacted as part of the school relationships, according to a change management

plan to be mutually defined by stakeholders. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. This lesson is mainly interactive, as stakeholders will contribute their ideas about how to define and implement change related to the adoption of warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and non-violent communication.

The eighth training session is to be entitled "Measuring Change." It will last 150 minutes and include all teachers and the principal. The lesson objectives will be to follow up on the change management plan previously defined by stakeholders with suggestions for metrics for improvement and continuous improvement. The supplies needed are a personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint, an overhead slide projector, and a laser pointer. This lesson is mainly interactive, as stakeholders will contribute data points and other insights into how warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and non-violent communication are being adopted by themselves and others, specifically by filling out and submitting a scale designed to measure these orientations in themselves and others.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

The PD coordinator will lead the PD session. The coordinator will be assigned by the director of the OSD PD team, and will handle possible issues with each session. There are three classes of participants. Their identities, roles, and responsibilities are as follows. Teachers are there to learn about how to improve communication and rapport between themselves and students, themselves and other teachers, and themselves and principals. Teachers have the right to contribute their own ideas, critically discuss and

evaluate training material, and maintain autonomy in the classroom. However, teachers also have a responsibility to engage deeply with the development material and to be conscientious about applying to their own situations.

Principals are there to learn about how they can better support teachers, and how they can better communication with teachers. Principals have the role of understanding and improving their support and facilitation function. The right of the principal is to maintain decision-making autonomy; however, the principal is also responsible for listening to the training material, and to individual teachers, in a manner that is open to critique and improvement.

Within the OSD is a PD team. This team is responsible for offering supports for the PD sessions that benefit teachers in the OSD. The plan is to have about five teachers trained and equipped with the knowledge to help facilitate each PD session to ensure by in from other teachers. If no one is available or more facilitators are needed, the PD team will step in and assist as facilitators as long as the communication for the need is communicated in a timely manner. Facilitators are there to ensure that the lessons of the research are properly applied in terms of the professional development seminars that constitute the project. Facilitators are there not only to present the material but also to ensure that they can answer questions, enable dialogue between the participants, evaluate the success of the professional development project, and make changes, if necessary, to ensure the continuous improvement of the professional development project as it is taught in subsequent years.

Project Evaluation and Analysis

Overall, the goal of this project is to enact positive change in teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal communications through PD. An evaluation phase will be important for both participants and facilitators to aid in their goal towards improving communication throughout the district. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure participants are receiving and implementing the information learned in the PD with fidelity. The data collected from the evaluation will be used to improve the PD. The evaluation plan will measure and explore the extent to which the goal and behavioral outcomes will have been met as a result of the PD activities. The question that will guide the PD is; how would you rate the delivery, information, and ability to implement the skills learned in each session. The evaluation and analysis techniques that will be employed for this PD reflect Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation (Changiz & Omid, 2014). The four levels of training include; reaction, learning, behavior, and results. This model will be reflected in the questions presented in the evaluation survey. The model supports the evaluation process in that it provides an objective process to effective evaluation (Changiz & Omid, 2014). The process includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and formative and summative techniques. The project will be evaluated on the participants' reaction to the training, if the participants' knowledge was enhanced because of the training, if their behaviors have changed in light of the knowledge, and finally a full summative analysis of the overall training as a whole. After each PD session teachers will participate in a survey that will evaluate their learning

during that session. It will be a simple 5 question survey with a scale of 1 to 5, one being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable, including the following questions:

1. How would you rate the delivery of instruction in today's PD?
2. How would you rate the relevancy of what you learned in today's PD? By relevancy we mean is it relevant to you and your job functions?
3. How would you rate your ability to implement what was learned in today's session in the classroom?
4. How would you rate the likelihood of you using the information to enhance your work environment?
5. Name at least two strengths and two weaknesses of the training today?

This survey is not a pre-established survey, and will be tested for validity and reliability before use by the PD committee. Participants in another PD will have the chance to test the validity and reliability of this survey. The survey will go through a test-and re-test measure correlation between the two tests to evaluate the stability of the survey over time. There will also be a summative evaluation given after all sessions are completed. This will include evaluating teacher's knowledge, skills, and ability to incorporate information learned in the PD in the classroom. This will be evaluated using an observation checklist. Teachers will be observed at least 2 times and no more than 3 times. The checklist will allow the observer, myself or another facilitator that is not an administrator, to evaluate using the following items:

1. Teacher and students are engaged in positive communication

   Provide an example

2. Teacher uses warm demanding to address unwanted behaviors

   Provide an example

3. Teacher uses positive communication with all students

   Provide an example

4. Teacher responds to students' who are having difficulty in an empathetic way by expressing his/her understanding and then responding to the issue.

   Provide an example

5. Teacher responds to undesirable behaviors one on one, when possible.

   Provide an example

Student perceptions will be analyzed using the Gallup survey or ninth grade survey previously used by and provided by the district. The survey administration will take place after all PD sessions have concluded. This study aimed to obtain student and teacher perceptions and therefore will gain both perceptions in order to get a clear view of the classroom environment.

Finally, there will be a summative survey to gain a clear picture of how the PD plan as a whole. There are four key areas the surveys will focus on, they include: (a) course content, (b) course delivery, (c) implementation results, and (d) suggestions for improvement. The summative survey questions are as follows;

1. How would you rate the overall delivery of instruction in the PD sessions?
2. How would you rate the overall delivery of what was learned in the PD sessions?

3. Have you implemented any of the information learned in your classroom? If not skip to question 6.
4. If so what?
5. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate with the students in your classroom?
6. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate with other staff members?
7. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate your needs for support to your administration?
8. How would you rate your ability to utilize warm demanding with your students?
9. If you have not begun implementation what is holding you back? Give a description of what supports are needed in order for you to begin implementation.
10. Overall did what you learn in the PD enhance rapport with your students? Explain.

An evaluation that explores results both quantitatively and from a phenomenological perspective will gain insight into how the lessons could be improved for future delivery. The feedback from the surveys will allow the implementation team to make any possible changes and continue providing the information to other staff members within the district. Shani and Noumair (2014) note that soliciting employee feedback can lead to increased motivation and energy regarding a change management

process. This is ideal in an environment such as teaching was constant supervision and support is not always possible and many of the changes are based on individual implementation.

Analysis

The ability to effectively analyze the survey results is just as important as designing it correctly. The survey can be split into two portions for the initial analysis: quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will allow one to describe the current status of the identified variable (Creswell, 2012). The variables in this case being teacher perceptions of their abilities and overall information learned in the PD. This data will come from the surveys from each PD section. These sections will be assessed separately to establish commonalities within the question groups. The quantitative data will be compiled to show average ratings and a distribution curve to identify any trends in feedback for any of the four question groups. Data will also be compared to the predetermined rating scale to estimate potential success for the module. Although the evaluation procedure will largely stay the same over the course of the lesson deliveries, the ratings scale can be adjusted by the implementation team if they see necessary, but only before the completion of a module evaluation.

The overview of the qualitative feedback and suggestions will be analyzed much the same way, but will address any trends in word choice or emphasis on certain topics. A coding system that assigns a short-hand description to pieces of data so it can be found easier later in the analysis will aid in finding those trends (Merriam, 2009). Once the evaluations are compiled, the identification of these trends will be notated. The

implementation team will then utilize the qualitative data to either confirm, dispute, or elaborate on the quantitative data collected. This is an important step in the analysis due to the black and white nature of the quantitative data and the inopportunity to elaborate when answering on a scoring grid. As an example, the participants could rate the course delivery a zero for ineffective, but based on qualitative data the implementation team could learn that it was because the facilities air conditioning was broken and the room the lesson was taught in was sweltering. In this case, the quantitative data did not directly reflect the feedback the implementation team was looking for and could have otherwise attributed to a lack of facilitator knowledge.

Project Implications

Local Community

The local community will benefit from the project to the extent that it will promote improved teacher-student rapport, which will, in turn, reduce the prevalence and impact of adverse events such as dropout and other forms of disengagement (Bryan et al., 2012). The improvement of teacher-teacher and teacher-administration relations will also impact the local community by improving the school climate in a manner that supports improved academic achievement and social development for students (Leana & Pil, 2009; Hallinger & Heck 2010).

Far-Reaching

The work carried out in both the analysis and the proposed project reflects a means of translating important research findings about improved school climates into action. The specific means by which professional development training can be created

will vary from school to school. However, the methodology presented in this study can be replicated anywhere. Beginning from the literature, researchers can examine dynamics in their specific school situations, design professional development accordingly, and follow the kinds of evaluation and implementation steps modeled in this study to achieve results.

