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The Relationship Between Student Achievement and Level of Parent Satisfaction in a Summer Enrichment Program

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND LEVEL OF PARENT SATISFACTION IN A SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Thesis submitted to
The Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist
School Psychology

By
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parent satisfaction and student achievement in an activity based, multiage, inclusive, summer enrichment program. The researcher constructed a survey that was mailed to parents the first day of the last week of the program (n=139). Thirty five surveys were returned by mail and five surveys were conducted by phone for a total of forty surveys. The average score for this sample of parents on the whole survey was 3.98 (SD=1.41). The average parent satisfaction score on question fourteen was 4.40.

Multiple regression analysis on 40 parent surveys revealed that the variable "perceived care by staff toward children" was the best predictor of parent satisfaction; accounting for 35% of the variance. The predictor variable is a component of positive school climate, which is a significant determinant of effective schools. A low, positive correlation was found between perceived progress in reading ($r = .26$, $p < .05$) and parent satisfaction. Students' actual progress as obtained by curriculum based assessment in reading and math was not correlated with their parent's satisfaction response from question fourteen of the parent survey. A series of one way ANOVA analysis were conducted between parents of students with disabilities and parents of students without disabilities given the following variables: level of satisfaction, perceived student achievement and parent involvement. There were no differences in levels of satisfaction between parents of students with disabilities and parents of students without disabilities. Moreover, levels of satisfaction in both groups of parents were unaffected by the following variables: perceived student achievement and parent involvement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Program evaluations eliciting parent satisfaction data have been conducted in a variety of settings: schools (Tuck, 1995), early childhood intervention programs (McNaughton, 1994), and adolescent treatment centers (Rey, O'Brien, & Walter, 2002). Few studies, however, have specifically examined the relationship among student outcome variables, namely student achievement and parent satisfaction in an educational program. Further contributing to the paucity of research on parent satisfaction and student achievement is the fact that most program evaluations that utilize parent satisfaction measures only provide descriptive statistics of the data, which are insufficient in describing parent satisfaction and its correlates.

Statement of Hypothesis and Exploratory Questions

The present study hypothesizes that the following variables: perceived improvement in reading, perceived improvement in math, and communication with staff will predict parent satisfaction (Saint Laurent & Fournier, 1993). Second, it is hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship associated between parent satisfaction and student achievement as measured by parental perception of academic progress. Third, it is hypothesized that there will not be a significant association between parent involvement and parent satisfaction (Meyers & Blacher, 1987; Saint Laurent & Fournier, 1993). Fourth, a series of one way ANOVA analysis will be conducted to explore the following: (a) differences in levels of satisfaction among parents of nondisabled children and those of parents of a child with a disability, (b) differences in levels of satisfaction between parents who rated their students as having made more academic progress and those parents who did not rate their children as having made more academic progress.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education refers to the rights of students with disabilities to be educated alongside their peers in regular, age-appropriate classrooms. This value was set forth in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA mandate) and its 1997 amendments. Additional legislation provided in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensured nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and was important in the legal mandate of Least Restrictive Environment. As a result of this legislation, students with disabilities are encouraged to participate in the school curricula and culture as much as possible. Although there is no legal definition of inclusion or inclusive education, the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) has developed a working definition:

> Providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society. (National Study, 1994)

Inclusive education programs have increased and many studies have shown their effectiveness. Baker, Wang, and Walbert (1994) conducted a meta-analyses of large-scale studies and found that students with disabilities who were educated in regular classes performed better academically and socially than their counterparts who did not receive inclusive education. Additional studies by Deno, Murayama, Espin, & Cohen (1990) examining academic outcomes for students with disabilities have found that students with mild disabilities in inclusive classrooms made more progress in the general curriculum than students with disabilities who received pullout services.

Not only do students make academic gains in inclusive settings, but researchers have also found that students with disabilities improve socially and behaviorally. Ray (1985) found that students with disabilities were as likely to engage in positive social interactions with peers as were nondisabled students. In addition, Burello and Wright (1993) found that students with disabilities in inclusive classes have improved self-esteem.

Nondisabled students also benefit from inclusive education. Staub and Peck (1994) identified five outcomes from the research: (a) lowered student fears of human differences along with higher levels of comfort and awareness, (b) increased social cognition, (c) improved self-concept, (d) development of personal principles, and (e) growth of warm and caring friendships. In conclusion, inclusive education is beneficial for all students and promotes a perception of students with disabilities as important members of society, bridging the link between school and community.

Although federal legislation ensured the right of students with disabilities to participate in regular education, it also established a classification system of disabilities with which to determine student eligibility for special education services. As a result, students are identified through assessment by psychologists, doctors, and other qualified personnel. Students who were found eligible received a diagnostic label describing the disability. The practice of labeling continues to be a controversial issue, and results of studies examining labeling effects have been mixed.

Labeling Effects

Recent studies have shown that labels, such as "students with disabilities," can influence teachers' attitudes (Kagan & Tippins, 1991; Weinstein, Madison, & Kuklinski, 1995). In addition, this same label has been shown to consistently elicit negative attitudes from teachers toward students with disabilities (Weisel & Kaspa, 2002). Early studies by G. P. Cartwright and Cartwright (1995) revealed that knowledge of a student's label may lower teachers' expectations toward that student. Furthermore, the use of labels may encourage self-fulfilling prophecies, whereby teachers and parents expect a child to behave in accordance with the child's diagnosis, and ultimately contribute in shaping the child's behavior to match the diagnosis (Gelfand et al., 1988). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) conducted a study of expectancy effects, called "Pygmalion in the Classroom." The study revealed that randomly selected students, whose teachers were led to believe that they would show academic gains, demonstrated IQ gains over the course of a school year. The results sparked additional research on expectancy effects as part of the teacher- student relationship.

As a result of the negative findings regarding labeling effects, an antilabeling movement began in the late 1970s. The movement was partly based on the belief that disabilities are also influenced by an individual's social perceptions and values (Hallahan & Kaufman, 1991). As a result, biases or prejudice can be reflected in labels that can harm the labeled person. Levin (1982) found that a teacher's optimism for future success was more influenced by the "emotionally disturbed" label of a hypothetical student than the "mentally retarded" or "dyslexic" label. Moreover, members of certain ethnic groups may be labeled more often, which would add to the discrimination against individuals within that group (Chinn & Hughes, 1987).

Despite the aforementioned research findings, other studies have indicated that a child's behavior is more important and has a stronger influence on teacher perceptions and expectations than does the child's label (Fernald, Williams, & Droescher, 1985). Indeed, when a teacher obtains direct information regarding a child's functioning, the effect of labels is significantly reduced (Sattler, 1992).

Although labeling has advantages and limitations, it continues to characterize much of special education. Efforts to establish inclusive education must handle the issue of labeling thoughtfully and considerately, in order to promote successful inclusion programs. Ultimately, inclusive education requires a change in the system, culture, curriculum, and practices of schools. One component of successful inclusive education is teacher instructional method.

Constructivist View of Learning

"Effective strategy instruction for students of all abilities is not linear, or lock-step, but constructivist, allowing students to construct their own interpretations and applications of a strategy through active processing and interaction with other students as well as the teacher (Wade & Zone, 2000, p. 16). Such methods include (but are not limited to) the following: cooperative learning, activity based or project-based learning, and thematic teaching. Cooperative learning refers to instructional approaches where students work in small mixed-ability groups. Activity-based, or project-based learning, also referred to as experiential learning, is a way for children to interact with people, objects, and the environment in ways that have personal meaning to them. The activities or projects are utilized in thematic teaching, where the content is organized into broad topics, which are then used for in-depth study over a period of time. Subsequently, this enables teachers to integrate areas across the curriculum and utilize

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language arts, math, science, social studies, art, drama, and cooking as learning tools to help students construct and internalize information about a particular topic.

Constructivist theories of learning emphasize the notion that learners must "individually discover and transform complex information if they are to make it their own (Slavin, 2003 p. 257). The idea of learning by doing is not a new one, and was advocated by both Dewey and Kilpatrick in the early part of the century. The concept was further advanced by the work of Piaget and Vygotsky. Piaget's view of cognitive development emphasized the active role of learners in creating their own sense of reality. In addition, Vygotsky put forth several key concepts regarding learning that have become the foundation of modern constructivists. First, he proposed a social learning theory, in that children learn through interaction with their peers. Second, he coined the term "the zone of proximal development," which states that learning also takes place when children are engaged in a task that requires assistance from an adult or competent peer. Third, Vygotsky called attention to the process of learning between a novice and an expert. This concept is defined as "cognitive apprenticeship" (Slavin, 2003, p. 258) and encourages teachers to engage students in complex tasks and provide mentor like assistance to the student. Cooperative learning groups best demonstrate this concept. Finally, Vygotsky stressed the notion that learning is mediated by the teacher, who guides instruction in such a way to promote acquisition of skills to enable students' higher cognitive functioning.

Curricular and instructional methods that promote active learning, guided instruction, and the social construction of knowledge that are interactive, experiential, and inquiry based have been identified in the literature as effective ways to facilitate inclusion of students with disabilities within the regular classroom (Wade & Zone, 2000).   For example, Mastropieri and Scruggs find that students with disabilities who had received instruction utilizing the

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constructivist approach in inclusive science classes were more successful than their counterparts

placed in a science class that emphasized vocabulary acquisition, lecture, or textbook learning

and whole-group recitations.

Multiage Classroom

A multiage classroom is one in which students of different chronological ages are

intentionally assigned to the same classroom. This type of classroom structure is best associated

with Vygotsky's theory of "zone of proximal development," which was previously discussed.

Typically students work in groups wherein two or more age levels are represented. Students in a

multiage classroom not only receive assistance from their teacher, but may also take on the

expert role by serving as peer-tutors. Kasten (1993) found that this experience increases the

student's self-esteem. Multiage classrooms are based on the view that children develop

physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally at varying rates and not always in a uniform or

predictable fashion. Subsequently, multiage classrooms are conducive for meeting the needs of

individual students who may exhibit developmental discrepancies ("Multiage Grouping", 1998).

Research has shown that students display academic and social gains in multiage

classrooms (Kolstead, 1998). Language acquisition also improves in a multiage setting. Grant

(1993) found that younger children improved their language skills as a result of interaction with

older students. Multiage classrooms foster a sense of collaboration and sharing, offering the

opportunity to extend their learning in a variety of ways. Dever (1994) found that students

learning math concepts used a variety of strategies such as modeling, tutoring, and

pairing/sharing. Nye (1995) found that students in a multiage classroom held better attitudes

toward school and work, displayed fewer classroom management problems, and had increased

attendance and better relationships with their peers. Additional studies have documented

improved self-esteem on the part of students in multiage classrooms and improved attitudes

toward schools (Butler, 1998). Finally, Pratt (1986) found no consistent benefit of age

segregation, but rather that multiage and multigrade classrooms provide a socially and

psychologically healthy environment.