Conclusion

Section 3 contained an overview of the project in terms of both practical details and relation to the literature. The project presented in this study is a Professional Development Plan. The overall goal of this PD is to enact positive change in teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal communication. The PDs include eight sessions with the last being an ongoing session. The sessions will provide teachers with the abilities to communicate more effectively with students, understand how to use warm demanding in the classroom, and analyze emotional intelligence. The participants will also analyze how each helps build positive rapport with their students. The project will be evaluated using surveys and observations reflecting Kirkpatrick's model (Changiz & Omid, 2014). Students' perceptions will be evaluated using a Gallup survey and the ninth grade student survey previously used by the district. Analysis of student and teacher surveys will be used after data is compiled. Data will be analyzed to find trends and commonalities amongst teacher/teacher, teacher/student, and student/student responses. Quantitative data analysis will take place using general statistics. Qualitative data will be evaluated based off trends and common emerging themes. Trends in word choice and trends emphasis on certain topics will provide insight. The overview in section 3 offered a research-based means of understanding and appreciating the alignment between the

product and known best practices in communication and relationship building. In Section 4, the project will be reflected upon, both in relation to its own strengths and weaknesses and in relation to my own growth as the investigator.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide a summative evaluation and overview of the project. A secondary purpose is to reflect upon what I learned and how I grew during the project. The strengths of the project consist of alignment of the project itself with the initial problem presented, but the project also noted limitations concerning the students and teacher's actual will to change. The project development used the SMART method as a guideline and Kirkpatric's 4 tier training model for the evaluation process (Changiz & Omid, 2014). This project allowed me to analyze how I developed as a scholar and project developer throughout the process and also analyze the impact the project can have on social change. The section thus consists of a combination of personal and project-related reflections.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The project has numerous strengths in addressing the problem. The first strength of the project is that the professional development approach has been demonstrated to align well with the goal of supporting change in schools. A community-based approach is quicker to build consensus, form plans, alight on standardized responses, and create a framework for ongoing learning, improvement, and accountability among its members. One strength of the project was the alignment between its goal of enacting positive change in teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal communications and the chosen project genre of professional development. Another strength of the project was the way in which the context and content of professional development were related to

existing research on best practices as well as specific information discovered during the course of the study. Although the project had many strengths, there were also limitations.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Limitations

One limitation would be the will to change. Many times policies are put into place, but they are not implemented with fidelity because people do not like change. When it comes to teacher-student bonding in the OSD, the will to change is strong, because teachers and administrators are united in the goal of engaging with students in more positive ways. There is top-down as well as bottom-up demand among stakeholders for improvement in this area. All stakeholders, from parent to teacher to the superintendent are held accountable for the achievement of the entire district. However, the study revealed significant evidence of low-quality and low-frequency teacher-to-teacher communication. In the absence of a PD community that can incorporate teachers from other schools, and that can somehow remove institutional obstacles to this kind of inter-school communication, it is difficult to see how this limitation can be overcome. It would be ideal if the professional development training could become a distributed rather than delimited effort, with teachers from several schools asked to take part. Doing so would, to be sure, involve considerable logistical, institutional, and practical difficulties, but the likely outcome would be to create a forum for the kind of inter-school, teacher-to-teacher communication that was missing in Section 2 to appear on a grassroots basis. If the professional development plan is expanded to more than one school, it could represent the very kind of communication that Section 2 participants noted was absent.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

The direction of the project as well as the results of the data analysis is aligned with the discussion of scholarship appearing in the first three sections of the study. In order to achieve alignment, the study's problem was presented, literature to address the problem was discussed, the problem then was further researched through data collection and analysis and finally, a project was developed out of the results to further address the problem originally presented. In the first section the problem of teacher and ninth grade student rapport was identified. During the research process students' issues with teachers and rapport were present through archival data and teachers express their thoughts and feelings through focus group data. Both data sets expressed the need for further exposure to training in the area of effective communication in order to enhance rapport amongst students, teachers, and administrators. One of the most important insights in the body of scholarly literature is that the dynamics of communication and rapport are highly dependent on local factors, including factors specific to schools, neighborhoods, and even individual classroom settings (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007; Diette, 2012; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Kostina, 2011). This was important to understand how to incorporate PD activities that would be relevant to the OSD specifically. The literature supported the generation of findings from a carefully delimited research population. According to Yin (2009), a case study focuses on a research phenomenon "in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18), and case studies are assumed to be appropriate when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). In this study, the phenomena of warm demanding, developmental assets,

and stakeholder communication were all closely allied to the context of the study, which was the target school district. The characteristics of that context being the diversity of the school district, the economic status of the school district, the low academic achievement, and the need to understand how to approach these diversities. Deriving lessons from that particular environment, for use in professional development further tailored to that environment, was thus an approach favored in the literature.

When best practices are identified and disseminated, they have more chance of becoming embedded in a school environment if there is a community-based structure, such as professional development within a school community, serving as the foundation (Bondy et al., 2013; Howes & Ritchie, 2002; Newton et al., 2012; Salkovsky & Romi, 2015; Xu et al., 2012). The project evaluation plan for this project was framed upon best practices for effective evaluation research. The plan development was a reflection of the SMART criteria, and the evaluation for the plan relied on Kirkpatrick's four- level training evaluation, both discussed further below (Kwak, Walewski, Sleeper, & Sadatsafavi, 2014; Oliveira, Valentina, & Possamai, 2012; Pries & Quigley, 2010; Schwaber, 2004). Researchers supported the chosen genre as a means of enacting the goal of improving communication and rapport within the school and between its various stakeholders (Kwak et al., 2014; Oliveira et al., 2012; Pries & Quigley, 2010; Schwaber, 2004).

Project Development and Evaluation

Project development is intended to follow so-called SMART criteria (Kwak et al., 2014; Oliveira et al., 2012; Pries & Quigley, 2010; Schwaber, 2004). These guidelines were used to structure the professional development plan presented in Section 3.

- Specific: The goals for the professional development training were module-specific.
- Measurable: A framework was proposed for measuring both the current state and the desired end state and for progress towards the end state.
- Attainable: Fairly modest goals were chosen for the modules.
- Realistic: The progress goals articulated in the training were realistic; and,
- Timely: The modules are intended to launch rapidly and to be ongoing throughout the year.

Project evaluation relied on support from Kirkpatrick's four-level training evaluation (Changiz & Omid, 2014; "The Kirkpatrick Model," n.d.). The four levels include: Reaction, Learning, Behavior and Results.

Throughout the process of creating this project study I learned the complexities in creating a professional development. In order to create an effective Professional development many considerations needed to be taken into account. Including who would be involved, who would facilitate, how each session and the overall PD would be evaluated and finally how I would analyze those results. In creating this PD my knowledge of what it takes to create an effective PD was enhanced and it will help in furthering my career in curriculum instruction and assessment in education.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are always changing in education. As I reflect on this PD I have a new understanding of how to go about these changes in education. The key is to constantly research what is affecting curriculum, instruction, and assessment and how to better serve our students in these areas. The development of this project will enhance my ability to tackle serious curriculum issues because I now understand that in order to tackle those issues you cannot rely on your own understanding, but you must rely on what has been researched. Understanding the research in itself will help me to further advance in my career.

Leadership and Change

I learned that just as frequently as leadership is required for change, a change in leadership (whether in personnel or orientations) is also necessary. Leaders help bring about change, but they are shaped by change themselves. It is impossible to try to separate the concepts of leadership and change.

In looking at the specific findings, I came to detect a gap in leadership as it applies to the larger system of students. Principals (and higher-level administrators, who make the kinds of decisions that influence principals' decision-making environments) in particular appear concerned with their own small corners of accountability, which in turn means that they do not give much thought to the systemic levels of change. For example, it would be easy for two principals to promote transition communication between middle and high schools, such that middle school teachers would communicate to ninth-grade teachers about incoming freshmen. That would be a systems approach to leadership. The

absence of such an approach, to me, means a failure in leadership and points to the necessity of changing how leaders conceptualize student well-being across schools.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a scholar, I learned that I have powers of concentration and improvement that I did not suspect I had. In approach the analysis, I was genuinely frightened of the prospect of applying my knowledge of SPSS to the quantitative findings. However, I learned that panic is a function of uncertainty. I told myself that I am capable of going through the same incremental steps that others did to learn the more advanced features of SPSS. Then I used targeted scaffolding techniques to identify (a) what I needed to learn, and (b) how I could get there. While some people have innate gifts for scholarship, I think anyone of average intelligence and the willingness to work both systematically and patiently can achieve enormous improvements in his or her own scholarship. Going forward, I will approach any scholarly task with the mindset of being methodical, patient, committed, and calm. I learned that I have these qualities after all, and that they make important contributions to the quality of scholarship.