Collaboration

Another variable found among successful inclusive education programs is the practice of

collaboration. The concept of collaboration in many definitions in the literature involves the idea

of working with others (Wade & Zone, 2000) and problem solving (Thomas & Grimes, 1995).

Welch and Sheridan (1995) developed their definition by incorporating aspects of several

definitions of collaboration they reviewed in the literature.

> A dynamic framework for efforts that endorses interdependence and parity during
> interactive exchange of resources between at least two partners who work together in a
> decision-making process that is influenced by cultural and systemic factors to achieve
> common goals. (Welch & Sheridan, 1995, p. 1170)

Cramer (1998) identified several key features of collaboration. First, collaboration should

encourage a professional environment that fosters student achievement. Second, collaboration

should encourage not only problem solving but the development of solutions as well. Finally,

collaboration centers on common goals to the group and not individual ones (Wade & Zone,

2000). Moreover, collaboration is characterized by equality in relationships and effective

interpersonal communication (Thomas & Grimes, 1995; Wade & Zone, 2000). Phillips and

McCullough (1990) suggest an ethic of collaboration consisting of five parts that addresses the

need for collaboration to be supported as a system within the school.

Collaboration in a school setting can take many forms. Wade (2000) describes the forms

of collaboration that encourage inclusion: team teaching, collaborative consultation, intervention

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teams, and multidisciplinary student service delivery teams. Team teaching involves two or more teachers who work together and share the responsibilities of teaching in one classroom. By pairing a special education teacher with a regular education teacher, students with disabilities receive services in the regular education classroom. Additional advantages to team teaching include: (a) reduced student to teacher ratio, (b) easier individual instruction for students with disabilities, and (c) improved teacher professionalism.

Collaborative consultation occurs when two or more individuals engage in problem solving in order to assist another known individual (Wade& Zone, 2000). The consultation interaction is grounded by the roles and relationship between the consultant and consultee (Thomas & Grimes, 1995). Intervention teams are composed of teachers who discuss the needs of students who may be at risk behaviorally or academically. The team is designed to reduce the unsuitable referrals as well as creating and applying interventions to help the student in the regular classroom. Finally, multidisciplinary teams are made up of school staff, specialists, and parents. The team reviews a variety of assessment data in order to determine if a student is eligible for special education services. If the team determines that the student is eligible, an individualized education program is developed that is based on the needs identified through assessment.

In conclusion, serving students with disabilities requires participation from many individuals across disciplines. In particular, the school psychologists, assists students in and out of the classroom in several ways. One of many ways a school psychologists assists students is by conducting an evaluation of an education program.

Role of School Psychologist and Program Evaluation

The passage of federal legislation for disabled students in 1975 secured the role of school psychologists. Since then, the services that many school psychologists have provided have primarily involved psycho educational assessment. This duty, however, has often restricted school psychologists from delivering additional services for which they were trained.

As a result, there have been many calls for change to the role of school psychology over the past 50 years. The ideas that have been widely spread include: increased attention of indirect service, applied psychology, prevention, evaluation of services, and greater consideration of diversity. Individual practitioners as well as the university community have taken responsibility of bringing about this change (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000). Indeed, Bradley-Johnson and Dean (2000, p. 3) note that:

> University programs can assist in documentation of the effects of intervention efforts in schools by ensuring that their graduates are skilled in program evaluation and by providing in-service training in this area for practicing school psychologists who do not have this background. Program evaluation is critically important for school psychologists to aid in the development of programs as well as to document effects.

Although limited resources and busy schedules which have been identified as obstacles to program evaluation, this activity still remains a responsibility that is stated in the NASP Standards and Provision of School Psychological Services (Thomas & Grimes, 1995 p. 1170).

> 4.3.6. Program planning and Evaluation: the process of designing and judging the effectiveness of educational structures at all levels
>
> 4.3.6.1 School psychologists provide program planning and evaluation services to assist in decision making activities.

Evaluating programs is also an activity mentioned in the Continual Professional Development Program in Best Practices III. Clearly, school psychologists are needed to provide their expertise

as researchers to assist in the designing and implementation of evaluation of programs in order to help improve educational services to children.

Parent Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction has been found to be an essential component of program evaluation (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988; Strain, 1988). "In program evaluation, parent satisfaction has been identified as one measure that deserves further attention" (McNaughton, 1994, p. 27). The term "satisfaction" is a construct that can be difficult to describe and quantify (Schwartz & Baer, 1991). It is important to collect parent satisfaction information for several reasons as acknowledged in the literature. First, parents have the main role of caring and nurturing their child and guiding their development. As a result, their decisions regarding the child's progress, challenges, or both are extremely important (Bernheimer & Gallimore, 1990; Guralnick, 1989). Second, parent satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) data can be used to improve services offered by programs and prevent the elimination of programs (Upshur, 1991; Woler, 1987); Third, programs may be able to increase parent involvement by including parents in the decision making process as a result of evaluation efforts. (Bailey, 1987; Conn-Powers, Ross-Allen, & Holburn, 1990). Finally, parents can be viewed as consumers, and the information they provide may be used to persuade other organizations (i.e., funding agencies, administrators) of the effectiveness of a program.

Literature regarding parent satisfaction on school age children indicates that this satisfaction is based on many experiences the parent has with the school. For example, it was found that fulfilling parent expectation is important in creating satisfaction (Olson, 1999). Other variables affecting parental expectations include the cultural background of the parents (Carnevale & Desrochers, 1999), parent involvement within their child's school, and other

specific aspects of the child's schooling including teachers attitudes about parents, transportation services, cafeteria food (Salisbury et al., 1997). In addition, researchers found that satisfied parents' are also those who have good communication with their child's school and know about their child's school experiences (Falbo 2003). Moreover, parents are more likely to be satisfied if the school values their involvement. Other key variables that influence parents' satisfaction with schools are student success and child safety (Salisbury, Branson, Altreche, Funk, & Boretzmann, 1997).

Their have been mixed results regarding studies of parents of children who have disabilities and parental involvement in relation to parent satisfaction. Polifka (1981) found that parents of children with emotional, learning, or cognitive disabilities who were more involved in the development of the individualized education program were more satisfied with the program. In addition, Laws and Millward (2001) reported that parents of children with Down's syndrome were more likely to report satisfaction with their child's education program if they were involved. Moreover, McNamara, Telzrow, and DeLamatre (1999) also linked parent satisfaction of an intervention program with parental involvement. However, Meyers and Blacher (1987) found no significant correlation between levels of parent involvement and parent satisfaction among parents of profound or severe intellectual disabilities.

Parent Satisfaction and Student Achievement

Studies regarding the relationship between student achievement and parent satisfaction have been conducted in early intervention research. Marfo, Browne, Gallant, Smyth, and Corbett (1991) demonstrated a moderate correlation of $r = .20$, $p < .05$ between parent satisfaction and child progress as measured by rate of development during the intervention. Moreover Upshur (1991) also found a moderate correlation between father's satisfaction and the child's

development of cognitive skills, yet did not find a relationship between mother's reports of satisfaction and child progress.

However, there are fewer studies that have specifically examined the relationship between student achievement of school age children and its impact on parental satisfaction in an educational setting. One of the challenges with data collected from program evaluations is that the type of data and how it is analyzed is determined by the goals of the program evaluation. Subsequently, the majority of studies on program evaluations that contain data on student achievement and parent satisfaction shed little light on the specific variables that influences or predicts parent satisfaction.

Criteria for inclusion of studies in this literature review include the following: (a) the researchers had to measure parent satisfaction directly as a dependent variable, (b) the researchers had to have used statistics specifically examining relationships or group differences, and (c) the study had to focus on school age children in some type of educational program.

Falbo et al. (2003) conducted a telephone survey on a stratified (by ethnicity, income, and grade level) random sample of parents in order to examine parents' satisfaction with the quality of their children's school. The researchers had predicted that parents of more successful students would be more satisfied than parents of less successful students. The interview questions were based on an individual student in that household. Therefore, some parents were in the pool as many times as they had children enrolled in the school district. The interview instrument asked the parents to consider the experiences of one of their children, the one named by the interviewer, during the current school year. The interview question that assessed satisfaction came at the end of the questionnaire. The parent was asked, "How satisfied are you with the

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quality of education that your child receives at school?" and responded by using a 1–10 rating

scale with 1 indicating "very dissatisfied" and 10 "very satisfied."

The researchers had a 50% response rate, resulting in 1,176 usable interviews. Most of

the parents interviewed were mothers. Overall, the weighted mean of the satisfaction index was

7.31, with 46% of the parents responding with a 7 or higher.

Although the results of the study did not confirm a relationship between children's

academic success and parental satisfaction in a linear fashion, the researchers did find a

significant difference in parent satisfaction among groups of parents whose children participated

in activities for talented and gifted ($N = 366$) and parents of children who did not, $F (1, 1,116) =$

4.94, $p <.01$. The study also revealed that parents who reported receiving special education

services ($N = 204$) were no more satisfied than parents of children who did not receive such

services.

In this study, a correlation could not be conducted because the researchers did not have a

question regarding parental perception of student achievement included in the survey questions

or use an objective measure of student achievement (such as grades). Moreover, using the group

of children who participated in gifted and talented class may not have been the best estimate of

achievement. In addition, some parents were interviewed more than one time (because of having

more children within the district), which could have led to bias in responses by the parent.

Tuck (1995), found that student achievement was the only factor that made a difference

in the overall ratings of parent levels of satisfaction. The study was designed to measure parent

perceptions of their children's schools and school experiences. A survey was mailed to a

randomly selected sample of 3,948 parents. The survey included questions covering five key

areas related to effective teaching and school management: (a) quality of staff, (b) school

climate, (c) academic program, (d) social development and extracurricular activities, and (e) parent involvement. Parents responded on a Likert scale from 1–5: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion/neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Overall, parents were moderately satisfied with their local schools, giving schools an overall rating of 3.82 on a 5-point scale. However, there were group differences among parents. The higher the achievement level, the higher parents' ratings of the schools, consistently, across all achievement levels F (3, 340) 11.45 $p < .001$.

In order to further explore the relationship between student achievement and parent satisfaction, statistics that employ correlation or regression analysis may be used. In addition, objective data is more useful in identifying student achievement than subjective. A landmark study in this area conducted by Saint-Laurent and Fournier (1993) employed those critical features and sought to identify what kinds of variables influenced parental satisfaction and if parent satisfaction was related to students' academic and adaptive behavior progress. The subjects were 33 students who had moderate intellectual disabilities and who were integrated in regular schools in either special or regular classes. The students' academic performance and adaptive behavior were evaluated twice at 2-year intervals. All students received the following measures: Stanford-Binet intelligence Scale; form L-M 3rd. ed.; Adaptive Behavior Scale School Edition—French version; and the Harvey Development Scale. Academic performance was obtained by examining student records. A classification system was developed to aid in understanding student progress. Results were divided into three categories: deteriorated, unchanged, or improved. Each student's progress was calculated by subtracting pretest scores from posttest scores for each variable. A score greater than zero was classified as "improved"; a score of zero was classified as unchanged; and a score less than zero was classified as

deteriorated. The parents completed a Parent's Satisfaction Questionnaire that was specifically developed for the study.