I learned several lessons about scholarship. First, I learned how to critically evaluate empirical literature. As I developed my own facility with statistical methods, I was better able to critique the use of such methods in existing empirical research. I also became better at understanding the relationship between theories and empirical findings. As I progressed through my own scholarly journey, I became better at determining why certain theories required certain forms of empirical testing; I began to be able to see how

theory and methods are interconnected in scholarly articles. Achieving this insight helped me with my own work, as my ability to relate my own findings to the existing body of theory grew stronger. I would use the word *integration* to describe what I learned about scholarship. I learned that scholarship is not a disparate collection of findings, references, and theories, but a unified product that combines many inputs into a single, useful form of knowledge output.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I learned that I am deeply emotionally invested in the improvement of my professional setting. At the beginning of the research, I had a sense that the school was basically in a good place. By the end of the research, I was genuinely disturbed by some of the easily fixable things that are broken in the school environment, and I realized that I have more at stake than just ensuring that my own corner of academic responsibilities is well-maintained. The more research I conducted, the more empathy and desire for change I developed, and I resolved to be more integrated with my peers so that I too can benefit from the knowledge of others.

I learned that just as frequently as leadership is required for change, a change in leadership (whether in personnel or orientations) is also necessary. To improve as a district everyone, including leaders, must be involved. One must lead by example. Leaders help bring about change, but they are shaped by change themselves. It is impossible to try to separate the concepts of leadership and change. In looking at the specific findings, I came to detect a gap in leadership as it applies to the larger system of students. Principals (and higher-level administrators, who make the kinds of decisions

that influence principals' decision-making environments) in particular appear concerned with their own small corners of accountability, which in turn means that they do not give much thought to the systemic levels of change. For example, it would be easy for two principals to promote transition communication between middle and high schools, such that middle school teachers would communicate to ninth-grade teachers about incoming freshmen. That would be a systems approach to leadership. The absence of such an approach, to me, means a failure in leadership and points to the necessity of changing how leaders conceptualize student well-being across schools.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Project development is a process that benefits immense from already having defined, quantified, and evaluated as many aspects of the project as possible. In this sense, good project development can be defined as the natural consequence of having (a) articulated the current state, (b) quantified and defined the desired end state, (c) understood the resources and constraints at hand, and (d) understood the personal and institutional dynamics of potential participants. For example, in the case of this project, one area of challenge and vulnerability is the possible alienation of principals because they may believe their staff members will name them during the actual PD. In developing this PD this possible perceived shame can be taken in to account and possibly avoided. Although there is indeed evidence from my research that principals have not been sufficiently responsive to the needs and requirements of teachers at the target school, the professional development plan was framed in a way that was not focused on blame, but rather on improvement.

I learned the project development should be a goal-driven, purposive process that is rooted in (a) accurate knowledge of the current state; (b) a well-articulated, desirable, and reachable desired end state; and (c) a real-world appreciation of resources and constraints. These three considerations not only define what project development ought to be but also offer some hints about evaluation. For example, one a project has articulated the beginning and the desired end states, then it can be evaluated on the basis of how far it progresses towards the desired end state. To be sure, approaching a project in this manner means being able to articulate and quantify what the project is attempting to change. A great deal of effort ought to be put into this process of articulation, because it will determine whether (a) the project can be achieved, and (b) what changes needed to be made in order to ensure that the project will be achieved.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

Schools are sites of social change. Student-teacher relationships help to explain the future academic, economic, and social outcomes of students (Dziubinski, 2014; Bergeron, Chouinard, & Janosz, 2011). Any project that addresses teacher-student, teacher-teacher, and teacher-principal communication is likely to touch upon many potential avenues of such change. Especially given the vast social disparities in the United States, the kind of validation and support that children receive from teachers is capable of driving many kinds of positive change. Students who bond with their teachers are less likely to commit crimes, drop out of school, or damage themselves and society (Dziubinski, 2014; Bergeron, Chouinard, & Janosz, 2011, Bryan et al). In this regard, the main significance of the project was for schools in the OSD to have better student

engagement, so that students are more likely to stay in school and receive the education needed to graduate from high school.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The main implication of the project is that stakeholders, in particular, principals, need to think more carefully about supporting ninth-grade teachers and also disseminating best practices throughout their own communities of practice. The implication is also an application, as the study's identification of gaps and deficiencies can be used to improve practice. The project discussed earlier is a means of achieving precisely this goal, because it presents a problem, supports the problem with research, and relevant data, and offers a researched based solution to the problem that involves administrators and teachers.

More research is necessary to determine how and why teaching bonding varies so widely in quality. While there is an extensive body of literature on what good bonding looks like in practice (Adkins-Coleman, 2010; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2004; Bondy et al., 2013; Bonner, 2014; Cejda & Hoover, 2010; Ford & Sassi, 2014; Gibson, Wilson, Haight, Kayama, & Marshall, 2014; Houchen, 2013; Mo, Singh, & Chang, 2013; Price & Tovar, 2014; Ross et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2012), there is insufficient literature on how teachers can become better at taking on the kinds of orientations and practices necessary to improve their bonding abilities. One means of achieving this goal might be to compare teachers who are good bonders with teachers who are not. A systematic analysis of differences could reveal relevant and actionable insights.

Conclusion

For this project study I focused on how ninth-grade students and teachers perceive their rapport with each other and provided insight on how the issues present a challenge to ninth-grade teachers when faced with trying to develop rapport. I collected and analyzed archival data in order to address ninth graders' experiences. Archival data helped to focus qualitative inquiry. I took the results and developed interview questions for 15 ninth-grade teachers. Data were collected from both teachers and students. The data gave insight on what hinders the rapport process. The findings from this study provided an evidence-based for the development of a new professional development opportunity centering on the twin themes of warm demanding and emotional intelligence, including nonviolent communication.

Change is something that is necessary for all entities to be successful. It seems like change in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in education happens more often than none. We often look at education as something separate from a business because of the children we directly affect. If we begin to look at education through the eyes of everyone involved, we can see just how business-like it is. In creating this project, I learned that in order to combat a problem within your business you have to come up with a solid plan. The development and evaluation process for this project consisted of careful research and study. The PD addressed the problem, introduced a solid evaluation plan that included the participants themselves, and hopefully will address the problem is the OSD.

My vision for this project is that it has a positive effect on student-teacher, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administration relationships. In conducting my research and interviewing teachers I gained a better understanding of just how big the problem is. People who are involved in education spend a great deal of time in the environment in which they impact and if that environment does not foster positive relationships, it can take a toll on everyone involved. This project can be the beginning of a movement towards a better understanding of everyone involved in educating our children. A movement towards understanding that we are all human, we all want to be understood, and we all want respect in some way shape or form. This project may only address a segment of the problems that surround rapport, but it is a start. The hope is for all students to encounter a classroom teacher that they can trust and perceive as warm, welcoming, and ready to support them in their learning endeavors.

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Appendix A: The Project

Ninth Grade Student and Teacher's Perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationship

A Professional Development Plan

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Creating a Learning Environment That Promotes Care and Trust

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January 2016

Ninth Grade Student and Teacher's Perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationship

A Professional Development Plan

This professional development plan is an opportunity for a school administration to assist and support teachers in the attainment of additional skills regarding student interactions and promoting success in the classroom. Successful implementation of this plan will provide educators with a clear understanding of the available literature regarding teacher-student interactions and proposed solutions to the issues that have been identified through current research. This PD plan consists of a training plan with individual modules. These modules include modules that address several important topics related to teacher effectiveness, such as; (a)utilizing effective communication skills, (b) making sure all teachers have the same level of expertise so proper accountability can take place, (c) change management, and (d) systems theory. The training plan will be staggered so that teachers have the opportunity to reflect on what was learned in each module. All teachers will be required to undergo training in ten modules, with a total commitment of four hours per module. The initial training is equivalent to a full-time working week.

Program Goals

The goal of the professional development plan is to provide information to better assist educators in order to positively affect the teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher principal communications by applying effective communication skills in and outside the classroom, applying warm demanding with their students, and understanding the keys to emotional intelligence. The improvement will be measured via a survey given to teachers after each module, and after all eight modules are complete, discussed in

further detail later. The program will also be evaluated via observation and archival data to evaluate implementation and student perceptions, also discussed in more detail later. The modules include different approaches to ensuring effective communication and positive interactions between teachers and students. Because of the interactive nature of the professional development program, additional positive outcomes could be identified during the evaluation phase of the implementation, but the overall goal is for students to have a more positive perception of their relationship with their teachers and for teachers to interact with their students in a caring manner. The project is a comprehensive professional development plan that consists of a training plan with individual modules. These modules include material addressing several important topics related to teacher effectiveness, such as: (a) utilizing effective communication skills, (b) level setting and accountability, (c) change management, and (d) systems theory. The training plan will be staggered in the following manner. All teachers will be required to undergo training in eight modules, with a total commitment time of four hours per module. The initial training is equivalent to a full-time working week.

Once teachers have completed all modules, they will be required to engage in a refresher module once every 6 months, with a time commitment of 3 hours per module. There are eight training sessions and one continuous learning session in the professional development plan. The purposes of the first eight training sessions are to (a) disseminate findings about observed best practices in teacher-student bonding, teacher-teacher communication, and teacher-administrator communication based on a combination of research consensus and findings from the research described in Section 2; (b) gather

further inputs from teachers, including critical discussion related to the literature as well as the study findings; (c) specify ways in which the study findings and research best practices can be applied to the school environment; (d) build teacher consensus for, and administrative support of, change; (e) create and execute a change plan designed to improve teacher-student, teacher-teacher, and teacher-administrator interaction best practices; and (f) report on, and maintain accountability for, changes in teacher practice. The purpose of the ongoing module, which occurs twice a year, is to ensure that teachers who have already been trained return to sessions in which novice teachers are continuing to pass on their knowledge, be accountable, serve as guides and mentors, and adding to the conversation.