The researchers found that parent satisfaction was predicted by three variables: satisfying communication with school staff, parents' perception of improvement in writing, and math and students' progress in two adaptive behaviors: community self-sufficiency and personal-social responsibility. Satisfaction regarding communication with school staff was the best predictor of overall parents satisfaction, which accounted for 21% of the variance (F [1,26] = 7.54, p < .01). A stepwise multiple regression was used to analyze data collected for each parent and there respective student. Of particular interest is that the researchers did not find a relationship between students' actual academic progress and parents' overall satisfaction. The researchers concluded that without objective measures, parents tend to overrate their child's academic progress. In addition, it was found that parent involvement did not predict parent satisfaction. This finding was consistent with Meyers and Blacher's (1987) study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Statement of Problem

There have been few studies specifically examining the relationship between parent satisfaction and student achievement in an educational program Two of the previous studies used ANOVA procedures to investigate group differences. Moreover, student achievement was not determined by objective data. In the first study it was determined by participation in a gifted and talented group and by parent perceptions as reported on a survey question in the second study. The final study involved only students with moderate intellectual disabilities and did not examine differences in satisfaction among parents of students without disabilities.

Program Description

Marshall University Graduate College is located in South Charleston, West Virginia. The college conducts a 5-week, 4-hour-per-day educational program in the summer. The Summer Enrichment Program is an integrated, activity-based learning experience for students in grades K–12. Enrollment includes breakfast and lunch for students under the age of 18. The program cost $100, with a limited amount of tuition assistance available. The program is unique in that it provides Marshall University graduate students a clinical field experience leading to certification or licensure in the following areas: Educational Leadership, Special Education, Counseling, School Psychology, and Reading. These students are enrolled in summer quarter courses that require a field experience. One of the main components for the success of the program is the high student/adult ratio. In 2003, the ratio of adult to students in the program was 7:1.

The program has existed for the past 20 years. Classrooms contain multiage, multi-ability students along with full inclusion of students with special needs. Classroom instruction is activity based, while utilizing theme study, which has traditionally been West Virginia. Graduate education students are also encouraged to use the strategy of team teaching in their classroom, as well as other effective, research based methods . A collaborative model is employed among all field experience students in order to assist the child in their development and education during the program. The program's faculty includes a director, site principal, and field supervisors (Special Education, Counseling, School Psychology, and Reading).

The director of the program sends brochures to county elementary, middle, and high schools. Guidance counselors within the schools refer specific students and send applications to interested parents. Students who have attended in the last two years are also sent applications.

The program provides opportunities for parents to become acquainted with the type of education their child is receiving. Group parent sessions were conducted by the school psychology students on the following topics: stress management, learning styles, building self-esteem, and homework. Individual parent conferences with school psychology students were also offered to parents regarding their child's behavior, attitude, development, academics, and family dynamics.

Subjects

Student subjects for the study were those who received parental permission to receive individual assessments. These students received a curricular-based assessment in reading each week. Some students also received a curricular-based assessment in math. Curricular based assessment has been used to monitor student progress and evaluate intervention programs (Marston & Kirk, 1992; Stoner, Scarpati, Phaneuf, & Hintze, 2002). Students' progress scores were calculated by

subtracting pretest from posttest for each CBA test administered. The data from the students was correlated with their respective parents' response on question 14.

Subject Characteristics

The average age of a student in the program was 11 years. There were 54 students with known disabilities (documented on application) in the sample ($n = 139$). Average attendance for any student was 15 days out of 20 days. Socioeconomic status was determined if the child was eligible for free lunch. There were 54% ($n=75$) classified as low income (per lunch status on application). Ten percent of students ($n = 14$) had attended the program previously the last year. Approximately 38% ($n=53$) of students were required to attend the program in order to be promoted to the next grade.

Service Delivery

Students who received individual assessments and individual or group counseling received "pull-out" services and were taken to another room in the school building. Students who received individual reading support worked with their teacher at a desk in the hallway in close proximity to the student's classroom. Drum therapy was also offered to students.

Instruments

The parent survey was constructed for the program evaluation by the principal investigator. It was reviewed and revised three times by the field experience supervisor in school psychology along with the school psychology graduate students. The director of the program also reviewed the surveys. The surveys utilized a Likert format with 1 corresponding to strongly disagree and 5 corresponding to strongly agree.

The parent surveys were designed to elicit information on the following scales: perceived student progress, quality of staff, school climate, socialization, perception of program, and

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parental involvement. Levels of parent involvement were adapted from Lusthaus, Lusthaus, and

Gibbs (1981) criteria: (a) no involvement, (b) giving and receiving information, and (c) having

control over decisions.

Procedures

The parents of all (*n*=139) students were mailed a survey the first day of the last week of the

program. A cover letter was attached to the survey explaining the purpose of the study and

confidentiality. In addition, the surveys were coded to protect identity. Parents were to return the

surveys through return envelopes included with the survey. In some cases, parents received more

than one copy of the survey, if they had more than one child attend. Returned, completed surveys

served as written consent. Follow-up phone calls were conducted that offered two ways for

parents to complete the survey: (a) sending another survey or (b) completing survey over the

phone.   One attempt for follow up calls was made for thirty-five parents.   Five parents were

administered the survey over the telephone. Supervisors and graduate students were administered

the survey on site during the last week of the program.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A total of thirty-five surveys were returned by mail. The response rate of the mail surveys was approximately 25%, which is consistent with the average return rate for mail surveys that fluctuates between 10 and 30% (Chiu & Brennan, 1990). In order to increase the number of surveys for statistical analysis, follow-up phone calls were conducted that offered two ways for parents to complete the survey; sending another survey or completing a survey over the phone. Fourteen contacts were made and nine parents stated the surveys were completed and they would mail them in. Five surveys were administered over the telephone for a total of 40 surveys. Nineteen of the parents surveyed were parents of students of disabilities ($n = 40$). Fifteen parents paid a fee for their child to attend the program and 25 were classified within the free or reduced lunch category.

The average score for this sample of parents on the whole survey was 3.98. The standard deviation for the sample on the survey was 1.41. The average parent satisfaction score on question 14 was 4.40. Additional descriptive statistics regarding survey questions are provided in Tables II, III and V.

Questions sixteen and seventeen were removed due to confusion in response by parents. Analysis of internal consistency was conducted on the remaining twenty questions on the questionnaire. Results showed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .79 ($n = 40$). Questions in the initial correlation that were significant were entered in a multiple regression analysis (see Table 4). Questions one, two and nine appeared as predictors. However, after conducting a partial correlation of questions one and two with question fourteen, controlling for question nine, they

were found insignificant. Subsequently, a model composed of one variable emerged accounting

for 35% of total variance (F [1,38] = 19.90, p < .01). Parent perception of staff caring about their

child emerged as the best predictor of parent satisfaction.

Table I

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Parent Satisfaction (N=39)

Variable	R	R2	df	F	P	B	SEB	*B*
Staff care about Child - Question 9	.587	.345	(1,38)	19.9	.01	.1.00	.226	.587

In order to test the hypothesis that there was a positive relationship between students'

academic progress and parent satisfaction a Pearson's correlation was conducted (see Table 4).

Results of question 14, which measured satisfaction, and question 18, which measured perceived

progress in reading, resulted in a low, positive, statistically significant relationship (r = .26, p <

.05). A correlation was not found between question 14 and question 19, which measured

perceived progress in math (r = .20). Moreover, there was no significant correlation found

between question 14 and question 21, which measured perceived academic progress in terms of

school year growth, at the .05 level (r = .23). Students' actual progress as measured by

curriculum- based assessment in reading (r=.04, p<.88, n=14) and math (r=.15, p< .56, n=18)

was also not correlated with question 14. However, there were moderate correlations between

question 14 and questions one (r=.52), two (r=,52) and nine (r=.59) significant at the .01 level.

In addition, slightly moderate correlations appear between question fourteen and question six

(r=.36) and question seven (r=.32) and question eight (r=.34) p<.05.

It was also expected that parental involvement would not be associated with parent satisfaction as demonstrated in the literature. A significant relationship was not revealed between question 13 and question 14 ($r = .16$, p $< .33$), and question 22 and question 14 ($r = .10$, $p < .55$), respectively. In addition, one way ANOVA analysis did not show any significant differences between levels of satisfaction among parents of children with disabilities and those of parents of students without disabilities $F (1, 38) = .03$, $p = .86$. Further ANOVA analysis did not detect differences in levels of satisfaction among parents who rated their child as achieving progress according to question 22 and parents who did not rate their child as achieving progress $F (1,38) = .87$, $p = .35$. Post hoc ANOVA analysis between surveys retrieved one week after the program and surveys retrieved 2 weeks after the program was conducted. There were no significant differences in levels of satisfaction between groups of surveys

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that parent satisfaction data can be used to gauge the effectiveness of a summer program. The overall mean of 3.98 demonstrated that parents were inclined to agree with most statements on the survey. The mean of 4.40 on question 14, indicated that overall, parents were satisfied with the summer program. Results are also consistent with findings from year-long, school satisfaction surveys (Tuck, 1995). Furthermore, parents of nondisabled children and parents of a child with a disability were both equally satisfied with the program. Also, there were no differences in levels of satisfaction between parents who rated their students as having made more academic progress and those parents who did not rate their children as having made more academic progress as measured by question 22.

A low, positive correlation ($r = .26$, $p < .05$) between parent satisfaction and perceived reading improvement, may be considered a form of academic progress. Results confirmed the hypothesis that parent satisfaction increases with student achievement when perceived by parents. However, there are mixed results in the literature regarding this area. Falbo et al. (2003) failed to find a relationship between parent satisfaction and student progress among nondisabled students. This artifact may be due to internal beliefs on part of the parents regarding importance of academic progress. Interestingly, there was no relationship found when actual improvement scores were correlated with parent satisfaction. This is consistent with Saint Laurent and Fournier's findings (1993) and indicate that parents are inclined to over report progress by their child in absence of tangible reports. This was found for parents of students with disabilities and parents of students without disabilities.

Results also confirmed the hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between level of parent satisfaction and parental involvement in the education program. The present findings are consistent with those of Saint-Laurent (1993), Meyers and Blacher (1987), and Falbo et al. (2003). These data suggest that parent satisfaction with their child's education program may not be associated with parental involvement as was commonly thought.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, the study found that parental perception of the care staff directed toward students was the best predictor of parental satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Griswold (1989) who conducted a telephone survey with parents and found school climate to be a major component of effective schools. Moreover, school effectiveness research has identified a warm, caring staff as contributing to a positive school climate which promotes learning (Miller, 1981). Positive school climate has been found to be a determinant of effective schools (Johnson et al. 2000). Nel Noddings (1992) posited that a caring and supportive classroom environment is necessary in order for schools to meet academic objectives. Part of the structure of the program included such things as frequent parent consultation and staff attending breakfast and lunch with students. The results differ from Laurent and Fournier (1993) who found that progress in writing and math among students with cognitive disabilities was a predictor of parent satisfaction. The difference may lie in the type of program. Summer programs are much different in design and have a different atmosphere (Boss & Railback, 2000). Moreover, parents may expect less academically from their children during the summertime and may have less stringent expectations regarding teacher expectations in a summer program (Ascher 1991).