Determining Roles and Responsibilities

There are three individual groups of participants in the learning process: the teachers, the principles and the session facilitators. Understanding the responsibility and goals for each individual group will allow the final evaluation to assist in making any changes to the program based on participant feedback.

Teachers are there to learn about how to build upon their communication skills increasing their ability to build rapport with students and their educational peers. Participation in the sessions are encouraged and suggestions, questions, ideas and conversation are encouraged throughout the process. However, the teacher participants should approach the development sessions with an open mind and commitment to learning.

The main focus for the principles in attendance will be increasing their awareness of issues facing their staff and students. This will allow them to utilize the skill sets within the professional development program and apply them to teacher-principal relationships. It will also assist them in encouraging these types of relationships between teachers within their school.

Facilitators are present to ensure that the lessons of the research are conveyed properly and that all intended material is covered. They are responsible for encouraging discussion amongst participants and answer questions that arise during the process of presenting material.

Identification of Resources

Although potentially challenging, the identification of available financial and logistical resources is critical to the success of the program. In order to successfully implement the program these resources must be identified in advance to avoid any disruption in the education process. There are a number of available options to consider including budget allocations for advanced learning, community resources and potential external funding for programs that are designed and implemented with goals and research to support them.

The project can draw upon a number of potential resources and existing supports. To begin with, the district conducts occasional professional development seminars throughout the year. Teachers in the OSD access PD opportunities through an online system created by the OSD's PD team. The OSD has over 10 schools/ meeting rooms that are available for PDs. These spaces are accessed by calling the location and scheduling

with that secretary. If the space is available it can be used with no cost. The OSD is a public schools district and their schools and spaces can be used, for free, by the public. Once a space is designated, I will provide the PD team with the information needed to create the online registration form and teachers will register for the PD online. The PD team will also provide a small budget for materials, and food if requested. The PD team can put in the plan, if requested, a request for stipends or continuing education credits (CEUs) for teachers who participate. Each OSD school has a media center with 24 computers, three lap top carts, and a computer lab for anyone who needs their participants to access technology. The OSD media centers, computer labs, and classrooms also come equipped with LCD projectors, monitors, microphones, and elmo document cameras for the use of teachers, principals, and any presenter using the space. As the PD sessions conclude the presenter will submit attendance and any work or reflections created by the teacher participants for review by the district's PD team. They will assist in inputting information online and awarding stipends/ or CEUs.

Often, school administrators have a budgeted amount of dedicated towards ongoing education for the teaching staff. This budget can be utilized in support of the professional development if the district chooses not to adapt the program, but a specific school administrator sees value in the program and wants to implement at his/her particular school.

Although this implementation schedule can in no way give instruction on financing matters, it would be advantageous for the school to investigate potential

educational grants and funding from their local, state and federal government if the district chooses not to move forward with the plan.

Materials

The material needs of the program are limited to: (a) a personal computer; (b) Microsoft PowerPoint software; (c) an overhead slide projector (d) a laser pointer (e) and pens to take notes. These materials are needed in order for the facilitator to present information and transfer electronic documents to participants. The design of the material resource requirements keeps in mind the limitation of the budget and the potential availability of supplies with the school district. If unavailable, the resources required are likely to be available somewhere within the community.

Location

The location of the sessions is critical for two reasons: accessibility and functionality. The utilization of school or local community space will likely encourage participation as opposed to the teachers, administrators and facilitators traveling a long distance to attend. There are over 10 schools in the OSD that can support this PD and teachers who would like to engage in the plan. It is also important that these arrangements be scheduled, verified before the plan is announced. Verifying available parking considerations will also assist attendants once they arrive. It will also be necessary to confirm the location one to two days prior to each session. In the case of a change of venue, a notification system, email or group text, shall be in place to notify

participants' in a timely manner. Allocating resources to implement a notification system is not necessary unless the school system is unequipped with common communications systems, typically used in the case of weather emergencies and other issues.

The functionality of the chosen space is also critical to the success of the program. When selecting a location it is important to consider the availability of important amenities when putting on a successful educational series. These amenities include: (a) handicap accessibility if needed; (b) audio-visual equipment such as a projector hook-up and presentation screen or viewing area; and (c) restrooms. Although somewhat obvious considerations, they are essential to producing a comfortable learning environment. The design and functionality of the space is equally important. Selecting a room that has a clear viewing area for material presentation and open floorplan to encourage discussion and interaction throughout the course will be helpful when engaging participants. Learning in a closed, dark or cramped space is not as effective as learning in an open and spacious environment (Dome´nech Betoret & Go´mez Artiga, 2004).

Implementation Timeline

The scheduling of the courses should be completed before the professional development program begins. This will allow for a timely implementation, taking into consideration any conflicting schedules within the community and school system. It is necessary to complete the training in the appropriate order and leaving additional time for make-up training in the case of an emergency will prevent any large reorganizational efforts during the course of the program.

The professional development schedule is based on a school calendar year and is designed to allow time for learning, application and evaluation.

August (1-2 weeks before school begins)*		
Session 1	Agenda and Level-Setting	150 minutes
Session 2	Deep Dive into Warm Demanding	150 minutes
Session 3	Deep Dive into Non-Violent Communication	150 minutes
Session 4	Deep Dive into Emotional Intelligence	150 minutes
Session 5	Deep Dive into Systems Theory	150 minutes
September (2-3 weeks after school begins)		
Session 6	Putting it All Together	150 minutes
January (prior to school resuming)		
Session 7	Planning for Change	150 minutes
June (after school concludes)**		
Session 8	Measurement and Accountability	150 minutes

**It is not recommended that anymore than two sessions be completed per day.*

***Session 8 may be repeated, as necessary, for follow-up purposes.*

Figure 1. Recommended Implementation Timeline

Lesson Plan

The training session information included outlines the schedule of information delivery and the course overview. Each session is outlined and includes: (a) attendant group(s); (b) research concept overview; (c) lesson objectives; (d) needed supplies; (e) lesson summary; and (f) potential question and answer prompts. Utilizing these outlines will assist the facilitator in delivering the content and provide a consistent expectation of material covered for future training.

Training Sessions: Course Description and Lesson Plan

Each individual training session has its own specific objectives, goals and material needs and it will be critical for the implementation team to examine each lesson as a separate entity to be delivered based on its own criteria. However, it is also important to understand that throughout the program there will be opportunities to build upon previous lessons and engage the participants to do the same. It is for this reason that it is important that the lessons be completed in the correct order, with room for additional make-up lessons be made available during the education cycle. The outlines provided will give the lead educator a path to follow throughout the session and attention to timing is necessary to ensure all topics are covered in the amount of time allotted.

Training Session 1

The introductory session sets the tone for the rest of the lessons as it addresses agenda and level setting, a concept that will be the foundation for the remainder of the lessons. It is important to set the tone for the remaining sessions by engaging participants in the initial lesson. This module will introduce the concepts of non-violent communication with the use of warm demanding paradigm of teacher-student communication. The lead educator should set the expectation in regard to participant involvement. Utilizing participation to facilitate the discussion is an important factor when learning communication skills.

The goal of this session is to create positive communication skills by utilizing the session to explore the idea of warm demanding and non-violent communication.

Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Agenda and Level-Setting"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Introduction to concepts of warm demanding, non-violent communication, and systems theory
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with: 1. Warm demanding as a paradigm for teacher-student communication 2. Non-violent communication as a paradigm for teacher-principal communication 3. Importance of systemic thinking and action to bring about change 4. Desired goal: improved communication quality 5. Path to goal: Training sessions
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss warm demanding as a paradigm for teacher-student communication • Discuss non-violent communication as a paradigm for teacher-principal communication • Discuss importance of systemic thinking and action to bring about change • Discuss desired goal: improved communication quality • Discuss path to goal: Training dessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 2

This module is an expansion of the initial session which introduced the concept of warm demanding conversation. The research and theory will be addressed first to further the foundation of understanding. The goal of this session is to increase the use of warm demanding communication in the classroom and other interactions with students and faculty by utilizing the session to explore the idea of warm demanding communication. Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Deep Dive into Warm Demanding"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Theoretical and empirical evidence for warm demanding; systematic exploration of principles, findings, and application
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with: 1. Warm demanding as a theory 2. Examples of warm demanding from literature 3. Examples of warm demanding from study findings 4. Desired goal: improved warm demanding 5. Path to goal: Training dessions
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss warm demanding as a theory • Discuss examples of warm demanding from literature • Discuss examples of warm demanding from study findings • Discuss desired goal: improved warm demanding • Discuss path to goal: Training sessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 3

This module is an expansion of the initial session which introduced the concept of non-violent communication. The research and theory will be addressed first to further the foundation of understanding. The goal of this session is to increase the use of non-violent communication in the classroom and other interactions with students and faculty by utilizing the session to explore the idea of non-violent communication. Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Deep Dive into Non-Violent Communication"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Theoretical and empirical evidence for non-violent communication; systematic exploration of principles, findings, and application
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with: 1. Non-violent communication as a theory 2. Examples of non-violent communication from literature 3. Examples of non-violent communication from study findings 4. Desired goal: improved non-violent communication 5. Path to goal: Training dessions
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss non-violent communication as a theory • Discuss examples of non-violent communication from literature • Discuss examples of non-violent communication from study findings • Discuss desired goal: improved non-violent communication • Discuss path to goal: Training dessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 4

This module introduces the concept of emotional intelligence. The research and theory will be addressed first to create a foundation of understanding. The goal of this session is to increase emotional intelligence and understand how it applies in the classroom and to other interactions with students and faculty. Exploring the idea of emotional intelligence and utilizing participant involvement during the session will accomplish that goal. Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Deep Dive into Emotional Intelligence"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Theoretical and empirical evidence for emotional intelligence; systematic exploration of principles, findings, and application
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with: 1. Emotional intelligence as a theory 2. Examples of emotional intelligence from literature 3. Examples of emotional intelligence from study findings 4. Desired goal: improved emotional intelligence 5. Path to goal: Training dessions
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss emotional intelligence as a theory • Discuss examples of emotional intelligence from literature • Discuss examples of emotional intelligence from study findings • Discuss desired goal: improved emotional intelligence • Discuss path to goal: Training dessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 5

This module introduces the concept of systems theory. The research and core concepts will be addressed first to create a foundation of understanding. The goal of this session is to increase understanding of applicable systems and how they affect the classroom, students and faculty. Exploring the idea of available systems and encouraging questioning during the length of the session will help to accomplish this goal. Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Deep Dive into Systems Theory"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Theoretical and empirical evidence for systems theory; systematic exploration of principles, findings, and application
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with: 1. Systems theory 2. Examples of systems theory from literature 3. Examples of systems theory from study findings 4. Desired goal: improved understanding of systems 5. Path to goal: Training dessions
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss systems theory • Discuss examples of systems theory from literature • Discuss examples of systems theory from study findings • Discuss desired goal: improved understanding of systems • Discuss path to goal: Training dessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 6

This module is focused on the integration of the concepts from modules 1-5. An overview of the concepts will be outlined and then further information about how the concepts relate will be covered. The goal of this session is to increase the utilization and understanding of how these theories and models of communication and emotional intelligence can be combined and how they affect the classroom, students and faculty. Facilitating an open discussion and utilizing participation will allow extra attention on the usage of the concepts. Outlining these goals with the participants will allow them to take ownership of learning and implementation of the skills they have learned.

Lesson Title	"Putting It All Together"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Theoretical and empirical evidence for integrating warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and non-violent communication
Lesson Objectives	To acquaint internal stakeholders with how to integrate warm demanding, emotional intelligence, and non-violent communication
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss how to integrate all of the orientations discussed in previous sessions
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 7

This module is focused establishing the acceptance of change and how a change management plan can be implemented to assist teachers and administrators. It will be critical to establish a timeline that is realistic and that all parties can commit to implementing. Addressing specific steps and deadlines for the change management plan will be key to confirming buy-in from participants and creating a baseline for comparison upon evaluation of the program's success.

Lesson Title	"Planning for Change"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Defining a change management plan that the entire school can get behind
Lesson Objectives	To facilitate a discussion about how the school can move towards adopting the orientations discussed in the training sessionns
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Discuss how the school can move towards adopting the orientations discussed in the training sessionns
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Training Session 8

This module is focused on the perceived success of the program through the eyes of participants. The objective is gather pertinent data and utilize this information to establish potential next steps. The completion of this session does not necessarily mean the end of the process. If administrators and educators feel that the process of the last three sessions should be repeated, additionally meetings can be scheduled.

Lesson Title	"Measurement and Accountability"
Lesson Duration	150 minutes
Occupational Area	All teachers and principal
Concepts Taught	Measuring the success of the change plan
Lesson Objectives	Gathering data and forming accountability
Supplies needed	Personal computer equipped with Microsoft PowerPoint ™, overhead slide projector, laser pointer
Lesson Summary	• Asking participants to turn in rating forms for warm demanding, non-violent communication, and emotional intelligence; both self-evaluations and school climate evaluations will be collected. Year-over-year change will be looked for
Q & A Session	Encourage the audience to ask questions and provide them with answers.

Project Evaluation and Analysis

Overall, the goal of this project is to enact positive change in teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal communications through Professional Development. An evaluation phase will important for both participants and facilitators in their goal to improve communication throughout the district. Prior to the beginning of the evaluation and analysis process, the implementation team must establish a scoring model that will allow them to define success and failure to achieve the primary goal of each module.

Evaluation

Overall, the goal of this project is to enact positive change in teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-principal communications through PD. An evaluation phase will be important for both participants and facilitators in their goal to improve communication throughout the district. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure participants are receiving and implementing the information learned in the PD with fidelity. The data collected from the evaluation will be used to improve the PD. The evaluation plan will measure and explore the extent to which the goal and behavioral outcomes will have been met as a result of the PD activities. The question that will guide the PD is; how would you rate the delivery, information, and ability to implement the skills learned in each session. The evaluation and analysis techniques that will be employed for this PD reflect Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation (Changiz & Omid, 2014). The four levels of training include; Reaction, Learning, Behavior and Results.

This model will be reflected in the questions presented in the evaluation survey. The model supports the evaluation process in that it provides an objective process to effective evaluation (Changiz & Omid, 2014). The process includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and formative and summative techniques. The project will be evaluated on the participants' reaction to the training, if the participants' knowledge was enhanced because of the training, if their behaviors have changed in light of the knowledge, and finally a full summative analysis of the overall training as a whole. After each PD session teachers will participate in a survey that will evaluate their learning during that session. It will be a simple 5 question survey with a scale of 1 to 5, one being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable, including the following questions;

1. How would you rate the delivery of instruction in today's PD?
2. How would you rate the relevancy of what you learned in today's PD? By relevancy we mean is it relevant to you and your job functions?
3. How would you rate your ability to implement what was learned in today's session in the classroom?
4. How would you rate the likelihood of you using the information to enhance your work environment?
5. Name at least two strengths and two weaknesses of the training today?

The survey given is not a pre-established survey, and will be tested for validity and reliability before use. There will also be a summative evaluation given after all sessions are completed. This will include evaluating teacher's knowledge, skills, and ability to

incorporate information learned in the PD in the classroom. This will be evaluated using an observation checklist. Teachers will be observed at least 2 times and no more than 3 times. The checklist will allow the observer, myself or another facilitator that is not an administrator, to evaluate using the following items;

1. Teacher and students are engaged in positive communication

   Provide an example

2. Teacher uses warm demanding to address unwanted behaviors

   Provide an example

3. Teacher uses positive communication with all students

   Provide an example

4. Teacher responds to students' who are having difficulty in an empathetic way by expressing his/her understanding and then responding to the issue.

   Provide an example

5. Teacher responds to undesirable behaviors one on one, when possible.

   Provide an example

Student perceptions will be analyzed using the Gallup survey or ninth grade survey previously used by and provided by the district.

Finally, there will be a summative survey to gain a clear picture of how the PD plan as a whole. There are four key areas the surveys will focus on, they include: (a) course content, (b) course delivery, (c) implementation results, and (d) suggestions for improvement. The summative survey questions are as follows;

1. How would you rate the overall delivery of instruction in the PD sessions?

2. How would you rate the overall delivery of what was learned in the PD sessions?
3. Have you implemented any of the information learned in your classroom? If not skip to question 6.
4. If so what?
5. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate with the students in your classroom?
6. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate with other staff members?
7. How would you rate your ability to effectively communicate your needs for support to your administration?
8. How would you rate your ability to utilize warm demanding with your students?
9. If you have not begun implementation what is holding you back? Give a description of what supports are needed in order for you to begin implementation.
10. Overall did what you learn in the PD enhance rapport with your students? Explain.

An evaluation that explores results both quantitatively and from a phenomenological perspective will gain insight into how the lessons could be improved for future delivery. The feedback from the surveys will allow the implementation team to make any possible changes and continue providing the information to other staff

members within the district. Shani and Noumair (2014) notes that soliciting employee feedback can lead to increased motivation and energy regarding a change management process. This is ideal in an environment such as teaching was constant supervision and support is not always possible and many of the changes are based on individual implementation.

Analysis

The ability to effectively analyze the survey results is just as important as designing it correctly. The survey can be split into two portions for the initial analysis: quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will allow one to describe the current status of the identified variable (Creswell, 2012). The variables in this case being teacher perceptions of their abilities and overall information learned in the PD. This data will come from the surveys from each PD section. These sections will be assessed separately to establish commonalities within the question groups. The quantitative data will be compiled to show average ratings and a distribution curve to identify any trends in feedback for any of the four question groups. Data will also be compared to the predetermined rating scale to estimate potential success for the module. Although the evaluation procedure will largely stay the same over the course of the lesson deliveries, the ratings scale can be adjusted by the implementation team if they see necessary, but only before the completion of a module evaluation.

The overview of the qualitative feedback and suggestions will be analyzed much the same way, but will address any trends in word choice or emphasis on certain topics. A coding system that assigns a short-hand description to pieces of data so it can be found

easier later in the analysis will aid in finding those trends (Merriam, 2009). Once the evaluations are compiled, the identification of these trends will be notated. The implementation team will then utilize the qualitative data to either confirm, dispute, or elaborate on the quantitative data collected. This is an important step in the analysis due to the black and white nature of the quantitative data and the inopportunity to elaborate when answering on a scoring grid. As an example, the participants could rate the course delivery a zero for ineffective, but based on qualitative data the implementation team could learn that it was because the facilities air conditioning was broken and the room the lesson was taught in was sweltering. In this case, the quantitative data did not directly reflect the feedback the implementation team was looking for and could have otherwise attributed to a lack of facilitator knowledge.

Summary

The professional development plan is the first step in encouraging change in teacher, and administrator communication amongst themselves and students. Although a commitment to the process is necessary to achieve the goals and objectives set forth, a comprehensive evaluation method will ensure maximum value of the project from the participant perspective. Ongoing improvements to this professional development plan are encouraged as participant and facilitator feedback is received.

Although each phase of the professional development plan is important to the success of the program, focusing additional energy of preparation and evaluation will provide participants with a solid experience and the implementation team the necessary details to improve the program in the future. Initial planning will include identifying the

roles of the implementation team and establishing responsibility for: (a) location selection; (b) material acquisition; (c) communication with participants before and after the lesson; (d) distribution and collection of surveys; and (e) analysis of feedback. The implementation team will then work cohesively to establish an implementation timeline and set expectations based on the timeline. As core members of the project, the implementation team must remain positive about the program and encourage feedback and participation in the process. Once the feedback is analyzed it will then be the role of the implementation team to engage the appropriate resources to facilitate changes to the program for future use in the district. The success of the program will depend largely on the planning of the program and participant buy-in to the process. Acknowledging the positive impact communication training can have on the entire staff and the students is key to gaining the participants commitment to the program. It is also critical to communicate with local leaders and facilities to convey the importance of the program. Securing the support of the local community will encourage participants and the outcome of the professional development plan will affect positive change in the local schools and community.

References

Dome´nech Betoret, F., & Go´mez Artiga, A. (2004). Trainee teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning, classroom layout and exam design. *Educational Studies, 30*(4), 355-372. doi:10.1080/0305569042000310309

Shani, A., & Noumair, D. (2014). *Research in Organizational Change and Development.* Bradford, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Appendix B: E-mail Evidence

Hello
At our last meeting we spoke in detail about the issues the staff is having with their ninth and tenth grade students. They mentioned numerous instances where they feel the students are not ready for high school, they are immature, and they lack communication skills. From what I gather, and discussed with the staff, they are having issues with building positive rapport with their students. I discussed ways in which the district can assist them in bridging the communication gap with their students. This is what we discussed in our meeting.
I hope this is enough information. I did not want to provide the names of the teachers.
Lonie Meyer

>>> Lynda Huggins 11/07/14 11:38 AM >>>
Good Afternoon,

I am e-mailing because I am still working through some issues with my doctoral study and I am in need of some evidence to prove my problem exist. My topic deals with the lack of teacher-student rapport we sometimes witness in this district. I know we speak on it a lot, but the URR wants evidence in writing. I provided the video from the convocation this year, and PDs that focus on rapport, but they would like memos. Do you have a piece of paper where you jotted something down during a meeting or one of our meetings about the lack of rapport, or could you send me an e-mail referring to this issue? I can white your name out if you need me to. If you know of anyone who can be of assistance can you please forward them this e-mail.
Lynda Huggins
CIA
Ponits Career Technology Center

When we met on 10/13 we mentioned how some students feel like teachers don't care about anything but them passing the PARCC test. We also mentioned ways to get buy in from students. One of the things mentioned was to get to know students and their cultures and build a rapport with them.

Nhyere Howard
David H. Ponitz Career Technology Center
741 Washington St.
Dayton, Ohio 45402
(937) 542-7298

>>> Lynda Huggins 10/31/2014 9:10 AM >>>
I am e-mailing because I am still working through some issues with my doctoral study and I am in need of some evidence to prove my problem exist. My topic deals with the lack of teacher-student rapport we sometimes witness in this district. I know we speak on it a lot, but the URR wants evidence in writing. I provided the video from the convocation this year, and PDs that focus on rapport, but they would like memos. Do you have a piece of paper where you jotted something down during a meeting or one of our meetings about the lack of rapport, or could you send me an e-mail referring to this issue? I can white your name out if you need me to. If you know of anyone who can be of assistance can you please forward them this e-mail.
Huggins

Hello,
During our previous discussion it was mentioned that a group of teachers are having problems with students they teach. In confidence, they are saying that many of their students are failing, not submitting homework, and reporting to class late. The teachers feeling is administration should be more involved in the discipline process. The teachers are hesitant to ask administration for help, because they don't want to be judged as a teacher with lack of certain coping skills.

>>> Lynda Huggins 10/31/14 9:10 AM >>>
I am e-mailing because I am still working through some issues with my doctoral study and I am in need of some evidence to prove my problem exist. My topic deals with the lack of teacher-student rapport we sometimes witness in this district. I know we speak on it a lot, but the URR wants evidence in writing. I provided the video from the convocation this year, and PDs that focus on rapport, but they would Iike memos. Do you have a piece of paper where you jotted something down during a meeting or one of our meetings about the lack of rapport, or could you send me an e-mail referring to this issue? I can white your name out if you need me to. If you know of anyone who can be of assistance can you please forward them this e-mail.
Huggins

Appendix C: PD Evidence

Outcomes

Participant Outcomes:

1. Participants will be able to write/articulate personal belief system about accountability, race, **poverty**, equity, and excellence in education.
2. Participates will be able to identify in-school factors that affect student learning.
3. Participants will be able to generate a PDSA action plan that identifies at least one teacher behavior or attitude they will modify to promote the success of students.
4. Participants will present new learning and critical awareness with colleagues.

Student Achievement Outcomes:
Students will be able to develop more positive relationships wth teachers which should result in improved academic achievement.

Describe how achievement of the course objectives will be evaluated.

* **Level I** *(Participants' reaction. Please enter three statements to appear on the evaluation for this plan which will indicate what participants will be able to accomplish after the training.)*
This will be the default statements that will be added to the plan outlines. If the statements should not be the same for all sessions, make changes to the statements on the plan outline.
1. I am able to write/articulate persoanl belief system about accountability, race, poevrty, equity and excellence in education.
2. I am able to identify in-school factors that affect student outcomes.
3. I am able to identify at least one personal area for self-improvement in my attuitude and behavior.

* **Level II** *(How will you measure participants' learning during session(s)?)*
Class discussion as measured by facilitator and building administrators
Teacher essays and oral presentations as measured by facilitator and building administrators
PDSA personal action plans

Level III *(Participants' use of new knowledge)*
1. Participants will write a brief essay or give a brief oral summary of their personal belief system about accountability, race, **poverty**, equity, and excellence in education.
2. Participants will focus and identify in-school factors that affect student learning
3. Participants will establish at least one goal and compose a PDSA plan of action that targets a change in personal attitude and/or behavior with students.
4. Participants will present salient points and new learning from the text with colleagues.

Level IV *(Participant outcome(s))*
1. Participants will be able to write/articulate personal belief system about accountability, race, **poverty**, equity, and excellence in education as measured by self-reflection, facilitator observation, and building administators' observation.
2. Participants will be able to identify in-school factors that affect student learning.
3. Participants will be able to develop a PDSA action plan based upon a self-prescribed personal goal for self-improvement that involves the modification of at least one persoanl behavior or attitude they believe will promote the success of students as measured by , session facilitator, and building administrators.
4. Participants will share new perspectives gleaned from the text with colleagues as measured by facilitator and building administrators.

* **General Cost Center Manager:** CN=Marlea Jordan Gaskins/O=DPS
(used only for costs other than stipends)

Please itemize the cost:

(please use numeric values only)

	Budget	Actual	Key/Object Codes
* Consultant/Presenter Fee	$0.00		
Material	$510.40		
Reserve Teachers	$0.00		
Food	$0.00		
Other (Explain)	$0.00		

* *Requires Board Approval*

Do you want to offer a Stipend? Yes

Cost Center Manager #1:	CN=Marlea Jordan Gaskins/O=DPS

Appendix D: Archival Survey Questions and Links

Survey 1 Gallup Student Poll (20 question survey)

10. My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.

11. At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

14. I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.

15. Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?

Survey 2 Ninth grade first semester survey (17 question survey)

1. I believe my teachers have an interest in what I like
2. I believe my teachers understand me
3. I can talk to my teachers about what is happening in my life
4. I can talk to my teachers about my plans after high school
5. I believe my teachers respect my culture
7. I can stay after school for tutoring if I need help
8. Sometimes I don't want to come to school because of a teacher
9. Sometimes I don't want to come to go to class because of a teacher
10. I believe I can talk to my teachers if I am having difficulties in

Appendix E: Tentative Interview Questions

1. What are ninth grade teachers' perceptions of their ninth graders and their overall ninth grade experience?
2. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their communications with their students?
3. How do ninth grade teachers perceive their rapport with ninth their students? What strategies are effective and what strategies are ineffective when building rapport?
4. How well do ninth grade teachers feel they communicate with eighth grade teachers concerning incoming ninth grade students?
5. What are ninth grade teacher's perceptions of administrative support during the transition period and during the school year?

Appendix F: Sample Consent Forms

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study to allow you the chance to share your thoughts, feelings, experiences about ninth grade teacher- student rapport. This study will gather teacher and student opinions about rapport or lack thereof. The researcher is inviting 15 teachers, from this district, who teach at least one class of ninth grade students to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Lynda R. Huggins who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher because she has taught in this district for 7 years and now holds the position as a curriculum coach at Ponitz Career Technology Center, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how ninth grade teachers and students interact with each other. The items this study will focus on are rapport, care, respect, and communication amongst ninth grade teachers and students.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you were asked to:

- Participate in a short 45 minute to an hour interview
- Participate in a second interview to make sure your ideas and opinions are conveyed correctly. This interview can take place through email, phone, or face to face.

Here are some sample questions:

1. How would you describe your rapport with your students?
2. What if any barriers exist when developing rapport with your students?
3. To what extent do teachers have an impact on ninth grade students having a positive ninth grade experience?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at this school or school district will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may also stop participation at any time

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as staying after school or coming in early. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The potential benefits from this study could include; your perceptions being heard, and possible changes and supports throughout the district to address whatever problems you may be experiencing with your ninth grade students.

Payment:
There is no payment provided for participation.

Privacy:
Any information you provide were kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Your name will never recorded on any interview sheets or recordings. The data from this study were kept secure in a lock box. Data were kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me via email or phone. My email address is Lynda.huggins@waldenu.edu and my phone number is 937-xxx-xxx. If you want to talk privately about your child's rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University staff member who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210.
The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, or replying to this email with the words, "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Only include the signature section below if using paper consent forms.
Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent
Participant's Signature
Researcher's Signature

Appendix G: Data Analysis Table

List each research question.	**List each analysis that will address the research question to the left. (Use multiple rows if more than one analysis will address a particular research question.)**	**List the data points that are needed to complete each analysis to the left. Use a separate line for each data point. For the quantitative analyses: data points include the specific variables (e.g., scores, groupings) needed for each analysis. Label each as IV, DV, or covariate. For the qualitative analyses: with as much precision as possible, indicate which part(s) of the interview or observation guide will yield the critical data points for each analysis.**	**Describe which persons, documents, or artifacts are supplying each data point**
what are ninth graders' and their teachers' perceptions of their rapport with each other, particularly with regard to the ninth grade experience	Using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and categorizing for qualitative data	Archival Survey Data and Interview Questions	
How do ninth grade teachers perceive their communications with their students?	1. I will number each line of the interview questions shortly after each interview and go through each line	IQ: 1,2	Teacher Interview

	labeling the sentences, or words according to tentative themes of care, respect, communication, ninth grade experience, and rapport. 2. I will listen to each interview and jot down words and labeling according to the themes in number one. 3. I will then categorize written interview data in columns labeled; communication, care, respect, ninth grade experience, and rapport. 4. I will then take written themes and put them in the categories		
How do ninth grade teachers perceive their rapport with ninth their students?	" "	IQ:3,4	Teacher Interview questions
What are ninth grade teachers' perceptions of their ninth graders and their overall ninth grade experience?	" "	IQ:5	Teacher Interview questions
Do ninth graders believe	1. I will use descriptive	S1Q:10, 11,&14 S2Q: 1, 2	Archival ninth grade

their teachers care for them?	statistics. I will calculate the mean, median, and mode. 2. I will graph each set of data (mean. Median, and mode). 3. I will then summarize findings 4. I will Compare findings to qualitative categories		survey data
Do ninth graders believe their teachers respect who they are?	“ “	S1Q:15 S2Q:5	Archival ninth grade survey data
Do ninth graders believe they can communicate with their teachers?	“ “	S2Q: 4,3,10	Archival ninth grade survey data
Do ninth graders believe their relationship with their teachers impacts their ninth grade experience?	“ “	S2Q: 8, 9, 7	Archival ninth grade survey data

Appendix H: Data Use Agreement

DATA USE AGREEMENT

This Data Use Agreement, effective as of December 1, 2014, is entered into by and between Lynda R. Huggins and Ponitz Career Technology Center. The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in research **in accord with laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.** In the case of a discrepancy among laws, the agreement shall follow whichever law is stricter.

1. Definitions. Due to the study's affiliation with Laureate, a USA-based company, unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the USA "HIPAA Regulations" and/or "FERPA Regulations" codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

2. Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with any applicable laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.

3. Data Fields in the LDS. **No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS).** In preparing the LDS, Data Provider shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the research: ninth grade previously administered surveys.

4. Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

    a. Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

    b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

    c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

    d. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

e. Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

5. Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS **for its Research activities only.**

6. Term and Termination.

a. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

b. Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.

c. Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

d. For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.

e. Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.

7. Miscellaneous.

a. Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

b. Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

c. No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

d. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

e. Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

DATA PROVIDER	**DATA RECIPIENT**
Signed: _____	Signed: _____
Print Name: _____	Print Name: _____
Print Title: _____	Print Title: _____

Appendix I: OSD Data Table

SCHOOL/#OF STUDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITES	HISPANIC	MALES	FEMALES	IEP	LEP
OS1/ 784	73%	12.9%	3.2%	44.9%	55.1%	15.4%	1.8%
OS2/ 482	93.5%	3.8%		43%	57%	28.3%	NC
OS3/ 654	93.4%	3.1%	NC	57.2%	42.8%	19.9%	NC
OS4/ 950	34.6%	52.2%	6.6%	55.7%	44.3%	25.8%	13.6%

(Ohio Department of Education, 2014)

Appendix J: Gallup Poll Information

earned, and GPA data at the end of the term suggested that hope (more precisely the hope total score, or sum of the responses to the six hope items) was the best predictor of each variable: attendance (0.29), credits earned over the course of the first semester of the freshmen year (0.30), and total GPA at winter break (0.36). The hope item focused on confidence in graduating was the best predictor of positive student behaviors and outcomes. Engagement (represented by the sum of the responses of the five engagement items) was also a significant predictor of these credits earned (0.21) and GPA (0.23), and the "praise and recognition" item does appear to be the item that accounted for engagement's association with desirable student behaviors/outcomes. The individual "ladder of life" responses were not related to these markers of student success. When results were analyzed by hope, engagement, and wellbeing classifications, hopeful and thriving students did better than students with lower hope and wellbeing classifications. Additional analyses regarding the utility of these classifications will be discussed in an addendum to this report.

March 2009 Gallup Student Poll Nationwide Pilot Study

In March 2009, the core 20 items of the Gallup Student Poll were piloted with 70,078 students in grades 5 through 12 from 335 schools and 59 districts located in 18 states and the District of Columbia. The online poll was completed on school computers during one of four March fielding options; polls were open Tuesday through Friday during school hours. Based on the March 2009 data, the six hope items constitute an internally consistent scale (alpha = 0.76) and the five engagement items constitute an internally consistent scale (alpha = 0.71).

May 2009 Representative Panel Study

Results are based on a Gallup Panel study and are based on mail and Web surveys completed by 328 youth aged 13 to 18, conducted in May 2009. Gallup Panel members are aged 13 and up, and are recruited by phone through random selection methods and can be surveyed across multiple modes of data collection. Teens aged 13 to 17 were invited to participate in the online survey either via e-mail or by mailing a letter to them through USPS. A total of 1855 surveys were sent, and 328 were received, for an overall 18% completion rate. The panel is weighted so that it is demographically representative of the U.S. youth population.

The core 20 items of the Gallup Student Poll were completed by the representative sample of 328 students in grades 5 through 12. Based on these May 2009 representative panel data, the six hope items constitute an internally consistent scale (alpha = 0.65), and are best described by a single factor solution (Eigenvalue = 2.24) accounting for 37% of the scale variance, though the component matrix suggested cross loading of an item. In this sample the Engagement Index has adequate internal consistency (alpha = 0.70) and all five items load on a single factor (Eigenvalue = 2.4) accounting for 48% of the scale variance. The Wellbeing Index is measured by two items (alpha = 0.63), with a 0.46 correlation between the "ladder now" and "ladder future" items.

October 2009 Gallup Student Poll Validation Study

The online Gallup Student Poll was completed in American schools by a convenience sample of 246,682 students in grades 5 through 12. The survey was conducted from September 28 through October 30, 2009. There were 905 schools from 93 districts in 33 states and the District of Columbia that chose to participate in the poll. Schools participating in the Gallup Student Poll were not randomly selected and were neither charged nor given any incentives beyond receipt of school-specific data. Participation rates for schools ranged from 1.3% to 100% of the total student population.

Table 2. Correlations between Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing and Gallup Student Poll Supplemental Scales (All Correlations Are Positive and Significant)

	Eng2	Satisfaction	Strengths 1	Strengths 2	Gratitude	SOC	EPI	WB	GWI
Hope	0.48	0.51	0.48	0.61	0.58	0.63	0.46	0.50	0.61
Engagement	0.71	0.54	0.59	0.48	0.51	0.51	0.26	0.56	0.55
Wellbeing	0.25	0.30	0.25	0.30	0.32	0.32	0.23	0.29	0.25

One supplemental scale was assigned randomly to each student respondent. More than 12000 students completed each index.

Wellbeing is represented by the response to the Ladder Future item. Eng2 = Engagement Supplement, Satisfaction = Brief Multidimensional Student Satisfaction with Life Scale, Strengths1 = Strengths Awareness, Strengths2 = Strengths Self-efficacy, SOC = Selection-Optimization-Compensation Index, EPI = Entrepreneurial Potential Index, WB = Wellbeing Finder Short Form, GWI = Good Worker Index

All correlations between the core scales (hope, engagement, and wellbeing) and the supplemental scales were positive and significant. Hope was most strongly correlated (0.6 or higher) with agentic measures (i.e., strengths self-efficacy, SOC) and a brief measure of wellbeing. Engagement was most strongly correlated with the supplemental engagement scale. All correlations between Wellbeing and supplemental scales were between 0.20 and 0.32 in magnitude, including the correlation between Wellbeing and the Wellbeing Finder Short Form.

July 2010 Representative Panel Study

The Gallup Student Poll representative survey was conducted with Gallup Panel members from Monday, June 11 through Tuesday, July 6, 2010. 2,555 survey invitations were delivered to youth aged 10 to 18 years and 642 usable surveys were returned (25% completion rate).

Gallup Panel members are aged 13 and up and are recruited by phone through random selection methods and can be surveyed across multiple modes of data collection. In order to identify the sample of 10 to 18 year olds, Gallup identified households within the Panel that were known to either have a panelist in this age range, or whose household was known to have a child in the age range (as verified in a January 2010 profile survey). The survey was conducted by both mail and Web to accommodate those households that lack internet access or who do not prefer to respond to surveys online. The survey was mailed or e-mailed directly to the young panelists in the specified age range and also e-mailed or mailed to the parents of the young panelists, seeking their consent for their child to respond to the survey.

The Panel is weighted so that it is demographically representative of the U.S. youth population. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ±4.95 percentage points. Margins of sampling errors vary for individual subsamples. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of polls. Regarding concurrent validity, hope, engagement, and wellbeing are positively correlated with financial literacy behavior and skill.

The October 2009 Gallup Student Poll dataset was analyzed to determine the internal consistency and factor structure of each of the three scales. The Hope Index is an internally consistent scale (alpha = 0.78), with all six items loading on a single factor (Eigenvalue = 2.89) with that factor accounting for nearly 48% of the scale variance. The Engagement Index is internally consistent (alpha = 0.72), and all five items load on a single factor (Eigenvalue = 2.39) with that factor accounting for 48% of the scale variance. The Wellbeing Index is measured by two items (alpha = 0.60) with a 0.43 correlation between the "ladder now" and "ladder future" items. Factor loadings, alphas, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Factor Loadings, Reliability Estimates, Means, and Standard Deviations for Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing Items (October 2009; n = 246,682)

	Factor Loading	Reliability If Item Deleted	Mean	SD
HOPE INDEX*		0.78	4.37	0.54
Know I will graduate	0.72	0.74	4.74	0.70
Adult	0.64	0.76	4.74	0.74
Ways to get good grades	0.73	0.73	4.30	0.90
Energetically pursue goals	0.73	0.73	4.12	0.92
Ways around any problem	0.60	0.77	3.80	1.04
Good job after graduation	0.72	0.73	4.44	0.87
ENGAGEMENT INDEX**		0.72	3.99	0.79
Best Friend at School	0.50	0.73	4.40	1.12
Safe in school	0.72	0.66	3.93	1.19
Schoolwork is important	0.76	0.64	4.13	1.09
Do what I do best	0.77	0.64	3.95	1.17
Recognition or praise	0.68	0.68	3.49	1.42
WELLBEING				1.42
Ladder Now			7.28	2.18
Ladder Future			8.46	1.73

*Eigenvalue = 2.89, Percentage of Variance Accounted for = 48

**Eigenvalue = 2.39 Percentage of Variance Accounted for = 48

A closer examination of factor structure across specific ethnic group yielded information about the cultural equivalence of the scales. These analyses will be presented in an addendum to this report.

Concurrent validity studies focused on the associations between the hope, engagement, and wellbeing scales and supplemental scales that were administered to a subgroup of the sample. Supplemental scales include an additional engagement scale based on Gallup research, student satisfaction scales (Huebner, Seligson, Valois, & Suldo, 2006), Strengths Awareness items (Gallup), the Strengths Self-Efficacy Scale (Tsai, Zhao, Chaichanasakul, Flores, & Lopez, 2009).), a gratitude scale (Froh et al., 2010), the SOC-4H measure (Zimmerman et al., 2007; Gestsdottir et al., 2009), an entrepreneurial potential index (Gallup), a brief wellbeing finder (Gallup), and a good worker scale (Gallup), all of which had alphas greater than 0.70. It was hypothesized that the correlations between the three core scales and the supplemental scales would be positive. The concurrent validity results are presented in Table 2.

Table 3. Factor Loadings, Reliability Estimates, Means, and Standard Deviations for Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing Items (July 2010; n = 642)

	Factor Loading	Reliability If Item Deleted	Mean	SD
HOPE INDEX*		0.76	4.46	0.54
Know I will graduate	0.75	0.73	4.88	0.47
Adult	0.59	0.75	4.91	0.48
Ways to get good grades	0.76	0.70	4.48	0.81
Energetically pursue goals	0.71	0.71	4.12	0.95
Ways around any problem	0.69	0.72	3.99	0.95
Good job after graduation	0.64	0.74	4.23	0.97
ENGAGEMENT INDEX**		0.76	4.17	0.79
Best Friend at School	0.55	0.76	4.52	0.95
Safe in school	0.68	0.73	4.43	0.92
Schoolwork is important	0.83	0.67	4.18	1.05
Do what I do best	0.80	0.68	3.98	1.12
Recognition or praise	0.71	0.73	3.78	1.39
WELLBEING				
Ladder Now			7.71	1.65
Ladder Future			8.32	1.50

*Eigenvalue = 2.86, Percentage of Variance Accounted for = 48

**Eigenvalue = 2.60, Percentage of Variance Accounted for = 52

The core 20 items of the Gallup Student Poll were completed by the representative sample of 642 students in grades 5 through 12. Based on these June 2010 data, the six hope items constitute an internally consistent scale (alpha = 0.76), and are best described by a single factor solution (Eigenvalue = 2.86) accounting for 48% of the scale variance. In this sample the Engagement Index has adequate internal consistency (alpha = 0.76) and all five items load on a single factor (Eigenvalue = 2.60) accounting for 52% of the scale variance. The Wellbeing Index is measured by two items (alpha = 0.64), with a 0.47 correlation between the "ladder now" and "ladder future" items. Factor loadings, alphas, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.

Reliability and Validity of the Gallup Student Poll — A Summary

Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing are theoretically and psychometrically distinct constructs, each measured by a small number of items. The three core scales have adequate internal consistency; stability estimates have not been examined. Single factor solutions best describe each of the constructs. Concurrent and predictive validity have yielded findings consistent with hypotheses.

Gallup Student Poll Psychometric Overview

Hope | ideas and energy we have for the future

- 6 items constitute an internally consistent scale (Alphas > 0.70)
- Stability analyses needed
- Single factor solution best describes structure
- Positive correlations with related measures
- Ongoing predictive validity analyses

Engagement | involvement in/enthusiasm for school

- 5 items constitute an internally consistent scale (Alphas typically > 0.70)
- Stability analyses needed
- Single factor solution best describes structure
- Positive correlations with related measures
- Ongoing predictive validity analyses

Wellbeing | how we think about and experience our lives

- Stability analyses needed
- Single factor solution best Positive correlations with related measures
- Ongoing predictive validity analyses

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