Overall, it appeared that parents held a positive perception of staff. At least 93% of parents were pleased with how staff worked with their child during the program (question 6) and

75% felt that the staff was open to talking with parents (question 12). Many parents expressed program loyalty and approximately 88% of the parents would like their child to attend again and 88% would recommend the program to other parents. Thirty percent of parents reported that the best thing about the program was their child's enjoyment. In addition, 83% of parents agreed that their child benefited from the program. There were a few suggestions for improvement in the program, ranging from longer hours to ways to increase communication with parents (see Table V).

The results of the study are subject to influences that may affect the participant. The survey is located at the end of the program, which may be influenced by subject characteristics (parent availability, willingness, motivation, fatigue). School related events, positive or negative, occurring right before the survey may also influence a parent's response. Ongoing evaluation of parent perceptions throughout the program would help protect against this (Stufflebeam, 1983). In addition, the act of soliciting information itself may influence an individual to be more positive in their response on a survey. Follow up phone calls to the parents prompted a group of late mailed surveys (retrieved two weeks after program). Responses from the second group did not differ in level of satisfaction when compared to the first group. This data lends support to the generalizability of results to the whole sample. It is very likely that the parents who did not return a survey would report that they were satisfied with the program, due to perceived care by staff towards their children. There are several opportunities to expound upon the present findings. For example, parents of a control group of students who would not receive specific services could be compared with parents of a group of matched students who would receive specific services, such as reading intervention. Further, solely conducting the surveys by phone may increase the number of completed surveys.

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Table II

Parent Survey Frequency of Response Categories by Question (*n*=40)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	*NR
1	1		3	8	28	
2			4	5	31	
3	1		16	14	9	
4	1		2	12	25	
5	2		6	16	16	
6		2		8	30	
7		1	4	10	24	1
8			1	15	23	1
9				13	27	
10	1		2	5	32	
11	1	1	12	9	16	1
12	2	1	5	12	19	1
13	4	3	15	9	6	3
14		1	6	9	24	
15	10	3	8	6	10	3
18		1	13	12	14	
19	3	1	15	8	12	1
20	1	2	14	10	12	1
21	1	5	16	6	7	5
22	7	8	6	15	3	1

*NR=No Response

Table III

Means and Standard Deviation of Parent Survey Questions (n=40)

_____

Question	Mean	SD
1. I would like my child to attend the Summer Enrichment Program again.	$\underline{X}$=4.55	SD=.85
2. I would recommend the Summer Enrichment Program to other parents.	$\underline{X}$=4.68	SD=.66
3. My child has improved his/her ability to get along with other children.	$\underline{X}$=3.75	SD=.90
4. My child enjoyed participating in the program.	$\underline{X}$=4.50	SD=.82
5. My child made new friends through the program.	$\underline{X}$=4.10	SD=1.00
6. I am pleased with how staff worked with my child during the program.	$\underline{X}$=4.65	SD=.73
7. My child has benefited from the program.	$\underline{X}$=4.35	SD=1.05
8. My child's teachers seemed to make learning exciting and fun.	$\underline{X}$=4.45	SD=.90
9. The staff in the program truly cared about my child.	$\underline{X}$=4.68	SD=.47
10. My child was safe at the school.	$\underline{X}$=4.68	SD=.80
11. Staff takes prompt action when problems occur.	$\underline{X}$=3.87	SD=1.20
12. Staff is willing to talk to me if I have any concerns/suggestions.	$\underline{X}$=4.05	SD=1.26
13. I have participated in activities with my child at school.	$\underline{X}$=3.10	SD=1.35
14. I am satisfied with the program.	$\underline{X}$=4.40	SD=.84
15. I was aware of the group parent training sessions.	$\underline{X}$=3.00	SD=1.62
18. My child made improvements in reading skills during the program.	$\underline{X}$=3.97	SD=.89
19. My child made improvements in math skills during the program.	$\underline{X}$=3.55	SD=1.30
20. I have spoken with school staff about my child.	$\underline{X}$=3.68	SD=1.18
21. Please circle how much academic progress you feel your child has made.	$\underline{X}$=2.95	SD=1.50
22. Please indicate your level of involvement in your child's program.	$\underline{X}$=2.90	SD=1.35

Table IV

Intercorrelation of Parent Survey Questions and Satisfaction Question Fourteen (n=40)

_____

Question	Question Fourteen

_____

1. I would like my child to attend the Summer Enrichment Program again.	.52**
2. I would recommend the Summer Enrichment Program to other parents.	.52**
3. My child has improved his/her ability to get along with other children.	.17
4. My child enjoyed participating in the program.	.27
5. My child made new friends through the program.	.22
6. I am pleased with how staff worked with my child during the program.	.36*
7. My child has benefited from the program.	.32*
8. My child's teachers seemed to make learning exciting and fun.	.34*
9. The staff in the program truly cared about my child.	.59**
10. My child was safe at the school.	.23
11. Staff takes prompt action when problems occur.	.11
12. Staff is willing to talk to me if I have any concerns/suggestions.	.16
13. I have participated in activities with my child at school.	-.15
14. I am satisfied with the program.	.07
15. I was aware of the group parent training sessions.	.26
18. My child made improvements in reading skills during the program.	.26*
19. My child made improvements in math skills during the program.	.20
20. I have spoken with school staff about my child.	.03
21. Please circle how much academic progress you feel your child has made.	.16
22. Please indicate your level of involvement in your child's program.	.04

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

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Table V

Frequency of Responses to Open-ended Parent Survey Questions (*n*=40)

_____

Question	Response	Frequency

_____

Question	Response	Frequency
23. If you were unable to attend a group	Work	16
parent training session, please list reason why.	Forgot	2
	No Response	10
	Unaware	7
	No need	3
	Sick	2
24. What I liked best about the program	Program	5
	Child enjoyed	12
	One on one help	9
	Counseling	1
	People	7
	No Response	5
	Convenient Location	1
25. What I liked least about the program.	Nothing	27
	Older kids w/younger kids	1
	More communication	2
	More academics	2
	No pull out services	1
	Program too short	3
	Placement issue	1
26. In order to improve the program, I would suggest_____.		
	Nothing	18
	Parent involvement activities	3
	Increase academics	2
	No older kids with younger kids	2
	Offer at another location	2
	Program changes	8
	More transportation	1
	More communication	4

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Appendix A

Parent Letter

July 21, 2003

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Enclosed is a survey regarding the MUGC Summer 2003 Enrichment Program that your child is currently attending. We are interested in your thoughts about the program. **Would you please complete and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by July 24th?** The information you provide will be used for program evaluation. This information will be very valuable in providing feedback to staff and parents as well as assisting with program improvement. The results of this survey will also be helpful in securing additional funding so the program may continue.

In order to ensure the evaluation is comprehensive, your child will also be asked to complete a survey during the week of July 24th. He/she will be completing it as a part of regular class activities during the MUGC Summer Enrichment Program.

Your responses will be treated in a confidential manner. The program evaluator will assign a number to your response and your name will not appear on the survey. Only summarized data will be shared within Marshall University and/or included in any formal reports. No identifiable information will be used in this evaluation. Please note you are free to decide not to participate in the survey, however, we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to make suggestions and offer feedback.

Your time and thoughtful consideration are very much appreciated. If you have questions regarding the program evaluation, please contact me at 800-642-9842, ext. 1983 or jmeikamp@marshall.edu

Sincerely,

Joyce Meikamp, Ed.D.
Director of Clinical & Field-Based Experiences

Encs.

Summer 2003 Enrichment Program
Parent Survey

Please circle your responses to the following questions. All responses will remain confidential and your effort is greatly appreciated.

| | 1=strongly disagree | 2=disagree | 3=neutral | 4=agree 5=strongly agree |

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I would like my child to attend the Summer Enrichment Program again.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would you recommend the Summer Enrichment Program to other parents.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My child has improved his/her ability to get along with other children.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My child enjoyed participating in the program.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My child made new friends through the program.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am pleased with how staff worked with my child during the program.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My child has benefited from the program.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My child's teachers seemed to make learning exciting and fun.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The staff in the program truly cared about my child.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My child was safe at the school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Staff takes prompt action when problems occur.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Staff are willing to talk to me if I have any concerns/suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have participated in some activities with my child at school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am satisfied with the program.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I was aware of the group parent training sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I attended one or more of the group parent training sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The group parent training session was helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My child made improvements in reading skills during the program.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My child made improvements in reading skills during the program.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I have spoken with school staff about my child.	1	2	3	4	5

21. Please circle how much academic progress you feel your child has made.

1=much less than reg. school yr.   2=less than reg. school yr.   3=similar to reg. school yr.
4=more than regular school yr.   5=much more than reg. school yr.

22. Please indicate your level of involvement in your child's program.

1=none   2=receiving information with staff   3=giving information to staff (i.e. phone calls, meet with teacher)
4=giving and receiving information with staff   5=participating in decisions with staff

23. If you were unable to attend the parent training session, please list reason why.
_____

24. What I liked best about the program was_____.

25. What I liked least about the program was_____.

26. In order to improve the program, I would suggest _____.

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Master's in Clinical Psychology, 1996, Eastern Michigan University
Bachelor's in Psychology, 1990, Michigan State University

EMPLOYMENT:

8-02 - present
Intern School Psychologist, South Central Ohio Educational Service Center
Administer psychological tests to students and compose reports to determine eligibility for special education services. Develop and implement interventions. Participate in multidisciplinary teams and assist on intervention assistance teams. Manage caseload and provide consultation to parents.

8-01 – 7-02
Psychometrician. Dr. Krieg & Associates. WV
Administer psychological tests to students and compose reports for Mingo County Schools. Conduct behavioral observations on children in Head Start.

11-98 – 8-01
Coord. of Special Needs Services, Shawnee State University Portsmouth OH
Coordinate specific programs and services to minority, disabled and international students. Provide accommodations to disabled students and implement programs to promote campus diversity (i.e. ADA workshop). Conduct meetings with faculty, parents to facilitate accommodations, academic success. Serve as liaison to support agencies. Manage caseload for disabled students, document services and maintain confidential records. Counsel, advise and register students for classes.

7-98-11-98
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Bureau of Voc. Rehab. Portsmouth OH.
Counseling with individuals with disabilities toward increased functioning and mutually agreed upon goals based on assessment instruments, developing and managing caseload, conducting interviews, composing reports, evaluating information. Coordinate services for disabled individuals to prepare them for employment.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST